

FoAB Convenor's Report 2020

The year started with Jim Arnold in the chair and ended with Kevin McCue as interim chair from November till the AGM in January. Secretary Jenny Andrews and Ian Falconer continued to give enormous support and encouragement, and participation rates in work parties have never been higher. Minutes Secretary Diana Brown and Treasurer Peter Mellor looked after the meeting minutes and finances completely autonomously, so that meetings could focus on conservation issues.

The initial six-month ban on work parties, announced in late March due to Covid-19, was rescinded soon afterwards and we only missed one monthly work party (in April). As usual, work parties were the main feature of our year - weeding and track maintenance mainly. With wonderful regular rain the plants are thriving, the weeds too, so we were busy. From October, the monthly work parties were supplemented by shorter weekly ones for those with time. We did plant Lomandra in erosion areas, plants with local provenance from Colin and Pam Macdonald.

For most of the year Richert Ahlers, aka Riko, was our efficient contact ranger with ACT Parks, but he has recently been superseded by new ranger Kelzang Tshering. Most of you will probably have met him, a very personable and knowledgeable addition to the Parkcare group. He organised the slashing of the Saffron Thistle in the paddock along William Hovell Drive in December, just in time before it seeded.

Webmaster Keith Pantlin is about to upgrade the FoAB website to make it technically up to date. During the year he also produced a handsome new map of the Aranda Nature Reserve with all the local names.

In September the annual Parkcare display, featuring local Parkcare groups including FoAB, was mounted in the Jamison Plaza, and attracted much interest.

Mary Falconer formally resigned from work parties after nearly 30 years as convenor, monitoring guru, weeder and planner. What a sterling effort! I would like to thank her for this. I also thank all those who participated in the work parties, especially those who contributed to the morning teas, with their pleasant camaraderie.

A small FoAB group has worked on a new explanatory track, now named in memory of member Ian Loiter-ton and we hope it will be commissioned some time in 2021 after heritage issues have been addressed. Work has begun on the design of six interpretative signs which will be paid for from a grant from the Molonglo Catchment Group.

Inaugural member and former ranger Peter Ormay will be honoured under a joint proposal with the National Parks Association that the ACT's only mature River Red Gum near Tharwa be named after him - more on that later.

After the ACT election in October, we wrote to successful candidates for the seat of Ginninderra to invite them to walk around our patch. Jo Clay, MLA and Greens spokesperson for Transport, Active Travel, Parks and Conservation, Animal Welfare, Arts and Culture, Circular Economy and Women, not only worked with us on a work party, but also became a member of FoAB.

Many thanks to our active committee for keeping the group going over the year. Changes are afoot so we would welcome your ideas and any assistance you can give the incoming committee.

Kevin McCue
January 2021