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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It's a testament to the hard work and dedication of my predecessors that, not only did the Environmental Living Zone become a reality but that 40 years later it is still flourishing. As the current President of the BICA I would like to thank all those residents, members, and supporters who have helped protect and strengthen the Bend of Islands as the truly unique pocket of Nillumbik that we occupy today.

Today's world is certainly a different world than 40 years ago with so many more things competing for our time and attention. Despite this we still manage to engage with our community and devote some of our precious time to our homes and the environment around us. Our Land Management Plan has underpinned several successful grant applications for both weed control and revegetation works. Oxley Reserve is looking a treat and, although not as visible, the escarpment areas have benefitted from many hours of weeding. Our calendars overflow with planned community activities.

Of course there are still challenges for our membership to face as we progress to the next 40 years. Increased development pressures around us, and occasionally within our borders require vigilance. This includes the debates surrounding the proposed amendments to the Council planning scheme. We always aim to provide a truthful assessment to these debates albeit we have more of an interest in the "greener" view. But any watering down of the environmental values of surrounding areas will ultimately have a negative impact on us as "our habitat", like that of many endangered species of plants and wildlife, if our buffers are reduced.

The primary reason for the success of the Bend of Islands over the past 40 years is the people who make up this unique community. They have always been the drivers - we look forward to their continuing support. Our challenge is to ensure the area maintains its relevance to its community. And at the same time we hope we can convince those looking from outside that there is real value in conserving this area which makes it every bit as desirable an address to have as the priciest in Melbourne. As residents we already know this.

I would like to close with a by-line I hope will stick – "It's our Bend and we love it"

Neil Kamminga
President

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WHAT LOCAL PLANT IS FLOWERING?

Botanical name: *Pterostylis nana*
Common name: Dwarf Greenhood
Family: Orchidaceae
Flowering Period: July to October

Pterostylis spp. are orchids, commonly known as Greenhoods, because the flowers are generally green with brown or reddish tinges, with the dorsal sepal and petals united to form a hooded structure over the column and labellum (lip)

Pterostylis nana has single, erect, pale green & white hooded flowers, 15mm long, with dark green stripes, which terminates a stem, 5–15cm high. The enclosed labellum is broad tipped and erect, 4-6mm long. The flower has two lateral, erect sepals, 25mm long, which rise above the hood in fine points.

A rosette of 4-8 dull green, shortly stalked, ovate leaves, to 30mm long, encircle the stem at ground level, with two to three sheathing bracts up the stem.

Found in well drained soils in dry sclerophyll forest and generally tolerates a range of soil types and habitats. The height of the orchid will vary, with shorter stems in drier situations and taller stems in moister, protected sites.

It grows from round tuberoids, the swollen end of an underground root. Small flies or fungus gnats are pollinators.

Cric Henry



The Bend of Islands has a broad diversity of indigenous plant species. The BICA website, at <https://bendofislands.wordpress.com/flora-and-fauna/plants/>, has a comprehensive Plant List for the area.

This page also has a List of Species Suitable for Revegetation and Planting Projects for guidance to local landscapers, and a list of Environmental Weeds found in Bend of Islands to aid in identifying and managing these pests.



ELZ TIMELINE

The Bend of Islands is located only 30km north east of Melbourne, Australia, adjacent to the Yarra River and about 20 minutes drive north of Eltham. The area is zoned Special Use Zone 2 (Environmental Living) under the Shire of Nillumbik Planning Scheme and is unique in Australia. Situated on 634 hectares of natural bushland, the area combines environmental conservation with residential use. The zoning ensures that the flora and fauna are protected by strict regulations prohibiting the introduction of non-indigenous plants and the keeping of pets or livestock including cats, dogs, horses or cattle.

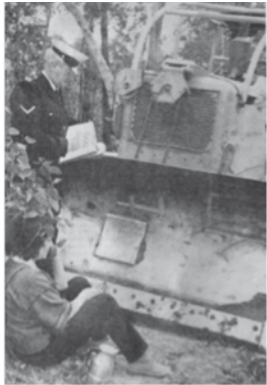
1960's - Neil Douglas came to area and encouraged others to purchase available land

1962 - Fire devastated the whole area with many houses and shacks destroyed.

1964 - 1964 Neil and Abbie bought a fire ravaged block on Henley Road

1966 - Neil convened a meeting of all landowners to discuss control of future subdivision at the Temby home in Lower Plenty. Yarra-Brae Dam mooted.

1966 Nov, first meeting of Bend of Islands



Conservation Council. Neil Douglas was elected President.

1967 - Local residents protested re SEC plans for 250 kV powerlines through Kangaroo Ground.

1968 - September the Shire of Healesville Proper Officer sent Notices requiring the removal of all scrub and undergrowth by burning by November. Community protested and had protracted discussions with Shire who did some bulldozing and burning before the matter

was brought under control.

1969 - Tim Ealey (Monash University) provided ecological advice on fuel reduction burning.

1970 - BICA President: Ian Temby.

- Values of the area important to retain
- BICA Committee worked with the Shire of Healesville and the CFA to establish fire prevention measures acceptable to all

1971 - Round the Bend Cooperative was inaugurated purchasing land in Skyline Road.

1972 - Concerns of local community (particularly those along the River) regarding rumours re a proposal for Yarra Brae Dam. Some residents received letters re proposed reservation of land along the river.

- Yarra Brae Action Group was formed led by Mal McClure.
- With the threat of a dam, Neil Douglas, BICA members & Co-op continued developing ideas regarding best way to conserve the whole area.

1973 – Drought hits Melbourne. Dam to proceed

- Board of Works began sending letters to owners regarding compulsory acquisition of properties.
- Environmental Impact Study was underway. Many Submissions were made by the Action Group, local community and BICA.
- After much lobbying, Mr Hamer said dam may be built 7miles further upstream to save the Bend of Islands and the Gorge.

1974 - April: - Yarra Brae- Sugarloaf Environmental Study published by MMBW



- August - Neil Douglas, Tim Ealey, Bob English, Gary Jungwirth, John Lawson and Mal McClure, presented a paper to the Australian Conservation Symposium on "Residential Conservation" The paper caught the attention of senior bureaucrats within the government. The timing of this was optimal as the Board of Works were already drafting new planning proposals for the area.

- September - Government decides not to proceed with Yarra Brae Dam.

1975 - BICA Meeting requests the Government to institute a new zoning category to be designated "Residential Conservation". Dam proposal was abandoned.

1976 - March - MMBW advised the proposed Zones and changes to the Interim Development Order which covered not just reservoir site land but an extension into adjoining area. THE ENVIRONMENTAL LIVING ZONE WAS A PLANNING CATEGORY.

- June - Upper Yarra Valley & Dandenong Ranges Authority legislation introduced into Parliament (replacing MMBW as the planning Authority for the region).
- Wednesday 20th October 1976, 7.30 pm MMBW held a Public Meeting at Presbyterian Church Kindergarten Kangaroo Ground to discuss the proposed zones and reservations in the Yarra Brae area.
- Sunday 31st October 1976 2.00pm BICA held Meeting at Claire Watson's house in Oxley Road. President Ian Leach led the meeting and all agreed on making submissions to the Board supporting the introduction of the ELZ to the whole of the Bend of Islands area!
- MMBW requested Shire of Healesville to use ELZ (IDO) as a guideline for all permit applications.

1976 - 1982 BICA really got into action with Felicity Faris(Secretary) writing literally hundreds of submissions clarifying details to be included in the planning provisions and Neil Douglas lobbying all relevant bureaucrats, all with the assistance of Presidents Ian Leach, Rod Shield, Cric Henry and in 1982 John McCallum and their Committees. This period also marked the change of State Government Planning Authority from the Board of Works to the Upper Yarra Valley& Dandenong Ranges Authority. Here we found much interest and support.

1981 - President: Cric Henry

- I came onto the BICA committee in 1979, a year after we moved into the area to build a house on our block. We were interested in the conservation of the flora and fauna of the area and joining the BICA committee was a long term and positive commitment to ensuring this.
- In my role as President in 1981, the main conservation issues the committee were involved in included:-
- The objection to the Bissett-Johnson housing subdivision of Stan Brae and Yarra Brae, adjacent to Mt Lofty State Park at Wonga Park and pushing for the Government to purchase these two areas to include into the Mt Lofty State Park. This initiative established a continuous conservation zone along the Yarra River and adjacent to the Bend of



ELZ TIMELINE

Islands.

- Pending the gazettal of the ELZ in 1982, the committee sought via the Minister of Planning, the implementation of the dog and cat provision of the zoning, to protect the indigenous flora and fauna in the interim.
- The decision was made to implement a Botanical Survey of the Zone; the result is the present comprehensive Flora and Weed Lists of the Bend of Islands.
- The compilation of these lists provides a valuable framework in the pursuit of the conservation and protection of our native flora and as a result a healthy and viable fauna. Ensuring the availability and the updating of these lists, is an issue that I have been personally and keenly involved with in the subsequent years.

to educate and involve the community in our bush, thus learning to recognise it and manage it

- Many field days and working bees were held covering aspects of local fauna, indigenous flora, invertebrates, weed identification, propagation, willow removal and roadside vegetation management.
- Secondly we looked at outside issues impacting on our zone and made submissions on local government restructure, recreational use of Sugarloaf Dam, the use of excess Watsons Creek Dam land, upgrade of Henley road, and the final report of the Ministry of Planning and Environment's Christmas Hills Study Group Report.

1988 -1990 - President Frank Pierce

- The Shire of Healesville Planning Scheme completely overhauled and went on exhibition. We put in a lot of effort to ensuring that the ELZ



BICA Celebration; Minister for Planning, Evan Walker cut a floral ribbon at Oxley Bridge and formally unveiled a road side sign indicating the Bend of Islands as an Environmental Living Zone.

1982 - President John McCallum

- UYV&DR Regional Strategy Approved (including ELZ)
- An Area of MMBW land held for Stan Brae & Yarra Brae to be acquired for Warrandyte State Park.
- GAZETTAL OF SHIRE OF HEALESVILLE INTERIM DEVELOPMENT ORDER thus creating a formal ENVIRONMENTAL LIVING ZONE

1983 - The Ministry of Planning set up the Christmas Hills Study Group to examine the Zoning and to review and identify any problems, to look at further extensions and provide recommendations for the remaining MMBW properties located within the ELZ boundaries.

- BICA also dealt with the issue of the proposed duplication of the high voltage transmission lines
- 1984 - Shire of Healesville Amendment 22 when some of the more rural properties sought exemption from some of the planning provisions. It was not accepted.

1985 - 1987 - President Janet Mattiske

- It is 1985, The ELZ is an official planning entity and you would think that that would be the end of it! But that's the thing about conservation. You can never sit back and say that you have achieved it. It is an ongoing commitment. It requires each of us to examine our own personal objectives in terms of their effect on the environment - what can be done as an individual or as part of a community?
- ELZ provisions are there to safeguard our bushland but even so success is still hugely dependent on our actions on our own land.
- Thus the focus for the BICA Committee, 1985-87 was two-fold. Firstly

was retained with the planning provisions improved.

- Negotiations with the SEC, and future power authorities, to establish a cyclic program for vegetation control under the roadside powerlines was commenced. and has continued to this day. We promoted an innovative approach at the time, to preserve as much vegetation as possible whilst maintaining the clearances required for fire safety. These negotiations have been on-going to the present day, and the results speak for themselves.
- BICA engaged consultants to undertake a Weed Survey of the ELZ. This was the 1st such survey for the area and highlighted a focus on this threat. It stimulated many newsletter articles regarding target weeds to be prioritised.
- During 1989 the BICA Bird Survey was commenced and the monthly outings have continued since then. The body of data gathered over such a long period is considered to be significant by Birdlife Australia, the current national bird conservation organisation.
- URVDRA Regional Strategy Plan updated

1991 - President (shared) John McCallum/Frank Pierce

- After many years of work, the first ELZ Publication was produced with funding assistance from the Shire. This highlighted the many aspects of the zone- the environmental qualities and issues for low-impact residential living.

1992 -1994 - President Michael Pelling:

- Published our first Directory with council contacts
- Pine tree eradication program continuing



ELZ TIMELINE



2000 Sign unveiling ceremony with the formal acceptance of our Bend of Islands locality place name.

- Realignment works on Henley road-upper Catani intersection and sealing.
- Shire Amalgamation, we became part of Nillumbik Shire.
- BICA joined Landcare organisation

1995 -1998 - President Alan Bonny

A new Shire, a new challenge! BICA prepared an introduction to the ELZ to go to the Commissioners. The issues that faced us over the coming months and years were identified and included

- Our approach to the Minister of Planning on the proposed new planning zones.
- Proposed Heritage Resort and impact on our zoning, particularly the bushland adjoining the ELZ.
- LCC recommendations re Watson Creek corridor
- MMBW land within our area yet to be sold(in particular Yanakie)
- MW recreation plan (ensure no access to Skyline Rd)
- Regional open space plan

1996 - 20 years celebration

1997 - Comprehensive submission to Nillumbik re ELZ in the new Nillumbik Planning Scheme.

1999 -2000 - President Robyn Duff

- The Shire of Nillumbik Planning Scheme was developed.
- BICA presented a submission arguing for an Environmental Living Zoning
- Work on the Heritage golf course began and a Monitoring Committee commenced.
- Nov 2001; The Year of The Volunteer; BICA received a Certificate for Conservation works
- BICA successfully argued that Yanakie should be transferred to public ownership
- The Bend of Islands was accepted as a new place name with postcode 3097
- The Shire of Nillumbik Planning Scheme was proclaimed in June with SUZ 2 - Environmental Living.

2001 -2008 - President Carol Bonny

- In December 2000 my first duty as President was to officiate at the sign unveiling ceremony with the formal acceptance of our Bend of Islands locality place name.

- During the Kennett era the new format planning scheme was introduced and a huge effort by BICA was made to ensure our Environmental Living Zone remained.
- Mount Lofty was finally transferred to Parks Victoria as part of Warrandyte State Park.
- BICA produced a new Bend of Islands Information Folder with input from many locals and support from Nillumbik Shire. A celebratory launch by Nillumbik CEO, Catherine Dale was attended by 150 people with 80 folders distributed on the day.
- Vegetation Management agreements for high tension power line easement through the area were negotiated and implemented.
- Melbourne Water lands were rationalized and the Yanakie Reserve adopted.
- The Neil Douglas Conservation Reserve was a major win from the MW lands. Community events were held in Nov 2005 when the reserve was proclaimed and Oct 2008 for the plaque unveiling.
- In 2008 BICA was awarded the Port Phillip and Western Port Landcare award "Caring for Nature".
- There were lots of meetings with Nillumbik Shire and introductory tours for councillors and planning staff. These meetings addressed many issues, including planning, the Non-Conforming Use Register and vegetation management for fire and solar power installation.
- Before moving to the Bend I had never been involved in a committee. It has been a fabulous and rewarding experience.

2009 -2010 - President Neil Harvey

- 2010 BICA made submission to the Royal Commission into the February 7th Bushfires.
- Successful negotiations with the authorities for vegetation control in the transmission powerline easement, in a post Black Saturday context – many surveys and exclusion plots.

2011 - No President

- BICA committee still active and began looking for Grants for a management plan and commissioned Ecological Perspective to do the work
- Background work for grant applications and data consolidation for the LMP project.

2012- 2014 - President Robyn Duff

- BICA began a major project by gaining 3 grants totalling \$19,500 for the development of a Land Management Plan which would identify



ELZ TIMELINE



the priorities for the management of the Bend of Islands i.e. the most important environmental assets, their location, critical areas of weed infestation, and threats to the area. The Plan would guide, BICA's Landcare activity and pest animal projects as well as the work that individual residents do on their own properties in working to maintain the environmental integrity of the Bend of Islands.



- BICA produced a pamphlet to promote the area and developed a new website www.bendofislands.wordpress.com
- BICA worked to transfer key documents to the State Library of Victoria as archives
- Wurundjeri project at Neil Douglas Reserve in 2012
- The first BICA calendar was published and distributed to members
- The BICA constitution was revised and updated in 2013
- The Land Management Plan was completed in 2013 and launched in 2014. This was a milestone in the conservation effort to preserve the quality of the area.

- **2015** Wurundjeri Sign Project unveiling
Tom Fisher summarised the project's background, which has its roots in 2012, when BICA partnered with the Wurundjeri in implementing a 'Communities for Nature' grant.



Planning for the project was guided by a consultative committee that consisted of representatives from the Wurundjeri, BICA and the Shire of Nillumbik and involved input from other Wurundjeri elders as well. Tom also acknowledged assistance from a large number of individuals and organisations, chief of which were Nillumbik Shire for two Robert Bridgford Indigenous grants and the Wurundjeri Tribe Land Compensation Cultural Heritage Council

2016 marked the completion of a 4-year grant program, the Nillumbik Shire Conservation Corridors program. This NCC project was funded by a "Communities for Nature" grant, administered by a Steering Committee including representatives from local Landcare groups and coordinated by Julia Franco, Nillumbik Shire Council Biodiversity Officer.

- The aim of the project is to enhance and conserve the Kinglake – Warrandyte wildlife corridor, of which Bend of Islands is a part, by carrying out work difficult for Landcare groups to complete due to lack of resources or funds.
- BICA received funding for a wide range of projects including
- Weed control work e.g. removing Bridal Creeper on the escarpment
- Felling of the remaining pine trees.
- Planting of locally threatened flora species
- Dunnart Artificial Habitat
- Protecting rare and threatened plant species (small orchid plots)
- Local nest box survey

This Time-line of milestones has been compiled from a review of all old BICA Newsletters, various documents held by community members and the fading memories of Past Presidents. Special thanks go to Felicity Faris and to Dorothy Weigall for her untiring search through her boxes of files. Janet Mattiske

2015-2016 - President Neill Kamminga

• 2014 RECOGNITION OF THE BEND OF ISLANDS COMMUNITY

BICA was recognised by being awarded a Nillumbik Shire Sustainability Community Organisation Award 2014.



Mention was made of BICA's formation in the mid-sixties, of the valued biodiversity of the area, of the special zoning achieved to protect it, of members' tireless work in understanding and enhancing the quality of the bush, of the organisation, of the many social activities and the many practical conservation projects undertaken.

BICA is a great example of how a motivated and knowledgeable group of people can have a significant influence on environmental outcomes



Recollections

30 Years living in the Bend: Neil & Jennifer Taylor



As we walked through the oceans of orchids on our block today, listening to the bird songs we realised that we must be a couple of the luckiest of people living in Melbourne.

Thirty two years ago we bought our property in Henley Road, no house, no road, no power, no water, how hard could it be? In 1986 we received planning approval to commence construction. It has been quite a journey as anybody who has built their own house will know. Never daunted, we spent the next twenty years completing the task!

We opted for mud brick construction just like many of our neighbours. To us the feel and textures of a mud brick house imparts a comfortable living space which is complimented by the surrounding natural environment.

I have been retired now for about two years but I still remember travelling home after stressful days and awful traffic, the calming effect of just turning into our driveway had on me. Our property was like an oasis in a sea of madness.

Life here is never dull as there is always something to do, drain maintenance, never ending weeding and fire preparation.

On the surface all the weeding seems to be a distraction to the tranquillity but it can be rewarding in its own way. Especially when you finally see that something you have concentrated on for several years stops reappearing and orchids grow in abundance in its place.

When we walk around the property as we often do, we feel privileged to be here and looking down there is always something new flowering or sprouting, not to mention the myriad of bird life around.

This is the longest we have ever lived anywhere and becoming part of a supportive community has enabled us to know many people who are like minded and share the same passions as we do for the land.

All in all it has been a wonderful time here building our house and raising a family. It was truly a fortunate day when I walked past the estate agents window in Eltham and saw our property advertised.

Bonnys discover the Bend

When we discovered Bend of Islands we were searching for an escape from the suburban Montmorency quarter acre nightmare. The Environmental Living Zone was not officially 'Bend of Islands' then but it was a defined area shared between Kangaroo Ground and Christmas Hills and part of the Healesville Shire.



The area ticked all the boxes for us and a stand out feature the Zone provided was the potential to retain the values that we were seeking at the time and for the future.

We were welcomed and it was hard to resist the overtures from members of our new community to become involved in the Bend of Islands Conservation Association committee and thus started our years of active participation both having terms of being President, Secretary and on various sub-committees

While ongoing day to day preservation and protection of the environmental values of the Bend were, and still are, a priority challenge, we believed that the impacts from outside the area were also critical to the survival and quality of the Bend.

With this in mind we pursued Community Involvement and support from our fellow residents and on the broader scale, involvement, support and consultation from whatever arm of the bureaucracy or organisation that was appropriate. This included local councillors and officers, State Government and its many arms, infrastructure managers and private developers.

This has seen us through shire amalgamation and the creation of Nillumbik Shire along with a comprehensive restructure of the State Planning Scheme. We have had major developments such as the Heritage Golf complex adjacent to the Bend implemented and other challenges such as the persistent attempts to completely clear the high tension power line easement and quite a few unsuccessful inappropriate local development proposals.

At the moment we are seeing an interesting challenge within our Shire with the controversial C101 amendment. While not impacting on us directly it is disappointing to see some of our surrounding neighbours rejecting an environmental initiative. The battle continues!

To those who preceded us, thanks for what we inherited. To those that have followed, thanks for your ongoing efforts and enthusiasm.

Happy Fortieth Anniversary Bend of Islands.

Alan & Carol



Recollections

Henley Road moat over 40 years: Peter Gurney

She was a formidable mistress to those that used her. She would readily render useless any muffler, engine mounts or shockers without a second thought. Many a tyre fell prey to her ruthless, errant water channels, unforgiving mud and omnipresent dust. And homeward bound drivers were forced to vigilantly negotiate rocks, ridges and corrugations. But for the past 40 years Henley Road has offered her community sanctuary from the creeping noise, pollution and wayward tourists emerging from the growing population boom.

The 6.4 kilometre bitumen stretch today bears little resemblance to the original bumpy track that claimed many unsuspecting Holdens, Datsuns, Peugeotts (the arty types), VDubs and Fords that first populated the ELZ in the 1970s. A few locals sporting old Land Rovers and Toyota 4WDs fared somewhat better, but not forever.

Back then, two councils - Eltham to Oxley Bridge and Healesville - cited conflicting budgeting priorities for the poor road grading regime in its early days. Unsurprising the ill-attention heralded the pitiful sight of many a broken down car roadside or wayward drivers sliding off-road into a stump or tree. But for every breakdown, there were plenty of local volunteers eager to pull over and lend a helping hand. Solutions devised, advice given, parts and petrol leant, and towing provided. Severe breakdowns sparked a call to a tow truck but generally problems were resolved in-house. Tow ropes became tools of the trade for locals quick to return a vehicle home or - for the more serious casualties - to John Withers' garage in Research or Diamond Creek for repairs.

Curse her we did, but the ill-kempt road proved a blessing in disguise with drivers forced to drive slowly, meaning Henley Road suffered no fatal accidents apart from the odd kangaroo or two, or a jaywalking wombat. More importantly, the dire condition of the road served as a psychological barrier deterring all but the most determined from entering the Bend of Islands. A few hardy pioneers had made it their home before the 1970s but it was only after the likes of Neil Douglas, Tim Ealey and others who attracted publicity as environmental vanguards committed to preserving the area's environmental integrity that the environmentally aware began to settle the yet to be declared ELZ.

Over the decades the condition of Henley Road has gradually improved with Eltham Council first upgrading three sections over Oxley Bridge during the 80s before Healesville and Nillumbik Council extended from the bridge up to Upper Catani in the 90s. The final kilometre or so was completed in the late-1990s following extensive community consultation. I was part of a group who walked along from Brown House corner to Upper Catani with the Shire Engineer as Alan Bonny waxed lyrical every step of the way about the value of every shrub and each tree. The earbashing paid off with the road left in its original alignment and sealed rather than straightened and widened.

The poor state of Henley Road in the 70s and 80s had provided a 20-year buffer to full settlement of the Bend of Islands. By the 90s the Bend had become more attractive to people seeking an environmental lifestyle and provided time and space for the ELZ planning scheme to be established. The poor road condition deterred those with less 'green' motivation from purchasing in the area. Some who did either changed by osmosis or did not remain long. Simultaneously, both Eltham and Healesville Councils employed more environmentally-aware staff and councillors were elected who reflected the growing awareness



of environmental values. Similarly, State and Federal Governments' attitudes also adjusted to reflect changing community attitudes over the same period. The Bend of Islands is now lauded by Local and State governments as an example of what can be achieved through grass roots community action on environmental planning protection.

The now-fully sealed Henley Road no longer presents the barrier it once did but still poses some challenges compared with urban standards! With greater speed, more people and more cars (flash ones too) comes a few more road kills, especially poor wombats. But gone is the blinding road dust, wishbone shattering bumps and sediment run off leaving a pretty drive along a windy road through the bush and overlooking scenic paddocks. Along with the road improvements come council and other services (Garbo, recycling and green waste collection, school bus, emergency vehicles) which are helpful for residents. No doubt the road still dissuades some people from coming to the Bend but for those who love the place that's a boon!

Good on Henley Road - former moat of the Bend of Islands. Now it's up to us - Please drive slowly for the sake of the wildlife and others on the road.

Peter Gurney



Artwork provided by Syd and Ona Henderson



Recollections

Life of a Co-oper in the Bend: Neil Harvey



In 1971 I and a group of friends discovered the existence of the Co op in what was then called Christmas Hills South. The Co op had only just begun a few months before and it provided us with a solution to our search for a piece of native bush within commuting distance from the city. After discussions we learnt the Co op. although fully subscribed with 12 members that they were considering the option to buy a neighbouring property and increase the membership to 32. We applied and were accepted in Sept. 1971 and so began my connection to the Bend.

Our application for a planning permit to both the Shire of Healesville and the MMBW by the Co op was initially rejected as we were seen as a bunch of drop out hippies looking to subsist in the bush. It took quite a long process to convince some very conservative bureaucrats that we were serious and that we had a viable long term management plan.

The excellent work done by Tim Ealey, Ian Leach (Dec.), Randle Champion, Norm Parris and John Roberts was eventually successful and the Co op was on its way.

Over the years members of the Co op have been very active in supporting BICA and were a big part of the group that brought the original ELZ into existence. They were again called upon when the Shire boundaries were re aligned to facilitate the workings of the new SUZ2 planning scheme for our area.

The Co op is an integral part of the Bend and our members have served on The BICA Committee over many years. I have served as Treasurer and Chair and as just an active member. I have also acted as a fund raiser for the local CFA and at one stage was the Treasurer for BICA, the Secretary of the Co op, Auditor for the local Brigade and also for the Friends of the Brigade. It was once suggested I controlled all the money in the Bend.

Being involved with all these organisations over the last 40 or so years has been rewarding and educational. I've made many friends and still love the life I live in paradise. The thing I enjoy most of all is that the new people who have moved into the area are showing a passionate commitment to the Bend and the work done by the people who started the ball rolling 40 years ago.

The conserving of the Bend of Islands has been a constant aim of the majority of our residents for many years and I feel confident that it will continue long after the original members have gone.

Neil Harvey

THE NEIL DOUGLAS SANCTUARY

In December 2003 the Bend of Islands Community held a celebration commemorating the life and contribution to the area by Neil Douglas. At that event I had a discussion with our then State Member of Parliament Danielle Green about having a permanent memorial of some kind for "the father of the ELZ" and proposed the Melbourne Water land at Gongflers Peninsula as a reserve..

Danielle supported the concept and in State Parliament made a speech urging the Minister for Environment John Thwaites to provide the land for the reserve as part of the MW land resolution.

I contacted our local councillor Penny Mulliner who approached the Council for their support to help make my dream become a reality.

After months of meetings, letters and phone calls a compromise was reached and MW excised a portion of the Peninsula to sell leaving the majority as a reserve.

A community event was held in November 2005 when the Neil Douglas Conservation Reserve was proclaimed with a ceremonial ribbon cutting by John Thwaites, Danielle Green Doug Evans (Melbourne Water) and I.



To complete the Neil Douglas Conservation Reserve another celebration was held in October 2008. A memorial plaque was unveiled by the Member for Yan Yean Danielle Green, Mayor Warwick Leeson and I. A breakfast welcomed the crowd of 100 plus guests and residents and after the opening we retreated to the Fire Station for a gourmet morning tea.

**Carol Bonny: BICA
President 2001-2008**





Recollections

The Twentieth event 1996: Alan Bonny

On the Fortieth anniversary of our Environmental Living Zone it is appropriate to look back to our Twentieth anniversary celebrations. We aimed at a re-creation of the unveiling of the original sign at Oxley Bridge and we convinced Nillumbik Council to provide a new sign. The delivery of the new sign was dragging on and eventually we had to pick up the sign and install it ourselves on the morning of the event.

At 11 am the gathered crowd were called to order by Bruce Rogers on the didgeridoo.

As BICA President I welcomed dignitaries' guests and residents past and present and introduced the guest speakers.

Vasey Houghton who was Minister for Planning in the Hamer Government during the formation of the zone.

Robert McClellan Planning Minister of the Government of the day

Don Cordell the Chief Commissioner of the newly formed Nillumbik Shire.

.George Wright who supported the introduction of the ELZ at Healesville

We then unveiled the sign.

I mentioned Neil Douglas and other life members of BICA instrumental in the inspiration and implementation of the Environmental Living Zone before inviting all to move to the Fire Station for lunch.

The Fire Station was filled with displays relevant to the day and the gourmet BBQ lunch provided by CFA volunteers was complimented by delicious salads and desserts provided by the community.

A commemorative wine bottling with an Anniversary label was available on the day and in the afternoon guests were invited to join in various guided walks in the Bend.

I said on the day that "the ELZ was a proven formula that works. The results are here to see after twenty years and we will be here for another twenty years".

Time flies when you are having fun.

Alan Bonny - President 1996-1998



**COME AND CELEBRATE
Bend of Islands
Conservation Association**

ELZ 1976-2016





The Bend of Islands - A Residential Conservation Success?



The concept of Residential Conservation was novel when it was presented at the ACF Symposium in 1974 as a proposal for the area now known as the Bend of Islands. The case put by the proponents, with enthusiasm and determination, convinced the politicians and bureaucrats that it was a worthy experiment that should be supported.

40 years later it can be argued that it has been a resounding success on many counts: -

- The vibrant community spirit that draws the residents together at numerous social and 'nature-focused' events, not to mention the ubiquitous meetings!
- The successful development of robust planning provisions that now adequately support the residential conservation concept. This has been through many re-format exercises including a change of Shire.
- The on-going preservation of the high conservation values of a special piece of land despite, or perhaps because of, the occupation by 'nature-centric' residents who have accepted some minor lifestyle compromises to enhance the environmental qualities of their living area.
- The contributions made to the areas beyond the Bend of Islands such as: -
 - Being a role model for other communities in bush areas and other conservation focused groups both within the Shire and beyond.
 - Being an integral part of the Warrandyte – Kinglake Habitat corridor



The fundamental basis for all of this is the Environment of the Bol. After 40 years it's a good opportunity to reflect on this. Has the environmental integrity been maintained or improved? What are the successes? What are the failures?

The science of environmental management has been on a sharp learning curve over the last 40 years. We have tried to keep pace with these changes by utilizing expert advice and assistance. Two examples of this are the Weed Study of 1989 and the major environmental audit of 2012 to develop

the Bend of Islands Land Management Plan.

This LMP brings us up to date with the current conservation practices and is a major platform for our on-going management into the future. It enables us to prioritise issues so we can target our limited resources on the most pressing issues, thus giving us confidence that we are being as efficient as possible. It also provides a strong basis for making applications for grant funding for our projects and to finance

the use of professional consultants and contractors.

The LMP gives an accurate snapshot of the current status of the local environment and will facilitate future monitoring of changes, both positive and negative.

Since the launch of the LMP in 2014 many grants have been received for projects such as: -

- Protection and management of the rare and threatened orchids found in the area
- Planting of locally threatened high conservation species.
- Installation of many nest boxes to supplement the relatively low number of tree hollows in our 'young' forest (due to 1962 bushfire)
- Camera trapping throughout the area to gain a better insight into our nocturnal fauna
- Attempts to monitor or assist the occurrence of rare species such as the White-footed Dunnart.



That's not to say we were sitting on our hands for the years preceding the LMP. Our management activities included: -

- Eradication of the vast majority of pines that were planted in the area after the '62 fires or had self seeded from the pines planted when the Aqueduct was constructed much earlier.
- Preservation of the roadside vegetation, managing it ourselves in the early years until the Shire adopted better environmental standards. Also successfully negotiating with the power authorities to achieve novel ways to retain and maintain the vegetation under the roadside powerlines whilst ensuring adequate clearances for fire safety.
- Successful negotiation with Melbourne Water for
 - Improvement of the river environs with control of willows, blackberries and the regular maintenance control of other weed species
 - The regular maintenance control of targeted weed species along Stevenson Creek and Watsons Creek.
 - Environmental maintenance and improvement of the Aqueduct reserve and adjacent land on our northern boundary
- We have also had some success with Parks Victoria for environmental improvements to the reserve it manages on Watsons Creek adjacent to our western boundary.

Our knowledge and understanding of the area has also improved dramatically over the 40 years with: -

- A comprehensive and well documented Plant List that is linked to the State system



- A comprehensive and well documented Bird List with data based on our continuous survey that was commenced in 1989.
- The lists go on! We have Butterfly, Dragonfly and Cicada lists and are gradually starting to gather data on the myriad of invertebrates that call the Bend home. There have been several discoveries of exceptionally rare insects, a tribute to the high biodiversity of the area.



The Bend of Islands - A Residential Conservation Success?

We are fortunate to be in the Warrandyte-Kinglake Habitat Corridor. Our area provides a vital link in the chain, but we also benefit by having special species such as lyrebird, red-browed treecreeper and goanna in the area from time to time. These species are clearly venturing southward from Kinglake NP and their numbers should increase as the habit quality of the corridor, as a whole, improves.

Testament to the high habitat value of the area is the annual migration of the White-throated Night-jar from New Guinea each spring/summer to breed here. This cryptic species is seldom seen but we are gaining more knowledge of its activities each year by monitoring its calls and movements as best we can. We were lucky enough to document a breeding event in 2014 with detailed records of the successful raising of a chick.



- The area has many threats and management issues:-
- Deer are a relatively new but fast increasing threat that we cannot solve alone. We are currently monitoring sightings and evidence of effects, so we have some data for future cooperative control efforts in the region with the managers of both public and private land.
 - Rabbits are a long term, recurring pest that add to the grazing pressure.
 - Foxes and other feral animals take a toll on the wildlife, but this issue is complex. Without the pressure of prime predators the grazing pressure of some 'out of balance' native fauna is having a detrimental effect on our flora diversity.
 - Development in the areas adjacent to the Bol has the potential for detrimental impact on our environment. This poses an on-going threat that needs to be closely monitored

Overall, one would have to say that the Environmental living Zone has been a great success. As always there are some things we could have done better but we have certainly achieved a lot. With the LMP to guide us into the future, we are well placed to continue down the track (or up the hill?) of maintenance and improvement of the rich conservation values of the area, whilst reaping the benefits of living right in it.

Frank Pierce

Working with our shire

On Sunday 19th June, Council's Green Army joined with the Bend of Islands Conservation Association (BICA) at a working bee at Nillumbik's Catherine Oxley Reserve.

The reserve is home to a small population of orchids called Slender Pink Fingers (*Caladenia vulgaris*) which is located quite separately from other populations of it in Victoria.

The day was a great success with the group working together to thin out several patches of Burgan & plant out around two-hundred native grasses, herbs & shrubs.

This Green Army team are the first of four teams to work in the Shire over 2016/17. It is hoped with the second team coming on board at the end of this month that many more collaborations with local community groups can happen.





The BICA Art Event



What's in my Head?

Artists from the Bend chat about the creative process.

On Sept the 11th a group of people arrive at Tony & Robina Summers property to drive along a driveway scattered with large poppies, a Tim Read sculpture and handmade quilts etc, to arrive at the house where there was more art work including some of Emma Rose's portraits.

We all settled in with a glass of wine and nibbles and watched a video of Robina's community work. A discussion was then held about how art evolves from the artist's head — led by Tony with a short chat by Tim, Emma and Robina.

A truly beautiful and informative day.

A big thank you to these artists for their time and talent.

Jenny Taylor

What's in My Head?

Robina

The question people ask the most is where on earth did you get the idea for that? It doesn't matter whether I'm making an exhibition or competition art quilt, an art scarf or working on a community art installation, it's always the same question. The answer is, it's an embellishment on some visual memory.

I usually work to a theme for an exhibition whether it's my own, invitational or a competition. If it's a commission either private or public, the client always has a theme. I research the theme, mull it over for days or weeks and try very hard not to think about it all day or in the middle of the night.

The idea will come to the surface when I least expect it, in the shower, in the garden or even in the middle of watching TV. In the end all good ideas have some connection to a past emotional visual experience, even if it's just a page in a distant favourite childhood book, or a walk in a garden somewhere.....transfer that to hours of designing and redesigning on the computer and I'm on my way.

I am always so surprised in the end that with yarn and fabric, stitching, knitting and weaving, what I have actually is a 3D touchable representation of my drawing.

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Emma Rose

I trained as a painter and printmaker in the early 90's and later as a teacher and art therapist.

A move to the Bend of Islands four years ago has led to a resurgence in my creativity and the creation of a body of work that has moved from images inspired by the local landscape to the large, dark portraits that originally characterised my work.

Utilizing the play of light and dark to create strong contrasts, my prints are painterly, as my paintings involve some form of printmaking. I aim to capture the essence of my subject and create a lasting impression.

CAFE BENDERS

Come and join us for Coffee and Cake at Café Benders held every third Saturday, starting about 10.30 am at the South Fire Station, 6 Catani Bve, Bend of Islands.

All proceeds go to the Christmas Hills Fire Brigade





Robins in the Bend

Australia's red-breasted robins are not closely related to their namesake European birds. In The Bend, we have recorded eight robins. These are a mix of birds, some that are resident, some that are regular migrants, some, which are irregular visitors and some which appear to be extinct! And not all of them have red breasts! In fact most don't!

The males are often brightly coloured and confiding and so are easy to see and relatively easy to identify. The females however are usually small brownish birds and are one of the more challenging groups of Australian birds to identify. One of the best ways to tell robins apart is their song. (Look up the xeno-canto website for recordings of their calls.) Each of them has an individual and distinctive song as well as a "ticking" contact call.

The resident birds are both quite common and include:

Scarlet Robin (*Petroica boodang*): The males are Black and White above with a bright red breast and a prominent white forehead. The females often have a reddish wash to their breast. They are usually seen in pairs perching low in the open forest areas of The Bend, flying down to pick up food from the ground.



Scarlet Robin male (Bend of Islands) Scarlet Robin female (Bend of Islands)

Eastern Yellow Robin (*Eopsaltria australis*): These are robins of the gullies and closed forest areas of The Bend. The male and female are similar; blue-grey birds with yellow breasts. They have a habit of perching horizontally on vertical trees trunks. These birds have a variety of calls and are one of the first birds in the morning, or last birds at night, to sing. The early morning call is a loud, double chew-chew call.



Eastern Yellow Robin (Bend of Islands)

Visiting birds include:

Rose Robin (*Petroica rosea*): A winter visitor, this robin is normally high in the trees (rarely low down) chasing insects with thornbills in mixed flocks. The male has a rose-pink breast and grey head and back. The female is yet another small brown bird but does have white in the tail.

Pink Robin (*Petroica rodinogaster*): Also a winter visitor but not recorded nearly as often as the Rose Robin. Pink Robins are birds of denser forest and fern gullies but when they are in The Bend, they can be recorded in forest that is more open although usually close to the ground. The male is charcoal-grey above with a strong pink breast and little white. The female is a brown bird with a buff wing stripe and no white in its tail, a distinguishing feature.

Flame Robin (*Petroica phoenicea*): A moderately common winter visitor, the Flame Robin is often seen in flocks in open areas such as Yanakie. This is unlike other robins. They perch, upright, on thistles and fence posts close to the ground and fly down to pick up insects. Most birds seen are "Brown Birds" a mix of young males and females, but the males are grey above with a fiery orange-red breast.



Flame Robin male (Kingslake Nat. Park)



Red-capped Robin female (Bend of Islands)

Red-capped Robin (*Petroica goodenovii*): These are rare birds in The Bend, having only been recorded a couple of times. They are slightly smaller than other red-breasted robins and have a unique red cap. The female like all red robins, is a brownish bird but she does have a chestnut-red forehead.

The probably extinct birds include:

Jacky Winter (*Microeca fascinans*): This all grey robin, with the distinctive habit of swishing its tail in a figure-of-eight, used to be regularly seen in The Bend. It was last recorded on a nest about 20 years ago but has not been recorded since. Both male and female are greyish with prominent white sides to their tails. It has not been seen locally for years.

Hooded Robin (*Melanodryas cucullata*): The Hooded Robin has not been seen in the Yarra Valley since the sixties. The male is a black and white bird and the female is, yet again a brownish bird. The usually occur in pairs and feed with a perch and drop method.

The last two are both members of the thirty-eight species that are noted as threatened woodland birds of South-Eastern Australia. As has happened in our area, these birds are disappearing due to habitat fragmentation and an inability to withstand the pressures of increased human activity.

So if you keep an eye open there are plenty of different robins to look for in The Bend, female robins to key out and hone your birding skills and a couple of lost species that you could rediscover.

Gavin Masters (Photos by Mal Chicksen)



BIRD NOTES

The following can be reported since March 2016.

Lyrebird Records

One new record has been reported. Neill Kamminga saw 1 bird inside Gate 3 of Sugarloaf Dam on 2016-04-03

The details of all Lyrebird records reported since July 2000 can be found on the BICA Website.

Please pass on details of any 'encounters' you are lucky enough to have with these iconic birds. The records are valuable as they form concrete evidence that the Warrandyte-Kinglake Habitat Corridor is working and that Stevenson Creek is an important part of this link.

Bird Survey Highlights

In May a **Whistling Kite** and a **Crested Pigeon** were recorded on Henley Rd Extension.

In June, a **Pelican** flew over the Co-op and a **Weebill** was seen. This is the 1st record of this species since 2009.



3 **Brown Goshawks** were seen in display flight over Yanakie in September.

Other Interesting Observations

The **Square-tailed Kite** has become an irregular visitor near the River at Gongflers Drive. On 30/5 Mal Chicksen finally obtained photographic proof for the skeptics.



White-throated Nightjars have arrived back. They have been advertising their presence with calls heard on the Co-op on 1/10 and 3/10. Fingers crossed for a successful breeding season this year.

A female **Red-capped Robin** was photographed on the Aqueduct on 1/4/16. This is the 1st known record near the Co-op and the 3rd for the Bol. One was seen on Gongflers Drive in 1981 and another at Michael Skewes house in 1998.



The **Birds Section of the BICA Website** has lots of information about the birds of our area, as well as an up to date summary of our on-going bird survey to the end of 2015.

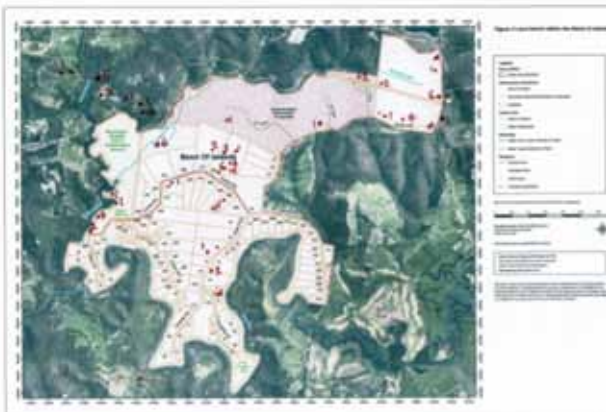
Could you please record the details of any unusual sightings you make and pass them on to Frank Pierce, (97120237), or email – jmandfp@bigpond.com - especially Lyrebirds.

All are welcome on the bird survey walks on the 2nd Sunday of each month. See the BICA Calendar for start times; we meet at the top corner of Henley and Catani.

Frank Pierce

DEER IN THE BEND

Since the last newsletter we have been receiving many reports of deer sightings in the Bend of Islands area. We have begun to map hot spots and will soon go to the next stage of setting up some cameras to monitor movements in these hot spots.



We have now compiled over 75 sightings since April and they should be increasing now especially as the deer are becoming very active. The disappointing thing is although we hear a lot of anecdotal evidence of sightings whenever deer are mentioned the reports have generally only come in from around ten people.

We have noticed on our property clearly defined deer tracks now the ground is damp where the deer transit of an evening. We have also noticed the young Cherries are struggling to survive under constant browsing by deer as they continually strip any new foliage from the bushes, probably their only chance to grow is some elaborate deer proof fencing until they can withstand these attacks.



This month we have made a submission to the Invasive Animals Inquiry to which Nillumbik Council have also made a submission. Although the enquiry focuses on a range of Invasive Feral animals its main focus is turning towards the increasing threat of an exploding deer population in Victoria. It is now in the hands of the government for any future actions?

Neil Taylor September 2016



RECENT RARE INSECT RECORDS IN THE BEND



Frank Pierce photo'ed this **Crane Fly** *Sigmatomera victoriae* on 13/6/16 and posted it on Bowerbird. It turned out to be a very significant record – the 1st record since the species was named in 1924 – See <http://www.bowerbird.org.au/observations/65770> for the full story.



Megalomima berthoides

Mallada basalis

These are 2 of the 10 species of **Lacewing** that Frank Pierce photo'ed on his windows in March and April '16. The experts think that these particular two species have never been photographed live before.



Frank Pierce found the **Mantis Lacewing** on the left, a female *Calomantispa venusta*, on 24/9/16 on the Co-op. He posted it on Bowerbird. It turned out to be a significant record – thought to be the 4th Victorian record. – See <http://www.bowerbird.org.au/observations/71408> for more photos of the beast and its larval skin from which it had just emerged.

Gavin Masters found the **Mantis Lacewing** on the right on his front door on the morning of 21/9/16. This has now been sent to the experts and is a Male *Calomantispa venusta*. (So Gavin's is now the 4th for Vic and Frank's is the 5th)

These records of super-rare insects are a testament to the great Biodiversity in the Bend.

RECENT SIGHTINGS



Echidna
Dorothy Weigall 12-09-16



Brown Tree Frog

To ID any frog found in the Bend see https://frogs.org.au/frogs/ofVic/Yarra_and_Dandenongs



BICA MATTERS

BICA GENERAL MEETING June 2016



On 26 June, Neil and Jenny Taylor kindly hosted the 2016 General Meeting, which was attended by approximately 20 members

As well as general committee business and a discussion about the contentious Nillumbik planning scheme amendments, members were updated on Community Involvement activities, deer activity and reporting, Environment Advisory Committee happenings, and the Nillumbik Conservation Corridors project which is nearing completion.

Following the meeting there was a very informative and engaging talk from Lauren Fraser, Port Phillip and Westport Conservation Officer. Lauren spoke about Trust for Nature, a not-for-profit organization which uses perpetual conservation covenants to protect native plants and wildlife on private land. Interested residents can find more information at:

<http://www.trustfornature.org.au/>

The afternoon finished with a nice spread of food, wine and a good "catch-up."

Felicity Rose

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

When asked the people in this community are amazing. In the last few months we have had:

- Two Fire House Cinemas ably organised by Neil Harvey.
- The Big Walk led by Peter Mildenhall.
- Graham Peterson took us out on a Flora Walk in June on the subject of Heath.
- A fun Trivia Night was held at the home of Joyce and Neil Harvey... questions by Alan Bonny
- A BICA general meeting held at the Taylors on the 26th of June. An opportunity when people not only come to find out what BICA is doing but also to have a say, plus we enjoyed some yummy food and wine. There was a great speaker, Lauren Fraser who spoke about the Trust for Nature.
- September saw the BICA Art Event held at the Summers' house where Robina Summers, Tim Read and Emma Rose displayed their work and chatted about being creative.

A big thank you to all these people who give up a lot of their time and have a lot of expertise for all of us to tap into.

Jenny Taylor

CONTACT BICA:

Secretary BICA Committee: bicacomm@gmail.com

BICA Website: <https://bendofislands.wordpress.com/>

2016 BICA CALENDAR

- We will also be celebrating our BICA 40th Birthday on the 22nd of October.
- You can then walk the celebrations off on the 23rd by joining in on the Pub Walk.
- At end the year there will be the Night Event on the 19th of November.
- And let's not forget the BICA, AGM on the 27th of November. The guest speaker will be Meg Cullen who will inform us about Dunnarts.
- Then to top all this off come along to our Cafe Benders Christmas evening on the 17th of December.




BICA MATTERS

LANDCARE

1. In April 10 people attended and we split into two groups and weeded the slopes downhill from properties, 57, 75 & 97 Catani Blvd. We removed a large quantity of: Bridal Creeper, Iris and a couple of Pittosporum and some Privet.
2. In May we were away and do not know what was undertaken.
3. June was the planting event at Catherine Oxley Reserve.
4. July saw 9 people attend and dig out Freesias and also sprayed some Oxalis along the road reserve west of the corner of Henley and Catani roads.
5. The August Landcare was called off as only 4 people turned up before the rain began to get heavier.
6. The September event saw 5 people, again attacking the Freesias along the roadside reserve in Henley Road, east of Catani Bve., and into the adjoining property. Many more are flowering now and need to be removed from this area. They will probably spread further without a major assault on this problem.

Neil Taylor



WELCOME TO THE BEND

Welcome to NEW BICA MEMBERS, we hope you enjoy participating in our community.

Jesse Little Doring

Katy Hood, Peter Allen, Jacob and Isaac (family)

Thank you to all who have contributed to this Newsletter

Keep sending in your articles and photos of the Bend of Islands to: jmandfp@bigpond.com

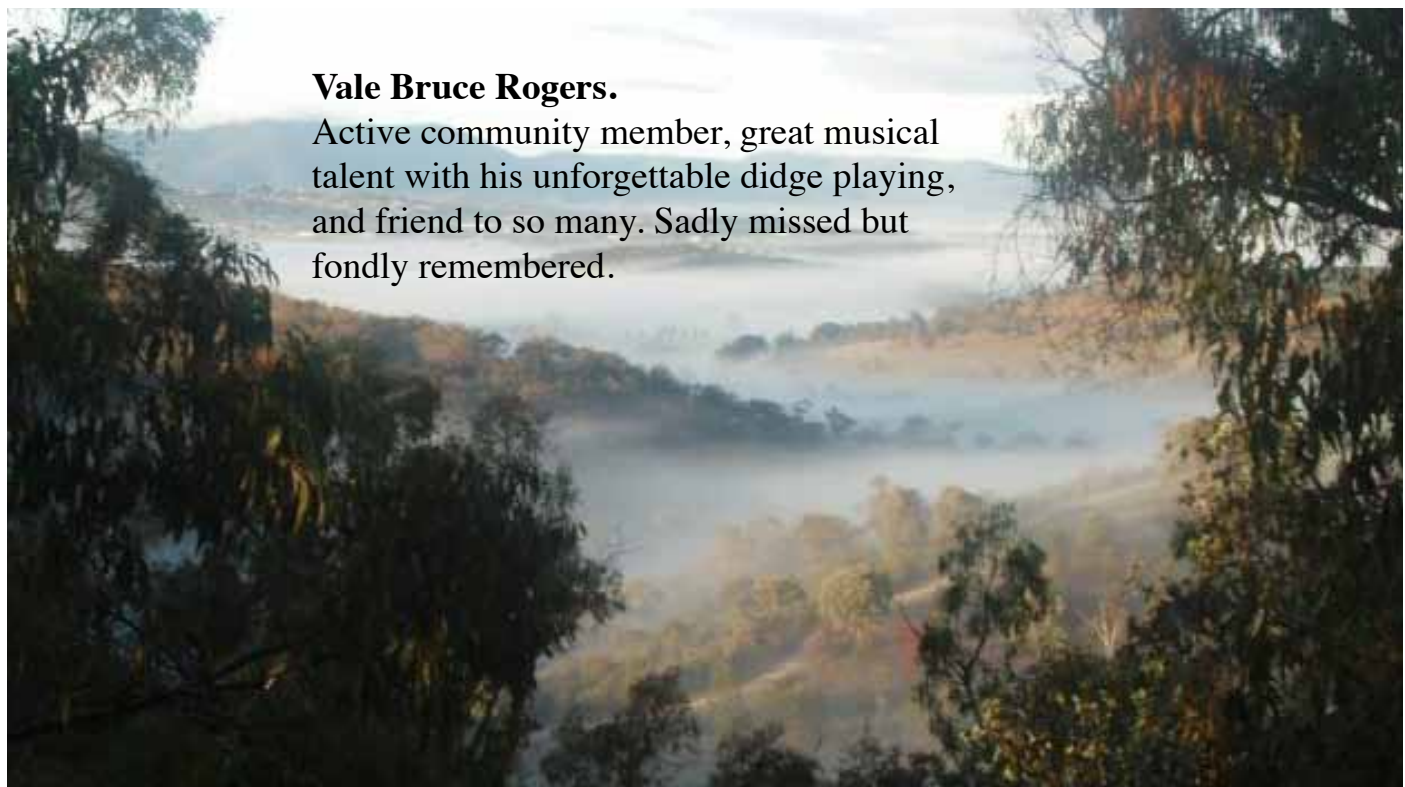
Editor: Janet Mattiske

Design and Layout; Greg Phillips

RENEW YOUR BICA MEMBERSHIP

Contact Leanne: wierzbowski@hotmail.com

DON'T FORGET THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION SATURDAY OCTOBER 22nd 4-6PM AT THE FIRE SHED



Vale Bruce Rogers.

Active community member, great musical talent with his unforgettable didge playing, and friend to so many. Sadly missed but fondly remembered.