

Our Natural World

Field Nats News No. 305



Newsletter of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Inc.

1 Gardenia Street, Blackburn Vic 3130

Telephone 03 9877 9860

P.O. Box 13, Blackburn 3130 www.fncv.org.au Newsletter email: fnnews@fncv.org.au

(Office email: admin@fncv.org.au)

Editor: Joan Broadberry 03 9846 1218
Founding editor: Dr Noel Schleiger
Reg. No. A0033611X

Patron: The Honourable Linda Dessau, AC Governor of Victoria

The deadline for FNN 306 will be

10 am on Tuesday 3rd March. FNN

will go to the printers on 10th with

collation on Tuesday morning,

17th March.

March 2020

Office Hours: Monday and Tuesday 9.30 am - 4 pm.

From the President

We have heard a great deal about the catastrophic damage to the environment and property caused by the recent fires across South Eastern Australia. One of our long-standing members, Alastair Traill and his family, were severely impacted when the fire went through Genoa. Many of you will be familiar with Alastair's property since FNCV camps, including the Juniors Group have been held there in past years. Very little of the beautiful property was spared. I will leave it to Alastair to de-

"For a few days the recent fires slowly formed a large 'claw' around our property and then on the 4-1-20 unusual weather conditions drove it rapidly through our place to Wangarabell and beyond. With the reopening of the highway Richard and I were able to make a brief visit to the area on 5-2-20 for the first time since the fire. Fallen trees and branches made the drive un-drivable. We did not expect the undefended house to survive and it did not. Neither did the other accommodation. The open sided shed with the tractor and Daihatsu Rocky was also destroyed. Our lockable shed survived but as I had forgotten the key we could not get in; however, my stainless-steel bed pan was visible through the window and it looked OK. The Hebel brick generator shed that was nestled into the burgan survived and looked as though the generator was ready to run. The steel water

tanks survived but there was no sign of the

scribe his visit to the site after the fires.



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(Continued from page 1) plastic tank below the house - it was full at the time as was one of the steel tanks, the others were part filled.

Signs of wild life were few and far between and included paw prints (dog?), a freshly shed snake's skin at least 1.5 m long, several wombat scats but no sign of wombat food and the only bird calls were currawong, kookaburra and tree-creeper. Several lace monitor tracks were noted and provided with a frozen rabbit or two. There were a few ants.





A snake's skin and one of several sets of wombat scats—evidence of survival

The biggest shock was the almost complete disappearance of the mature coastal grey box trees. My uninformed guess was that they were at least 200 years old (Perhaps 2m in diameter). They were sought after by loggers until they became a protected species. We were lucky to have had a few survivors. We guessed that their bases caught fire and when they fell the fire burnt out the roots and trunk. By this time the fire front had passed and only a few (if any) of the branches remained.

We also visited a resident neighbour's property. He had left his property during the fire and returned later. His house survived but he lost his sheds and a lot of water storage. Unlike our property he has some green grass and his post-fire wildlife sightings to date include 67 species of birds, 3 species of macropods, a calling yellow-bellied glider, a dead feather tail in a bucket and Richard found a healthy antechinus to add to this list. At night there were tree frogs feeding on the very few moths visiting his kitchen window."

Alastair Traill

The images forwarded by Alastair, are sadly, all too familiar and particularly heartbreaking for those of us who have visited Genoa and its beautiful riparian environments and forests. I have been to the area many times over the last six decades and it is devastating to think that I will never again see it in its full glory. It was a naturalist's wonderland.

All photos: Alastair Traill– more photos p12 digital FNN only.

Max Campbell



Vegetation was burnt to the water-line on both sides of the river. Right side of river is now a stretch of sand whereas pre-fire it was almost impenetrable.



Above: Pre-fire Coastal Grey Box. **Below:** Post-fire Coastal Grey Box pit.





CALENDAR OF EVENTS

All meetings are held at the FNCV Hall, 1 Gardenia St. Blackburn at 8 pm., unless otherwise indicated. On days of extreme weather conditions, excursions may be cancelled. Please check with leader.

March 2020

Sunday 1st - **Terrestrial Invertebrates Group Excursion:** *Westerfolds Park, Templestowe.* Meet in the northernmost car park at 10 am next to the Main Yarra Trail https://www.google.com/maps?q=-37.7431,145.1349 **Prior registration essential.**

Contact: Reiner Richter fncv@rnr.id.au

Monday 2nd – Fungi Group Meeting: Australian fungi: from Red Listing to On-ground action. Speaker: Dr Tom May, Senior Research Scientist (Mycology) at the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria.

Contact: Carol Page 9857 6388; cpage356@gmail.com

Tuesday 3rd - Fauna Survey Group Meeting: Research on the ecology of the critically endangered Sulawesi Forest Turtle. Speaker: Angela Simms, Masters Student, Macquarie University.

Contact: Raymond Gibson 0417 861 651; rgibson@melbpc.org.au

Friday 6th to Monday 9th - Fauna Survey Group Survey: *Bael Bael Grassland Nature Conservation Reserve*. Prior bookings essential.

Contact: Andrej Hohmann 0410 934 779; Andrej_hohmann@yahoo.com.au

Monday 9th - Marine Research Group. No Meeting: Labour Day

IMPORTANT

Council has put in place procedures for all excursions which will apply until further notice.

If you are planning to attend FNCV field excursions you must advise the excursion leader at least a week prior to the planned event. You will need to supply all of your current contact details and you will be notified if the excursion is to go ahead or not. If you do not advise the excursion leader you will not be registered to attend. If you are not notified that the event is going ahead please do not go to the site.

Contact the designated excursion leader if you have any queries.

Sunday 15th – Juniors' Group Excursion: *Black Hill Reserve*. Leader: William Terry, Environmental Programs and Engagement Officer, Macedon Ranges Shire Council. Meet 11 am. **Bookings in advance essential** Contact: Patricia Amaya juniors@fncv.org.au

Sunday 15th - Terrestrial Invertebrates Group Excursion: Lerderderg State Park

Meet at 10 am at O'Briens Crossing, O'Briens Road. We can walk along the mostly dry Lerderderg River and surrounding tracks. https://www.google.com/maps?q=-37.4959,144.3610 Prior registration essential.

Contact: Reiner Richter fncv@rnr.id.au

Monday 16th to Thursday 19th - Marine Research Group Field Work: *Port Campbell area*. Exact locations will be decided while on site. Prior registration essential. For further details contact Leon Altoff 9530 4180 AH; 0428 669 773

Tuesday 17th Collate FNN 306 Starting 10 am. Contact Joan Broadberry 9846 1218.

Wednesday 18th - Terrestrial Invertebrates Group Meeting. Speaker: To be advised. Contact: Max Campbell 0409 143 538; 9544 0181 AH; mcam7307@bigpond.net.au

Thursday 19th – Botany Group. Meeting: Botanising in WA – a brief look at some of Western Australia's unique species Speaker: John Harris, Director Wildlife Experiences. Contact: Ken Griffiths botany@fncv.org.au

Saturday 21st – Juniors' Group Excursion: *Waterways Analysis at Blackburn Lake*. Prior registration essential. Leader: Su Dempsey, FNCV. Contact: Patricia Amaya juniors@fncv.org.au

(Continued on page 4)





















The policy of the FNCV is that non-members pay \$5 per excursion and \$3 per meeting, to contribute towards Club overheads. Junior non-member families, \$4 for excursions and \$2 per meeting.

March Calendar (continued from page 3)

Monday 23rd FNCV Council Meeting: 7.30 sharp. Apologies or agenda items to Wendy Gare admin@fncv.org.au

Tuesday 24th – Day Group Meeting: *A field naturalist in Iceland.* Speaker: Sally Bewsher. Meet at 10.30 am for coffee and a chat. Presentation at 11 am. Contact: Joan Broadberry 9846 1218

Wednesday 25th – Geology Group Meeting: *The many factors causing climate change; climate change throughout Earth's history; and the question of whether anthropogenic greenhouse gases are the cause of recent global warming* Speaker: Retired Professor Ray Cas, School of Earth, Atmosphere and Environment, Monash University. Contact: Ruth Hoskin 9878 5911; 0425 729 424; rrhoskin@gmail.com

Friday 27th – Juniors' Group Meeting: <u>Note venue & time</u>. Aquaculture: An industry for the new millennium.

At Melbourne Polytechnic Epping Campus, cnr Cooper St/Dalton Rd, Epping: 5 pm-7 pm. This meeting is NOT in the FNCV hall! Speaker: Andrew Christie, Lecture. Contact: Patricia Amaya juniors@fncv.org.au

Sunday 29th - Terrestrial Invertebrates Group Excursion: *Royal Botanic Gardens, Cranbourne*Meet at 10 am near the shelter at the south-east of the Australian Garden car park (towards the visitor centre).
https://www.google.com/maps?q=-38.1296,145.2682
Prior registration essential. Contact: Reiner Richter fncv@rnr.id.au

Fauna Survey Group Special Survey Twice Monthly to March 2020

'Tile Boxes' as a tool to increase capture success of Reptiles Venue: Grasslands in Melbourne's west. Fridays and/or weekends. No prior experience necessary as training will be provided.

Prior booking is essential. Contact: Andrej Hohmann 0410 934 779 andrej_hohmann@yahoo.com.au

Members' news, photos & observations

We always have space for members' photos and natural history observations. Please share with us what you have noted in your daily life, travels or garden. Email: fnnews@fncv.org.au by the first Monday in the month.



Warmest greetings to the following new members who were welcomed at our last Council meeting.

Darien Gray, Gareth Davies, Zoe Davies, Pippa Davies, Carolyn Blomley, Kit Meander, Louise Guthrie, Grant Connoley, Kerry Connoley, D.D.Tyler, Hank Tyler, Zachary Tyler, Nina Tyler, Noa Tyler, Buddhika Talpe Merenchige, Sithika Talpe Merenchige, William Terry, Bev Woon, Friends of Organ Pipes National Park, Terese Dalman, Tegan Dalman, Rebecca Sowerby, David Sowerby, Lynne Sowerby, Paul Hamer MP, Anna Costanzo and David Hughes

This newsletter is printed on recycled paper.

Facebook followers = 15,845 as of February 4th 2020.

The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the FNCV.

Members' news, photos & observations, continued from page 4

Left:

An attractive powder blue and black coloured Chequered Cuckoo Bee, *Thyreus caeruleopunctatus*, spent at least three nights in my garden during December 2019. It would arrive at around 5:30 in the evening, latch onto a fine, bare twig with its jaws, raise its legs and remain there until after the sun reached its resting spot the next morning.

Thyreus are parasites (or more correctly parasitoids) of Blue-banded Bees, *Amegilla sp.* They enter and lay eggs in the nesting burrows, mostly constructed in soil by Blue Banded bees. The Blue-banded Bee egg or larva is killed and the Cuckoo Bee larva consumes the food resource that had been deposited in the nest by the adult Blue-banded Bee.

Observations and photos of native bees from a Blackrock garden.

John Eichler



Above and left:

While I have not seen Blue-banded Bees in my garden this season they do visit most years, having a preference for blue coloured flowers.

During the warmer months of 2015/16 Blue-banded Bees, *Amegilla asserta*, were frequent visitors, with up to 11 spending the night clinging to Kangaroo Grass stems in January.

I also observed Chequered Cuckoo Bees in the garden on several occasions that season.

From the Office..

Dear members. This month we have a request for some provisions for the hall – hand wash, toilet paper, tea, coffee and biscuits would be much appreciated.



Thank you for your generosity!

We are also hoping that those of you who are still receiving the paper form of *The Victorian Naturalist* will consider changing over to downloading it from our website. There are advantages to doing this – you can zoom in so that the text can be more easily read, and the photos can be viewed in much more detail than is possible with the paper version. It can be saved in a folder on your computer instead of attracting silverfish to your bookcases. You will also be saving paper and postage costs. Please mull it over!

I'm pleased to report that the restumper has done a great job on lifting the walls back to the correct position in the hall. There are now no gaps between the ceiling and the walls and the cornice is in place. He's also fixed a couple of bouncy floor-boards in the hall, and has put in an extra timber beam under the joined floorboards in the corridor near the library door. Previously they had no support at all underneath which is why they creaked and sagged.

He's done an excellent job so if you ever need a restumper, contact me at the office and I will pass on his details.

Wendy Gare Administration Officer

Advertising in the Field Nats News

VERY REASONABLE RATES

Contact Wendy in the Field Nats
Office
admin@fncv.org.au
9877 9860
(Mon –Tues 9.30—4)

SOLAR PANEL UPDATE



The solar panels on the roof of our building were turned on in mid-October 2012.

Our last electricity bill from AGL covering the period from 8th November 2019 to 5th February 2020 showed the FNCV to be \$25.50 in credit.

Many thanks to those who helped send out the four monthly calendar of events and collate and label FNN 304

> June Anton Andy Brentnall Edward Brentnall Hazel Brentnall Sheina Nicholls Joan Broadberry

Thanks to the editorial and layout team who put together FNN 305

Joan Broadberry Wendy Gare Sally Bewsher

bookshop@fncv.org.au

for any orders or bookshop queries.

If you don't have access to email, the FNCV office will pass on your message. Kathy will then be in contact with you.

WILDLIFE EXPERIENCES 2020 TOURS

Join John Harris of Wildlife Experiences and local naturalists as you discover the beauty and diversity of the Western Australia's Internationally recognised biodiversity hotspot.





For more information, or to book

Contact: John at admin@wildlifeexperiences.com.au or mobile 0409 090 955

Payment: 25% deposit required on booking, with balance due by 10 July 2020.



JOIN US ON AN EXPERIENCE, OR TWO, YOU WILL NEVER FORGET!

"Wildlife Experiences provided a unique opportunity to discover the fauna and floral diversity of the region which was greatly appreciated. You both went out of your way to ensure everyone got a great experience" – Ann, KD18



FNCV Environment Fundt Call for Grant Applications, Closing date: 30th March 2020

The FNCV Environment Fund has the following purposes:

- To support and finance environmental research, in particular research into the biodiversity of Victoria.
- To support and finance dissemination of information on the natural environment by any legitimate means, including public lectures, seminars, field trips, courses and publications.
- To support and finance practical projects aimed at preserving and enhancing the biodiversity of Victoria.

The FNCV Environment Fund is administered by a committee consisting of Malcolm Calder (Chair), Barbara Burns (Secretary & Treasurer), Bob Rogers, John Harris, Ian Moodie and Cathy Willis.

The Committee calls for applications for the next round of funding from the FNCV Environment Fund.

Requests for projects between \$200 & \$1,000 will be considered.

Applications can be from organisations or individuals, but in the latter case must be supported by an organisation. Suitable organisations are established natural history or environmental bodies, (Field Naturalist Clubs, Landcare Groups etc.), educational institutions or government departments. Multiple applications from one research group are not encouraged.

Applications for this round of funding close Monday 30th March 2020 at 5 pm. All applications will be acknowledged and results of applications communicated by **Tuesday 7th April 2020.** Late applications will not be accepted.

Grant money is required to be spent within 12 months of notification of receiving a grant with a short report on the project supplied to the FNCV within 12 months of the same date. The report can be published by FNCV and successful applicants are encouraged to also communicate the results of their project to the Club via articles, talks or field trips.

Additional information about the Environment Fund is available at www.fncv.org.au.

Please include the following information in the application:

- Project title.
- Project description (max 250 words).
- How the project meets the aims of the Fund.
- Budget (include GST on all relevant items). (Also indicate other sources of funding)
- Indicate if the application is from an individual or organisation and give the name of the individual or organisation.
- Applicant name and contact details (including mailing address/phone/fax/email).
- Signature of applicant.
- Endorsement of organization, (signature of responsible person such as President, Secretary, Manager, Head of Department, include name and position held).

Applications should be sent to:
Secretary FNCV Environment Fund
Field Naturalists Club of Victoria
PO Box 13,
Blackburn Vic 3130
or emailed to admin@fncv.org.au

Donations to the FNCV Environment Fund are tax deductible.

Donations are needed. Donation forms can be down-loaded from the website

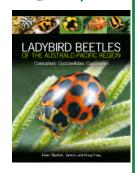
- www.fncv.org.au or are available on
- request from the FNCV Office. Phone
- 98779860 or email admin@fncv.org.au

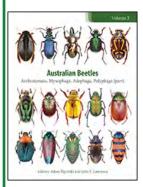
NEWS FROM THE BOOKSHOP (March 2020)

This month we focus on fascinating invertebrates, how to pronounce latin and the interesting heritage of Gariwerd. Three of the feature titles may pinch the hip pocket but to the invertebrate enthusiast, I am sure they are worth giving up a take-away meal or two. Only available via order, these three hardback books are on Ladybird Beetles, Australian Beetles and Hawkmoths. These books will be included in the Bookshop catalogue, but not on the display shelves. The fourth edition of Plant Names is soon to be released, so for all those budding botanists this book may be of interest and will be on display. The final book is about a very significant feature in the Victorian landscape, the Grampians or Gariwerd. This book will be on display for a limited time. To order or inquire about a book, please send an email to, bookshop@fncv.org.au and I will reply as soon as I can. Remember, it is not just members that can purchase from the bookshop, but it is only members that get the 20% discount.

Happy reading, Kathy

Ladybird Beetles of the Australo-Pacific Region (A. Slipinski, J. Li & H. Pang) covers 22 genera and 95 valid species, including 12 new species of ladybird beetles from Australia, New Guinea and the Pacific area. For each species, descriptions, illustrations and keys will assist with the correct identification of ladybirds from this large but practically unknown fauna. **(HB, 240 pp., March 2020) RRP \$220, Member \$176**



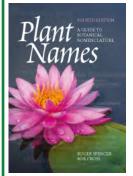


Australian Beetles Volume 2 (ed. A. Slipinski & J. Lawrence) is part of a three volume series that represents a comprehensive treatment of the beetles of Australia. Volume 2 contains 36 chapters, provding critical information and identification keys to suborders that include Archostemata, Myxophaga, Adephaga and several groups of Polyphaga. Each chapter is richly illustrated in black and white drawings and photographs. The book also includes colour habitat figures for about 1000 Australian beetle genera and subgenera. Part 1 is still available to order.

(HB, 792 pp., 2019) RRP \$250, Member \$200

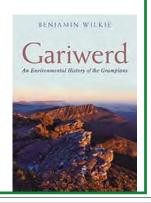
Hawkmoths of Australia (M. Moulds, J. Tuttle & D. Lane) provides identification of all of the Australian hawkmonths for the first time and treats species found on mainland Australia, Tasmania and all offshore islands within Australian limits. It presents previously undescribed life histories of nearly all species and provides a comprehensive account of hawkmoth biology, including new parasitoids and their hawkmoth hosts. Detailed drawings and photographs show the external and internal morphology of adults and immatures, and eggs, larval instars and pupa. Keys are provided for last instar larvae and pupae of 71 species. (HB, 424 pp., Jan 2020) RRP \$220, Member \$176





Plant Names (R. Kuiter) a guide to botanical nomenclature is the fourth edition of this popular title and is an invaluable guide. The book covers the naming of wild plants, plants modified by humans, why plant names change, their pronunciation and hints to help remember them, along with updated sections on trademarks and plant breeders' rights. The final section provides a detailed guide to resources useful to people using plant names. **(PB, 220 pp., March 2020) RRP \$44.99, Member \$36**

Gariwerd (B. Wilkie) an environmental history of the Grampians explores the geological and ecological significance of the mountains and combines research from across disciplines to tell the story of how humans and the environment have interacted. The book examines the significant Indigenous history and heritage and explores the history of European colonisation in the area from the middle of the 19th century and considers the effects of this on both the first people of Gariwerd and the environments of the ranges and their surrounding plains in western Victoria. (PB, 148 pp., April 2020) RRP \$49.99, Member \$40





Terrestrial Invertebrates Group

Maranoa Gardens

8th December, 2019

This long-standing garden in Balwyn, officially opened in 1926, is packed with native plants from around the country, but as it generally doesn't receive artificial watering. I was interested to see what sort of invertebrates we might still find.

In the dry creek gully habitat there was a depression retaining water and around it were numerous slender ringtail damselflies Austrolestes analis and Australian emerald dragonflies Hemicordulia australiae. Although the emeralds are usually observed constantly in flight these remained mostly perched, conveniently at chest height, allowing us to photograph them without too much exertion.

Particularly on the broad-leaves plants in the garden, we saw quite a few insects and jumping spiders. These sorts of plants (e.g. Lomandra) are often good for observing insects and spiders in the bush too, perhaps just because they are easier to see.

In the afternoon we visited the regenerated indigenous grassy woodland in the adjacent Beckett Park. We saw numerous bees and other insects in the bluebells and everlastings but it was quite warm by then and the insects were fast.

https://inaturalist.ala.org.au/projects/fncv-2019-maranoagardens

Reiner Richter



Image: Carol Page



Oxyopes elegans

Image: John Eichler



Megachile ferox

Image: Carol Page



Acanthonevroides nigriventris

Image: Carol Page

Warburton January 19th, 2020



Unlike through suburbia, the Yarra River at Warburton is relatively pristine and clear. For about 2km there is a walking track on both sides of the river but at our pace as we were thoroughly searching vegetation, we only explored a short stretch.

One of the first things we saw was a Long-jawed Orbweaver (Tetragnathidae family) hanging over the river. Normally it would have been inconvenient for a spider to be facing away in its web, but from underneath, its jaws were clearly visible. These spiders are common in the vegetation along waterways where they usually spread their webs more horizontally to catch insects taking off.

Nearby, a dragonfly was emerging atop an isolated rock in the river – a male

southern vicetail *Hemigomphus gouldii*. Members of this family (Gomphidae) emerge during the day but do so relatively quickly, taking their first flight into the trees after only about half an hour. Most larger dragonflies emerge overnight so have plenty of time to dry their wings, taking their maiden flight at first light (before the birds become active). Jeff Melvaine spotted some Arrowhead Rockmasters *Diphlebia nymphoides*, which were difficult to photograph basking far on the opposite side of the river. He first discovered these on the Yarra only a month earlier in the same area. This is a range extension from Eildon or Thomson.



Primeuchroeus sp. Image: Reiner Richter



Evaniidae family Image: Reiner Richter



Teragnathidae family Image: Reiner Richter



Hemigomphus gouldii

Image: Reiner Richter

The large gum tree at the upstream end of the car park, like our previous visits, provided numerous photographing opportunities including several leaf beetles and even a triangle spider. Although the dead tree nearby had no metallic green flies on it this time, there were several wasps inspecting holes and some beautiful iridescent cuckoo wasps also hanging around. At one point three hatchet wasps (Evaniidae family) were racing around too, these characteristically wave their abdomens up and down like a hatchet. https://inaturalist.ala.org.au/projects/fncv-2020-warburton

Reiner Richter



Rayieria basifer

Image: John Eichler



Continued from page 2. Two more post-fire photos taken by Alastair Traill at Wangarabell. Right: "Christel Palace"

Recently accessioned books

The following volumes have been accessioned into the collection, and may be borrowed. You will find them on the shelves at the positions indicated below.



McEntee, John C; Pearl McKenzie (1988) A rthropods of the Northern Flinders Ranges and adjacent plains with A boriginal names [592 MCE]

Reilly, Pauline (1983) Fairy Penguins and earthy people [598.2/945 REI]

Greer, Ronald L and Rosalind P Steel (2017) Birds of the Sale Common Wetlands [598.2/945 GRE]

Recently received (paper) periodicals/reports

Reflections: Water for the environment in Victoria 2018-19 is a fascinating description of the many and varied ways environmental water was used across the state.

Wildlife Research 46(7) reports research asking questions including:

- How do koalas cope after being translocated from Cape Otway?
- How are methods of managing feral pigs in WA working?
- Are camera traps effective in monitoring feral cat and fox reduction in WA?

Can radio-telemetry measure survival of wader chicks and ascertain causes of mortality? (Victoria)

Indigenotes 30(2) reports on efforts to establish a new insurance population of the endangered fragrant donkey orchid *Diuris fragrantissima* near Melbourne.

The latest printed periodicals are displayed in a rack in the library. You can borrow periodicals in the rack, as well as previous issues. Don't forget to fill in the borrowing book.

Digital periodicals

A number of organisations that have been publishing periodicals over many years have moved in recent times to issuing them exclusively in digital form. This Club continues to receive these journals but, of course, you will not find them on the rack or shelves in our library. The periodicals that FNCV currently receive in digital form are listed below. All of these can be accessed on a PC in the Admin office. (It is the one whose monitor faces the door; the one nearest the window.)

The path to these newsletters is as follows:

Double click on the 'Library' icon \longrightarrow the 'Newsletter' folder \longrightarrow the appropriate folder for the periodicals held.

Newsletters/Journals currently held in digital form:

Australasian Bats Society Newsletter Ballarat FNC Castlemaine FNC FNCV Juniors

IndigienotesMornington Peninsula FNCNature Glenelg TrustPlatypus news and views

Proceedings of the Royal Society of Qld Proceedings of the Royal Society of Vic

Gary Presland, Honorary Librarian