



Friends of the Box-Ironbark Forests (Mount Alexander Region) Inc.

ABN: 40 489 904 108 A0037461H

Phone 0488102191 email: info@fobif.org.au
PO Box 322 Castlemaine Vic 3450
www.fobif.org.au

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January 10, 2025

Dear Friend of the Box-Ironbark Forests,

The FOBIF committee hopes you are having a good start to 2025. The monthly walks program is printed overleaf. It is also posted on www.fobif.org.au. Conditions can change, so please check the website for possible last-minute changes.

A couple of **highlights** this year were-

- Over 100 people packed into the Senior Citizens Hall to hear fire behaviour scientist **Phil Zylstra** question the science and logic behind current planned burning systems.
- On the initiative of Asher Bannon, the MASC will adopt a **Biodiversity & Action Plan** for our shire.
- Our AGM was well attended, with fifty-three members and supporters. The evening began with a terrific presentation by local bird expert **Geoff Park**, *Woodland birds in central Victoria – historical observations, current status and future prospects*.

The AGM was also a time of great change in FOBIF. We are grateful to long term **committee** members Bernard Slattery, Bronwyn Silver, Marie Jones, Nev Cooper, Jeremy Holland, & Lynette Amaterstein for their work in establishing FOBIF as a valuable and reputable advocate for our beautiful environment. Thankfully they are all still around, supporting the new committee. Asha Bannon who joined the committee in 2023 has now resigned due to other commitments. As a former Landcare coordinator and NCCMA employee she was a valued committee member who brought FOBIF a broad range of knowledge and experience.

Here is a brief introduction to the new committee members-

Christine Henderson (President) lives on the eastern edge of the Fryers Ranges, and enjoys being in the forest, admiring wildflowers in season. She loves gleaned knowledge from others: botanists, ecologists, ornithologists and other nature lovers, preferably while walking in the forest.

Lisa Hall (Secretary & Interim Treasurer) lives in and loves the forest. After working in landscape architecture and outdoor education she now has time to volunteer in her favourite organisations.

Frances Cincotta (Assistant Secretary) has been running an indigenous nursery (Newstead Natives) for 25 years and supplies many of the Landcare groups, MAS Council, Connecting Country, farmers and gardeners with local provenance plants for habitat restoration. This her second year on the FOBIF committee, but she has been helping with publications, walks and exhibitions for many years.

Gen Blades (Vice President & Walks Programme Coordinator) A Castlemaine local, she loves exploring the bush on foot. She has had a long career in teaching outdoor and environmental education in schools & universities.

Sarah Day (Media) has worked and volunteered in the environment and social justice movement for 25 years working with grassroots groups and organisations such as Goongerah Environment Centre, Victorian National Parks Association and Friends of the Earth, most recently campaigning to protect native forests. Sarah is involved in local climate, seed collecting, revegetation and wildlife projects.

Jo Matthews (Membership Officer) moved to Dja Dja Wurrung country 10 years ago and has been keenly learning about the local plants and ecosystems ever since. Admiring the work Fobif does around advocacy, joining the committee felt like a natural extension of her learnings.

Dr Cassia Read is an ecologist, educator and garden designer, working at the intersection of biodiversity conservation and human wellbeing. She is Principal Ecologist and Co-Founder of the Castlemaine Institute.

Karl Just is a botanist and zoologist dedicated to environmental advocacy and nature restoration.

If you (or someone you know) wish to join this great bunch of folk working towards a better environment, we still need a **Treasurer!**

Our **publications** are selling steadily. We have kept prices to a minimum, and sales are just covering the costs of reprints.

Remember: FOBIF **committee meetings are open to all members**. They're at the Community House building, 30 Templeton Street Castlemaine, on the second Monday of every month from February to November, at 6 pm.

Subscriptions are due now: Member subs—\$10 per individual, \$15 a family—are due now.

There's a membership form with this letter. If you've paid your sub in the last three months you don't need to heed this notice....

See you on the track!

Christine Henderson, Lisa Hall, Frances Cincotta, Gen Blades, Karl Just, Jo Matthews, Cassia Read & Sarah Day