



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

NEWSLETTER Winter Newsletter 2016

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Hi All,

F.O.L.K.L.A.W is manning a stall this year at the Somers School Art Fair on the 23rd October from 9am to 4p.m. I wish to thank the our volunteers for arranging and running the stall, so please pay a visit and say hello. A kind face and support is always appreciated. Volunteers and no running costs combine to make us a true voluntary group.

The fire reduction works are to be carried out in the Somers Koala Reserve starting 26th September and lasting about one week. This is a normal job that is carried out every year. A crew of workman with equipment will be around the reserve at various locations.

The M.O.U (Memorandum Of Understanding) between F.O.L.K.L.A.W. and Mornington Shire Council for managing the Council owned Somers Koala Reserve from the 1st June 2016 to 31st May 2017 year was submitted to the Council for the operation of the the reserve in June. A meeting was then requested by the responsible council representative with us in August and our President attended. The result is that a new format for proposed works is required.

Your treasurer has born in mind all the present council budget cuts, therefore we will absorb some extra costs and reduce the amount of paid work to under last year requirements. (See below)

Extra costs we are absorbing: Supplying of biodegradable dog poo bags to 3 locations, collection and dumping of all types of reserve rubbish and newsletters postage.

Possum boxes.

Unfortunately the David who was making the orphan Possum boxes for the local wildlife carer from donated new and old materials is unable to carry out the work.

If you or somebody is willing to take up this job please contact me your Treasurer either by mail P.O. box 28 Somers, 3927 or E-mail karin.and.peter.cooper@gmail.com.

Koala Research.

If you have a Koala regularly visiting, or sight one on your walk, then note whereabouts and please share that information on Dr Desley's MP Koala Research Project----- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/MPKoalas/>

Working Bees Carried out.

26th June: Weeding and planting.

31st July: 50 indigenous plants of all types put in.

August: Cancelled

Next Working Bee: 25th September from 9.30am to 11.30am.

Meet in the Koala Reserve entry via the gate at the end of Campsie Court.

MELWAYS PAGE 193 All Welcome. Refreshments provided.

This back page will not feature plants this edition but hopefully be just as interesting.

Short Beaked Echidna (Goodie): (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*)

Echidnas are medium-sized, solitary mammals covered with coarse hair and spines.

Superficially, they resemble the anteaters of South America and other spiny mammals such as hedgehogs and porcupines. They are usually black or brown in colour. There have been several reports of albino echidnas, their eyes pink and their spines white. They have elongated and slender snouts that function as both mouth and nose. They have very short, strong limbs with large claws, and are powerful diggers. Echidnas have tiny mouths and toothless jaws. The echidna feeds by tearing open soft logs, anthills and the like, and using its long, sticky tongue, which protrudes from its snout, to collect prey.

The Echidnas' ears are slits on the sides of their heads that are usually unseen due to the fact that they are blanketed by their spines. The external ear is created by a large cartilaginous funnel, deep in the muscle. The short-beaked echidna's diet consists largely of ants and termites. They have no teeth, and break down their food by grinding it between the bottoms of their mouths and their tongues. Echidnas do not tolerate extreme temperatures; they use caves and rock crevasses to shelter from harsh weather conditions. Echidnas are found in forests and woodlands, hiding under vegetation, roots or piles of debris.

They sometimes use the burrows of animals such as rabbits and wombats. Individual echidnas have large, mutually overlapping territories. Echidnas are capable swimmers. When swimming, they expose their snout and some of their spines. They are known to journey to water in order to groom and bathe themselves. The tongues of long-beaked echidnas have sharp, tiny spines that help them capture their prey. Echidnas faeces are 7 centimetres long and are cylindrical in shape; they are usually broken and unrounded, and composed largely of dirt and ant-hill material. Echidnas and the platypus are the only egg-laying mammals, known as monotremes. The average lifespan of an echidna in the wild is estimated around 16 years. When fully grown a female can weigh up to 4.5 kilograms (9.9 lbs) and a male can weigh up to 6 kilograms (13.2 lbs). The echidnas' sex can be inferred from their size, as males are 25% larger than females on average. Male echidnas have non-venomous spurs on the hind feet. Due to their low metabolism and accompanying stress resistance, echidnas are long-lived for their size; the longest recorded lifespan for a captive echidna is 50 years, with anecdotal accounts of wild individuals reaching 45 years.

The female lays a single soft-shelled, leathery egg 22 days after mating, and deposits it directly into her pouch. While hatching, the baby echidna opens the leather shell with a reptile-like egg tooth. Hatching takes place after 10 days; the young echidna, born larval and foetus-like, then sucks milk from the pores of the two milk patches (monotremes have no nipples) and remains in the pouch for 45 to 55 days, at which time it starts to develop spines. The mother digs a nursery burrow and deposits the young, returning every five days to suckle it until it is weaned at seven months. Breeding season begins in late June and extends through September.

Echidnas are very timid animals. When they feel endangered they attempt to bury themselves or if exposed they will curl into a ball, both methods using their spines to shield them. Strong front arms allow echidnas to continue to dig themselves in whilst holding fast against a predator attempting to remove them from the hole. Although they have a way to protect themselves, the echidnas still face many dangers. Some predators include wild cats, foxes, domestic dogs and goannas. Snakes pose as a large threat to the echidna species because they slither into their burrows and prey on the young spineless puggles. Merely grabbing them may cause stress, and not picking them up correctly may even result in injury.

Hope you enjoyed the newsletter.

Thanks .