

# BEND OF ISLANDS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION INC NEWSLETTER

Secretary: Gavin Masters 9712 0462, C/- PO Kangaroo Ground, Vic 3097 Editor: John McCallum 9712 0319

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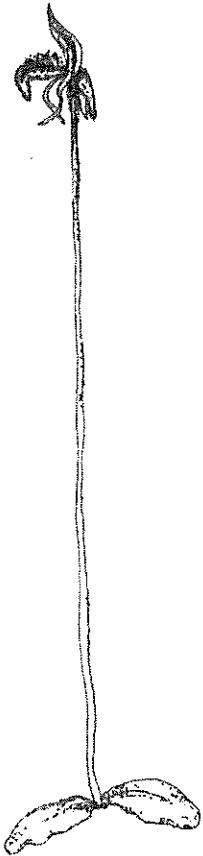
## WHAT LOCAL PLANT IS FLOWERING?

Botanical name: *Chiloglottis reflexa*

Common name: Autumn Wasp-orchid

Family: Orchidaceae

Flowering Period: March to August



A small terrestrial orchid, 8 - 15 cm tall, with a single terminal flower and a pair of basal leaves, flat on the ground.

The leaves are dark green, broad oblong & deeply veined, stem clasping, to 60 mm long and with wavy edges.

The small solitary flower is green with claret markings or wholly prune colour, up to 30 mm long and 15 mm across, on a single straight pinkish stem. The floral segments, made up of the sepal and petals, are up to 20 mm long. Lateral petals are bent backwards and the narrow sepals are reflexed against the ovary. The dorsal sepal is at the back of the flower, erect and curved over the column. The tongue or labellum is diamond shaped, velvety, dark red or purple in colour, 12 - 15 mm long and 2 - 3 cm wide with raised calli (lumps) on the centre of the lip. Its overall structure mimics an insect. The flower is pollinated by the male thynnid wasp as it attempts to mate with the insect-resembling lip.

Flowering does not happen every year and may be sparse in some seasons and prolific in others.

The species prefers a sheltered position and spreads vegetatively by increasing the underground tuberoles at the end of the roots to form colonies.

CRIC HENRY

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## ARE YOU FINANCIAL?

BICA is our community organization and it needs your support and involvement. If you have not renewed your membership you can do it on-line

### SUBSCRIPTION:

Single:	\$20.00
Family:	\$30.00
Concession:	\$10.00

For EFT the BICA account details are:

Commonwealth Bank Account at BSB: 063 210 Account number: 1008 8648. Please indicate it is for "BICA subs" and also a separate email to our treasurer (nharvey@bi-wize.com) will ensure that your payment is credited.

## ADOPT A STREAM

### Phillip Wiersbowski

The Adopt-a-Stream Grants Program is a 2006 election commitment made by the Government. It is a program that allows local community and interest groups to apply for dollar-for-dollar funding grants to conduct habitat improvement works on their local stream to benefit recreational fishing.

It has been set up as a separate program to the Recreational Fishing Grants Program to focus work on habitat improvements and will run until June 2011. This grants program is a "hands-on" way for local residents and interest groups to get involved in improving the habitat of a local stream for the purposes of enhancing recreational fishing and have fun at the same time.

Under this program you could implement a small project like a one-off clean up day, or a stream celebration, or a larger project like pest plant removal, native re-vegetation or re-snagging (*to provide more habitat: ed*).

Adopting a stream is a great chance for community groups such as angling clubs, civic groups, churches, schools and youth groups to get involved in protecting Victorian waterways, learning more about the natural environment and Victoria's precious waterways, and enhancing recreational fish habitat

More information can be found on the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) website. Follow these links.

DSE Home > Research > Arthur Rylah Institute (biodiversity and conservation) > Research Themes > Riverine Ecology.



## BIRD NOTES

### Frank Pierce

The following can be reported since May 2009.

Lyrebirds- The table shows records have been reported since the 2/09 fires.

I anticipated an increase in Lyrebirds after the fires devastated Kinglake NP, but there have been very few records reported. Perhaps the population pressure, that was apparently pushing the birds south before the fire, has been reduced to an extent that it outweighs the temporary loss of habitat in the fire area.

The number of reported observations in the ELZ per year starting on 7-Feb is:

'00 – 5; '01 – 5; '02 – 1; '03 – 8; '04 – 22; '05 – 59; '06 – 15; '07 – 13; '08 – 21; 09 – 6.

Please pass on details of any 'encounters' you are lucky enough to have with these iconic birds. These are all valuable records.

#### Highlights on the Birdwalks

On the August Birdwalk Flame Robins were seen at Yanakie. This is the first record of this species in the ELZ for over 25 years.

On the October Birdwalk a pair of Powerful Owls was observed roosting with a single, recently fledged young at the Duggo Reserve on Gongflers Peninsula. One of the adults was holding a dead Magpie in its talons.

On the December Birdwalk a Scarlet Honeyeater was observed near the 'Crake Dam' on Stevensons Creek, north of the Coop. (Rosemary West had seen one a few days previously at her place.) This is the first known record of this spe-

cies in the ELZ. It has been seen in the same area each month from December till April. (There has been an influx of many Scarlet Honeyeaters into the Melbourne Area this year, an event that has happened only very occasionally in the past)

White Winged Trillers were also seen on the December (Stevenson Creek) and January (Yanakie) Birdwalks. They were first recorded in the ELZ by the River on Gongflers Peninsula, early on 4/11/08.

On the March Birdwalk a pair of Powerful Owls was observed roosting together near Watsons Creek, downstream of the bridge.

On the April Birdwalk there were two sightings of single Powerful Owls on Stevenson Creek. Scarlet Honeyeaters were also seen.

Other Interesting Observations reported include the following.

The pair of Peregrine Falcons that nested in the old Wedge-tailed Eagle's nest by the river at the base of the escarpment at Marie and Wolfgang Krause's in 2008, repeated their performance in 2009; raising another 3 chicks.

On 28/01/10 a Little Eagle was observed flying high over C Track on the Coop. A photo was taken and this is the first confirmed sighting of this species in the ELZ.

Spotted Pardalotes nested in a hole in a sleeper in the wall outside our study window, where we could easily watch the frequent comings and goings of the adults and hear the squawking of the chicks on the nest. We were fascinated to watch the comical antics of three nervous chicks as they fledged on 3/02/10.

We were confused when the adults kept returning to the nest a day or so later. Finally it became obvious that they were

'double-brooding'. The 2nd lot of chicks fledged sometime over Easter, while we were away.

Australian Owllet-nightjars nested in a blocked flue at Parris's on B Track on the Coop. 3 eggs were brooded but only 2 chicks were raised. These fledged on 8/03/10. This event provided the opportunity for a progressive photo record to be taken. See the report on the BICA website.

Could you please record the details of any unusual sightings you make, especially Lyrebirds, and pass them on to Frank Pierce, (9712 0237), or email – fpandjm@netspace.net.au - .

All are welcome to join us on the bird walks on the second Sunday of each month. Times are as per the BICA Calendar.

## ENVIRONMENT NEWS

As many readers will be aware a sub committee of BICA meets reasonably regularly to promote broad 'environmental' issues in the Bend, especially in terms of solar technology and other associated ideas: Some forth coming events:

#### Megawat BBQ

Saturday May 1, 1.00pm at John and Glennie's place on A track, for those who have installed solar power generators, solar hot water, passive space heating and/or who are interested in pursuing sustainable technologies. Come and compare your bills!!! Further details via community email later.

#### Sunday June 6: World Environment Day Tour

Similar to last year with a local tour of residences with a focus on new solar hot water technology, 'green' audits and sustainable technology...keep an eye out for details later and put the date in your diary!

#### Green Audits

We have had a couple of 'enhanced' green audits completed by an experienced person familiar with mud brick and similar housing and these audits will be discussed further on the tour day. If a number of households take up these enhanced audits, then common issues across the Bend may arise and we can look at ways to address these.

Please feel free to contact members of the group for further details and/or discuss ideas or directions: Rudi Pauli (chair), Ross and Cric Henry, John Roberts, Liz and Peter Mildenhall, Art Curl, Jess Rae, Tom Fisher.

15 Feb 09	Gavin Masters	9am one bird heard, gully north of Crake Dam on BICA bird walk
23 Mar 09	Jenny Taylor	7am one bird heard near house
26 Oct 09	Frank Pierce	Heard north east of C Track at Stevenson Creek
14 Nov 09	Frank Pierce	Heard north east of C Track at Stevenson Creek
18 Nov 09	Neill Kamminga	Heard west of house at end of C Track
14 Jan 10	Neill Kamminga	Heard north of house at end of C Track
26 Mar 10	Neill Kamminga	Heard near house at end of C Track

LYREBIRD SIGHTINGS  
2009 – 2010

## RABBITS AND THEIR CONTROL.

### Gavin Masters

Under the Victorian Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act, rabbits are listed as a "Key Threatening Process"! They do this by selectively grazing plants they find palatable as well as through digging causing erosion. They provide fertile cultivated areas where weeds are favoured and spread.

In the Bend of Islands, over-grazing is a major inhibitor of plant recruitment which is leading to a simplification of our environment. While it is a much slower process than other effects, it will ultimately degrade the area and cause local extinctions.

Within 18 months a single pair of rabbits can grow to 180 individuals. They generally start the main breeding when the first rain comes at the end of Autumn as well as in the Spring but as this year has been wetter than average, breeding has been noted right through the Summer.

With this in mind a small group from the Bend headed off to the recent workshop run by Nillumbik Council to learn about their behaviour and to get some ideas on how we can manage if not eliminate rabbits in our area.

Harbour is critical for rabbits to live and breed under. In our context places to remember include under your house and decking as well as sheds. Weeds such as blackberries are also a popular place. And don't forget under your wood pile. Strategically placed nets can be used to capture the rabbits as they are habitual in their behaviour. Baited cage traps can also be used to live capture them around the house. Traps with one-way doors may be suitable where animals are entering and exiting from under buildings.

Park's staff are in the process of controlling rabbits on their land using bait stations. Here the rabbits are free fed with carrots for a number of nights. When they are used to feeding here and the rate of uptake has been determined, poisoned carrots are used. Strategic timing of baits and free feeding increases the effectiveness and minimises the amount of poison required. Warrens can then be manually destroyed with a mattock to increase the period of time it takes them to re-establish.

If you have any areas of particularly important vegetation, exclusion fencing is always an option.

Management is a long slow process. So.....

1. Monitor your property to determine where the rabbits are feeding and living.
2. Plan your actions to initially reduce numbers but to then control them at a low level.
3. Time your control to have best effect.
4. Monitor your property to measure effectiveness.

A community approach to control is needed. Rabbits don't stay on one property so working together is needed to achieve lasting results. If anyone is interested in volunteering to become an area Rabbit Action Group Coordinator, Dunmoochin has a model that we could consider implementing.

There are no quick fixes and a single method alone will not be successful.

It would appear that myxomatosis is currently having an increase in virulence with a number of people reporting affected animals over the last few weeks. Keep an eye out for sickly rabbits above ground through the day, to see if any are affected. Watch to see if this has any positive impact on plant growth in your immediate area. Myxomatosis alone, however, can not be relied on to control rabbits.

Under the law you have a legal responsibility to control rabbits on your property (Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994).

Council can supply detailed information on specific control methods. You can also receive funding support for any of these methods from local and State government bodies.

### ANOTHER VIEW!

A new aerial view website, similar to Google Earth has come on line recently. It is NearMap and the URL is <http://www.nearmap.com>

The site covers main areas of population in Australia and very clear images are available for various dates. No doubt very useful for planning authorities and others!

High-resolution cover is limited to capital and other larger cities but is increasing all the time. At the moment, in our area, it cuts out at about C track on the Co-op. If your place is not covered, look again in a few weeks. The row of broad bean plants in the McCallum vegie patch is clearly visible in the image for 13 Nov 2009!

On the NearMap welcome page, select Personal Use and proceed from there by typing something appropriate in the "Find:" box. A street name or "Bend of Islands" works fine. The full affect of the clearing under the high voltage transmission lines is very clear using NearMap.

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## ACTIVATE YOUR ART AUCTION FUNDRAISER

*Information printed as supplied by Cam Di Marco*

The Friends of the Earth Anti-nuclear and Clean Energy (ACE) campaign are seeking donations for our annual Activate Your Art Auction Fundraiser.

We are seeking donations of quality artwork across all art forms to be auctioned as a joint fundraiser for the ACE campaign and for the Aboriginal-led Australian Nuclear Free Alliance (ANFA).

ANFA brings together Aboriginal people living with, or threatened by, nuclear projects and uranium mining on their Country together with representatives from environment and public health organisations.

This alliance is critical in facilitating a co-ordinated and cohesive response to the environmental, social and racial issues attached to the nuclear industry.

Donated artworks may be across all mediums and forms. Diversity is welcome. Artworks will need to be donated by June 1st. Please contact Camilo on the numbers below to organise pick up/delivery of artworks.

The auction will take place on the 15th of June and will be held at the Hogan Gallery, 310 Smith Street in Melbourne.

For more information regarding this event please contact: Camilo - [dreamco@wildmail.com](mailto:dreamco@wildmail.com) - 0418333075 or 97120776

For further information about the ongoing campaign visit: [www.foe.org.au](http://www.foe.org.au) and [www.anfa.org.au](http://www.anfa.org.au)

## ROCKY ROAD TO FIRE-SMART LANDSCAPING

Robyn Adams

*Robyn is a long-time member of the Christmas Hills Fire Brigade and is a consulting botanist. She currently serves as the brigade Communications Officer*

Over recent months, Christmas Hills Fire Brigade members have been doing some pretty “hard” landscaping around the north Station in Ridge Road. We have been replacing the pine bark mulch, originally laid over the garden beds and which needs replacing anyway, with chunky rock mulch. The landscaping is part of a Brigade project to develop a “fire-smart” garden around the Fire Station which will act as a “demonstration garden” and offer an attractive landscaping alternative for residents in rural areas, and especially in residential bushland areas like the Bend of Islands. The next stage of the project is to re-plant the garden beds, and supplement the boundary plantings, with local indigenous plants. The original garden beds were planted out in 2008 (by CFA employed landscapers) with mainly local species, but they used a very limited suite of species, and many were not appropriate for the soils at the site. Consequently, a number died over the severe summer of 2008-2009. The Brigade now intends to source suitable species and plant them at a density that is compliant with the guidelines for household “defendable space” – essentially clumped, with enough space between them that they will not easily propagate a bushfire, and far enough from the structure so that if they burn, radiant heat and flame contact will not threaten the structure.

Once the gardens are planted and established, the final stage will be the design and erection of suitable signage, explaining the concepts of “defendable space” and “fire-smart landscaping”, and demonstrating that it is possible to successfully use local native species in residential gardens in bushfire prone areas. In addition, by using a more appropriate suite of species, and mulching with rock, it should be possible for the gardens to survive on rainfall only.

So far, the Station landscaping has had a pretty positive response, and we are hoping that it will generate discussion and ideas about smart ways to live close to the bush we love, while being as fire-ready and fire-wise as possible.



*Several fire brigade members showing their best aspects as they happily spread the rock mulch. The work was made much easier by Peter who carried scoop loads of rock to strategic spots. Rake-hoes and bare hands did the rest.*

## BRIGADE FUND RAISERS

The Bend of Island is served by the Christmas Hills Fire Brigade. The main fund-raising for the Brigade is in the hands of the Friends of the Brigade; they organise the two monthly fund-raising and social events, Café Benders and Chills Lounge.

Café Benders is a coffee and cake morning in the South (Catani Boulevard) station on the third Saturday of every month except January. 10.00 AM until midday. Come along and enjoy a chat and morning tea. Catch up with what’s happening and help the Brigade.

Chills Lounge is an evening affair, 5.30 PM onwards at the Main (Ridge Road) station on the first Friday of the month. Enjoy a barbecue and a chat around the fire. BYO drink and some nibbles to share. Sausages, veggie burgers etc for sale.

## OXFAM TRAILWALKER BASH

Over 150 people, family friends and 'Benders', rocked the South Fire shed on a balmy Saturday night to some great band music, wonderful *a cappella* singing, a frantic auction and a beautiful BBQ! All this to raise funds for OXFAM's work and to support two Trailwalker teams: Team 236 - Backbenders Cric and Ross Henry and Peter and Liz Mildenhall and Team 750 - Pitter Patter: Kate Mildenhall, Adam Burns Lorinda McPherson, Bonnie Butterworth and Maree Payne. Over \$7000 was raised on the night. We'd like to thank you all.

A BIG thankyou to all the donors who contributed to the auction items and raffle prizes especially those who created with their own hands and/or will deliver through their own labour: Mia Stephens & Michael Skewes for pottery pieces, Tarquin & Dan: Arcadia Jewellery, Jim Stewart -home brewed beer, Veronica Holland for her original painting, Amy Skipper: A &S at the Glasshouse at Montsalvat for the Caravaggio & fashion consultation, The Cloth Shop, Heidelberg Rd, Ivanhoe for donating material, Sue Thomas: A &S at the Glasshouse at Montsalvat for cushions, Jude Butterworth for rug and scarves, Alex di Palma for lanyards & keyrings, Tobey Henry - bag & coin purse and Healesville Sanctuary Pass, Geoff Osler for gourmet meal voucher, Peter & Jane Russ: Retravision Kew for a host of goodies, Tserin for trailer load of red gum, Rudi Pauli for his 'Rudi Rub' massage, Gav Masters & Mal Chicksen for weeding labour, Danielle Green MLA-Yan Yean & Ken King: Kings of Kangaroo Ground for wine, Colin Devenish for a massage, Watsons Creek Café, Bill & Ghada: KG Store, Viki & Mick: Research Green Grocery & Shire Of Nillumbik: Edendale Farm for their vouchers, Tom Fisher for meditation classes, Neil Harvey for vintage wine and his print, Jo & Dylan for their environmental scan, Rob Boschmer: of Specialist Termite Control for his voucher, Greg & Janet Phillips for guitar cases, music books & CDs, Melissa Brooks: Calma Therapies Macleod for massage voucher, Jo Hayter for the Vietnamese tablecloth, Caroline & Pierre for the French meal and conversation, Kate Mildenhall for the State Library tour, Andrea Bishop (A B) for the garden consultation and Gardening Australia goodies, Norma Serrano for sandals, Daryl & Caroline Claravino for

the holiday house at Anglesea, Noel Renouf for vintage wine, Barb Gregory for her felt bag, Jeff & Mandy Walters, The AEU, Tess Lethborg, Helen Burns, Yarra Coffee & Co, Lilydale for their contributions to the raffle hamper. Christmas Hills Fire Brigade for the loan of the fire shed.

Special thanks for our great entertainment on the night: The Geezers and Jimmy James & the Volcanos for wonderful dance music and our local *a cappella* group for their accomplished choir singing that started the night on such a high note!

The setting up of the Fire Shed and packing up couldn't have happened without the great support of Wolfgang Krauss for all the infrastructure help,

Alan Bluhm for the lighting, John Roberts, Glennie Bibra, Maree Krauss, Peter Rae and Pierre for their labour and support; Tobey and James and Jo Henry, Aeshna & Meika & Charlie & Asha for the fantastic decorations, Alan & Carol Bonny for the braziers, Rin and Helen Burns Trent McPherson, Liz Armstrong and Phoebe Smith for all their help on the BBQ! And an enormous thankyou to Neil Harvey who did such a wonderful job of auctioning off the many donations we had and extracting the most out of the audience!

A Big THANKYOU to the many members of the local community who turned up and supported the two teams and the OXFAM cause...your generosity and support is very much appreciated.

The 100km walk in 48 hours from Jells Park in Waverley, over the Dandenongs and out to Wesburn happens in mid-April and we hope to complete the walk all intact!

### THE BACKBENDERS & THE PITTER PATTERS

#### Late News!

The Backbenders made it without incident in a cracking time of two hours shorter than last year's effort. Well done! What about some of our younger people taking up this challenge in future years!

## NEW BENDER

Ned joins Sue, Rudi and Jarrah in Gongflers Drive!

## PROPERTY CHANGES

### Liz Mildenhall

Thank you to Carol Bonny for taking over for me; I'm still learning the ropes but back on the job. Because of recent changes in property ownership in the Bend we'd like to welcome some new residents and congratulate some old residents on their new homes:

·Gabbie and David Hatty, and new baby Oscar, Henley Rd

Lauren Burns and Nathan Muller, Catani Bvd

Meg and Ross, Jake, Nicole and Shannon Prickett, Catani Bvd

Jo Walker, Henley Rd

·Melanie Keely and Kirk Anderson, Co-op

There are a number of properties still for sale. Feel free to contact me for information regarding buying, selling or renting in the Bend.

Contact me on 97120577 or mildenhall2@bigpond.com

## FLORENTINES

### Barb Whiter

Barb and Alan brought a plate of these to the March Café Benders and got lots of great feedback – and took home an empty plate. Several people said "Send the recipe to John Mac for the newsletter!"

Janet and Barb had a bit of a think about how to make this an environmental article – ahhh, we thought – food miles!

Buy your sultanas from grapes grown in the Yarra Valley; great chocolate is made near Healesville; cherries and peanuts – hmmm ... not sure, but at least they are both grown in Australia – Young in NSW and Kingaroy in Queensland; cornflakes – well, we were sure you could grow your own corn and harvest it and bake it and flake it ... yeah, buy already prepared cornflakes! The tin of condensed milk is dodgy – for all sorts of reasons – including health and the best known brand having a boycott being called against them on the following website - but you can't make my Florentines without it!

For heaps of great consumer information visit [www.ethical.org.au](http://www.ethical.org.au).

Makes 16

### Ingredients

- 1 ¼ cups sultanas
- 1 ¼ cups peanuts (I used 180g dry roasted, unsalted packet)
- 3 cups cornflakes, lightly crushed
- 1 cup chopped glacé cherries (nearly all a 200g packet)
- 1 tin condensed milk
- 200 g chocolate (Cadbury's dark cooking choc is good!)

### Method

1. Combine all ingredients - except the chocolate - in a large bowl.
2. Line baking trays with baking paper.
3. Drop mixture in small heaps onto trays - allowing for some spread.
4. Bake in a moderately slow oven 150-160degC (300-325degF) for 15-20 minutes.
5. Allow to cool before lifting off trays.
6. Meanwhile, chop the chocolate and melt over a saucepan of hot water.
7. Spread melted chocolate over base of biscuit.
8. Refrigerate to set chocolate before serving.

### Notes

- Line trays with baking paper - not foil - otherwise biscuits will be hard to remove.
- Florentines will keep for two weeks in an airtight container - if they last that long!
- The quantity above will make 16 'chunky' Florentines; make them smaller to get 20.
- If you like thick chocolate bases you will need to buy around 250g of dark choc.

*I think that this is the first time we have had a recipe in a BICA Newsletter! For more information on food miles check the internet (just search "food miles" in Google). As Barb says, it seems that the concept is not as straight forward as has been represented. Nevertheless it is nice to eat produce that is fresh and locally produced. Ed.*

## A KOALA IN THE WOODSHED

Michael Scroggie and Deirdre Lucas

In early February, we had an unexpected guest occupying our woodshed- a very cute and placid young koala. For nearly two weeks, he (we think) arrived each morning to pass the day dozing in the shed, before ambling off at sunset to spend the night in a nearby tree.

The koala was unperturbed by our visits to the shed, and on occasion would waken from his beauty sleep to accept a snack of eucalyptus leaves, delivered by his attentive hosts. The old myth that koalas don't drink water was well and truly proven wrong, as water was enthusiastically guzzled, often straight from the spout of the watering can!

Apparently growing bored with his corrugated surrounds, he wandered off one day and we've not seen him since. Hopefully he'll come to visit again soon. A quick check of DSE's wildlife database (a privilege of Michael's job) found a few previous official records of koalas from the Bend of Islands. We'd be interested to hear if anyone else has had one as a guest recently.

*Right: Deirdre's and Michael's guest taking it easy in the tank that serves as their wood shed*



## BICA NEWSLETTER

BICA Newsletter always needs articles on life in the ELZ. Tell us about your experiences and what is going on in the bush around your place. Preferred format for articles is MS Word. Type should be unformatted. Photographs can be incorporated but to get an acceptable standard of reproduction with the printing methods we use we need to get original (not cropped or otherwise modified) pictures in the highest resolution possible.

## BICA WEBSITE

The BICA Newsletter is available on-line from the website <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~bica>

Some past issues are available and the missing ones will be uploaded as soon as we can. Over the next couple of months look out for changes in the website, especially in the Flora and Fauna sections. Suggestions and contributions to the website are also welcome from members. All we need now is reliable, high speed internet in the Bend of Islands!

## FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES

Consult the BICA calendar, available on the Association's website, for regular events such as bird walks and Landcare working bees. Special events over the next few weeks include

May 8 Cinema Pompier

May 30 Big Walk

Jun 6 World Environment Day

July 9 Trivia Night

July 25 General Meeting

