



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

**Newsletter
April 2020**

***Previous meeting
Sunday 15 March
Lincoln Place (over the hill)***

Now that it is officially Autumn, the weeding party, following our standard practice, met in the afternoon. Six of us – Doug, Paul, Rohan, Natasha O, Chris and new volunteer Sean – climbed over the Ridge above Lincoln Place to an area we hadn't worked on before. This was on the south-east downward slope toward Kambah, approximately between the old telephone line and the base of Mt Arawang. Alan went off separately to continue his attack on the St John's Wort above Darrell Place. Rob Horsfield continued his work repairing and maintaining the newsletter distribution boxes.



*New volunteer, Sean and Doug tackle blackberry
above Lincoln Place* Photo: Chris Oates

***Next Meeting
Sunday 19 April
Mt Arawang***

**ALL MEETINGS ARE
CANCELLED UNTIL
SEPTEMBER DUE TO
CORONA VIRUS
RESTRICTIONS**

The team over the Ridge concentrated on removing St John's Wort, verbascum, thistles and blackberries, with Doug helping us to distinguish between blackberries and native raspberries. Rohan sprayed salvia and other weeds. The recent rains have encouraged weed growth, but the countryside on an Autumn afternoon looked refreshingly green and the local dams are being replenished.

Chris Oates

Corona Virus and Cooleman Ridge

Due to the corona virus pandemic, we have been advised by Parks and Conservation that all Park Care activities including the monthly weeding parties are to cease until at least September. There was much concern in the Group regarding the lengthy restrictions and letters were sent by many park groups to the minister. It was thought that work parties could be safely conducted within the current social distancing rules. Individuals are encouraged to visit the Ridge for exercise while maintaining their social distance.

Linda Spinaze

Fridays on Fencepost Hill

Our Friday working group on Fencepost Hill has had plenty of ups and downs. We still honour the faithful work of Pauline Lynga by visiting and working on 'Pauline's Patch' quite regularly. Gosta includes that every week in his rounds.

This year we have had disruptions – Roger had been tied up for months with SES work, Erica is on call with rescue and care of birds through Wildcare, and Arminel has broken her wrist and is out of action! Mike Morriss and I try to go every week but the heat and smoke of Summer kept us away. Fortunately, weed growth is slight because it is an area where our group has been working for years. The hillside is a joy to see - native grasses seeding like mad, the *stipa* seed heads waving in the wind, and lots of flowers bursting into bloom after the rain and with this spell of warm weather. There are native geraniums, heaps of bluebells, the pink convolvulus and lovely purple creepers (*desmodium* I think) and also *glycine*). There are also lots of Yellow Rush lilies coming into flower and patches of common everlastings spreading after they looked as though they had expired in the drought. Even some of the 'dead' trees down near the Kathner dam have put on new leafy growth. And an eagle was circling over the Ridge as well.

I plan to continue my weekly visits to the Ridge to check on the weed growth and to enjoy the views. There will be no interaction with others there except for a friendly wave! Let's use these difficult times to find creative ways to engage with the world and help protect what we love in it.



Fencepost Hill

Photo: Jenny Horsfield

Jenny Horsfield

Prickly Pear weeding

Recently a small Prickly Pear plant spotted growing on the Ridge was reported to our President, Linda Spinaze. Eager to tackle the challenge, Linda's daughter, Kasia, and I offered to remove the plant. Surprisingly, the plant came away easily and all plant material and roots were removed. Always up for a science experiment, I am going to try my luck at [converting the plant into biodegradable plastic](#).

If you spot a plant that is not supposed to be on the Ridge, after accurate identification by a Group member, you are welcome to tackle its removal.



Clare Sullivan and Kasia Bail remove Prickly Pear
Photo: Clare Sullivan

Clare Sullivan

Verbascum, the Virus and Stockpiling

Verbascum thapsus is one of our most targeted weeds on the Ridge. But this plant has not always been held in such low regard. Arminel reminded me that the early settlers brought it out to the colonies and used its soft, velvety leaves as disposable bedding for babies. They also used the leaves as bum wipes. So, if you can't find toilet paper in your local supermarket, there are plenty of *Verbascum* plants up on the Ridge, especially to the west of Mt Arawang. Please feel free to stockpile as many of these plants as you wish.

Rob Lundie