



F . O . L . K . L . A . W .

NEWSLETTER Spring 2009

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Hi all,

On Friday August 21st two volunteers attended a Weed Awareness Training Day at the Chisholm Institute of TAFE campus at Rosebud. The Workshop was presented by Gidja Walker who has had 27 years experience in vegetation survey, vegetation assessment, endangered species monitoring and weed strategies. The interactive training course covered weed identification, how weeds spread, hygiene and legal responsibilities.



On Sunday 24th August, the Somers Foreshore volunteers received 100 indigenous plants grown and donated by FOLKLAW.

Jennie Bryant our local wildlife carer received 30 more gum trees as a food source for the koalas in her care.

At our w/bee in the Koala Reserve on 30th August FOLKLAW volunteers planted 130 plants. We also started spreading mulch. Many thanks to the 10 volunteers who helped.

Approx 150 indigenous plants were donated to Ian Jones, a Somers resident.

FOLKLAW donated 300 assorted postcards, Koala Watch fridge magnets and a number of brochures to be included in the Somers Arts Fair free show bags for children.

This year FOLKLAW grew approx 4000 plants from seed to give away.

Thanks to Steve Ainsworth, Trudi Oldis, and Karin Cooper who donated the seeds.

Thanks to Karin Cooper and Trudi Oldis who manned the stall at the Somers Arts Fair and thanks to all those who also offered their help.

KOALA RESERVE WORKS. Grass slashing of the Koala Reserve is being carried out and our regular weed killing program is working very well. Extra plantings done in the Reserve are showing good results. Thanks to our small band of voluntary people who carry out the work.

Report from Trudi Oldis: Trudi does a great deal of work for the Somers environment in her own quiet way. Here is an excerpt of a letter we recently received from her.

Dear FOLKLAW,

Just updating you on my progress with caring for Kennedy Rd track and Sandy Point Rd walk between Kennedy and Camphill Rds. I have managed to eradicate nearly all of the *Watsonia* on both walks and am currently hand mowing pasture weeds along Kenned Rd track to allow the native weeping grass and other great species to come through. After test

patch mowing last year many more Poas, Wallaby grasses, Weeping grass and even Yellow Stars have emerged! HOORAY!

I have planted Pelargonium, Flax Lilies, Chocolate Lilies, Prickly Moses and 10 new Manna Gums in the Kennedy Rd track this week.

Thank you Trudi for your valuable report.

Below is some information on weeds and indigenous flora and fauna which may interest you.

Eastern Quoll (Goodie): (*Dasyurus viverrinus*)

Male eastern quolls (*Dasyurus viverrinus*) are about the size of a small domestic cat averaging 60 cm in length and 1.3 kg in weight; females are slightly smaller. They have soft fur that is coloured fawn, brown or black. Small white spots cover the body except for the bushy tail which may have a white tip. Compared to the related spotted-tail quoll, the eastern quoll is slightly built with a pointed muzzle.



Eastern quolls once occurred on mainland Australia, with the last sighting occurring in the Sydney suburb of Vaucluse in the early 1960s. They are now considered extinct on the mainland, although some recent sightings in the New England region of northern New South Wales suggest that the species may still survive.

The species, fortunately, is widespread and locally common in Tasmania. It is found in a variety of habitats including rainforest, heath land, alpine areas and scrub. However, it seems to prefer dry grassland and forest mosaics which are bounded by agricultural land, particularly where pasture grubs are common. The eastern quoll is largely solitary. It hunts and scavenges, feeding largely on insects. Eastern quolls are nocturnal and only occasionally forage or bask during daylight. During the day they sleep in nests made under rocks in underground burrows or fallen logs.

Like the spotted-tail quoll, the eastern quoll is an opportunistic carnivore that takes live prey and scavenges. The eastern quoll is an impressive hunter, taking small mammals such as rabbits, mice and rats. Eastern quolls sometimes scavenge morsels of food from around feeding devils. However, the main component of its diet is invertebrates, especially agricultural pests such as the cockchafer beetle and corbie grub. Carrion and some fruits are also eaten.

Breeding occurs in early winter. After a gestation period of 21 days, females can have up to 6 young that develop in her pouch. After about 10 weeks the young are left in grass-lined dens located in burrows or hollow logs leaving the female free to hunt and forage.

Towards the end of November, when the young are 18 to 20 weeks old, they are weaned (stop suckling) and gradually become independent of the female. Within the first year, they have reached sexual maturity and begin breeding.

Feral cats are well suited to taking quolls, as well as the prey that quolls eat. Predation and direct competition potentially force the eastern quoll from its natural habitat. The threat from foxes, dogs, road kills, landowners, and illegal poisoning or trapping, are also causing declines. The species is wholly protected by law.