

Crinigan Bushland Reserve

NOTES AND INFORMATION

Welcome to the Crinigan Bushland Reserve. This Reserve is approximately 33 hectares of remnant bushland and has over 5.5 kilometres of walking tracks. The tracks are named after some of the birds you're likely to see while walking and may guide you to points of interest. The tracks vary in length and fitness levels, but can comfortably be walked over a few hours. The Reserve is a popular spot for recreation, where dog walking, bird watching and nature experiences are enjoyed.

Please put your rubbish in the bin, keep your dogs on a lead and if you see something that needs attention, please report it.

For further information on the Reserve or how to get involved in its management, contact Latrobe City Council on 1300 367 700.



Walking track



Prickly Moses

BACKGROUND

Prior to European settlement, this Reserve was part of the traditional lands of the local indigenous community of the Braiakaulung Clan of the Gunnaikurnai people of Gippsland. Following changes of land ownership and various lease arrangements, the Shire of Morwell began management of the Reserve in 1981 and Latrobe City Council purchased the land in 1999. A volunteer committee was established to oversee the Reserve management which continues to this day.

The Reserve is representative of the native vegetation that formerly covered much of the Latrobe Valley and is one of the last remnants in the vicinity of the township of Morwell. Evidence suggests that the majority of the Reserve was selectively harvested for timber in the 1940's, and has regrown since this time. Therefore, only a small number of large old trees remain.



VEGETATION

As you walk through the Reserve, you will notice changes in the vegetation. It ranges from Lowland Forest, characterised by tall canopy Eucalypts with mid storey shrubs in the higher elevation drier slopes, through to Swamp Scrub, which lacks a Eucalypt canopy, has a denser shrub component and is found in the wetter gullies and drainage lines.

Eucalypts such as Manna Gum, Narrow-leaf Peppermint, Swamp Gum, But But and Silvertop Ash are all found within Lowland Forest, most of which are of medium size due to past timber harvesting. The understorey has shrubs such as Burgan, particularly in more disturbed and cleared areas where it colonises, with Prickly Tea-tree, Cherry Ballart, Blackwood and Showy Bossiaea commonly found. Look out for common ground cover species within this vegetation type such as Bracken, Spear Grass, Spiny-headed Mat-rush, and small shrubs such as Parrot Peas.

The Swamp Scrub vegetation is confined to drainage lines in the north of the Reserve, and wet depressions in the north-west. Swamp Paperbark is a key defining species for this vegetation type however, a lot of Prickly Tea-tree is also found in these areas. Rushes, Sedges and Ground-ferns are also signs that you are within this vegetation type.

NATIVES ACTING AS WEEDS

'Weed' is a word used to define a plant growing where it is not wanted and usually refers to plants that are not native. Within the Reserve however, there are some native species that have become invasive and are acting as weeds. This process can result from planting species outside their natural range, or from changes in land management practices, such as changed fire regimes or clearing. These changes create conditions that favour certain plants. Over time these introduced plants spread and compete for resources (such as water and light), which can result in the decline of other species. One of these plants is Sweet Pittosporum, which is typically found in Warm Temperate Rainforest or Wet Forest vegetation. It's a medium-sized bushy tree growing over 10 metres high, with dark-green shiny leaves, creamy white flowers and orange berries. Other native vegetation struggles to survive under its canopy and it has well and truly spread out of its typical vegetation type within the Reserve.

Burgan is another native species that occurs within the Reserve but is now over abundant and outcompeting other species. It's a fast-growing tall shrub, which has small green leaves and white tea-tree like flowers in Spring. A Burgan management plan has been developed to deal with this overabundance, with a goal to reduce Burgan cover to 4%. Four treatment options have been used including mechanical control, herbicide use (spraying and cut & paint) and burning. You'll notice the areas that have been treated adjacent to Magpie Drive and Rosella Tracks, where the shrub coverage is now sparse and ground cover species such as native herbs and grasses are flourishing. On-going monitoring has been established to determine how the vegetation responds and to ensure there are no negative impacts.



Burgan



Sweet pittosporum

FLORA

Have a look at the different trees and their canopy as you walk along the tracks. Eucalypts are distinguished by not only their bark, but leaves, fruit and buds. Some can also be identified by the smell of the leaves being crushed along with the form they take - are they straight tall trees, or squat branching types. The Gums have smooth trunks, sometimes with shedding bark such as Manna Gum, Swamp Gum or Blue Gum; Peppermints have fibrous bark and smell distinctly when the leaves are crushed, with both the Broad leaf and Narrow leaf Peppermint found here; Stringybarks have fibrous and furrowed bark and the one Stringybark species found in the Reserve, Silver Swamp Stringybark, also has distinct glaucous (waxy) new growth; and Box Eucalypts have short-fibred or flaky bark, with But But a common example found in the Reserve. If you look down, there are over 30 species of orchids recorded here, ranging from Greenhoods, Helmet-orchids, Spider-orchids and Sun-orchids. Most orchids flower through Spring, so if you're in the Reserve at this time of year, look closely in the areas that have had Burgan removed as the additional light from the removal of its cover will allow for native orchids to be more easily spotted. Most only grow to less than 30cm in height and the pretty flowering displays don't last long, so any flash of colour is worth investigating to see if you can find a few of these cryptic species. Remember though, some orchids are quite rare and native species are protected, so please don't pick flowers from the Reserve – leave them for everyone to enjoy.



But-But (*Eucalyptus bridgesiana*)



Gang-Gang Cockatoo
Photo: Colin Cook



Chocolate Lily

FAUNA

The Reserve is home to many native birds, mammals, reptiles and frogs, with surveys completed by interest groups such as the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalists contributing to the 82 fauna species recorded in total through-out the years.

Three significant bird species have been recorded, including Gang-gang Cockatoos which are Federally Endangered. Satin Flycatcher and Rufous Fantail have also been found, with both listed on the BONN Convention treaty for the conservation of migratory species. You'll see nest boxes which have been installed in various areas to provide hollow nesting fauna a place to raise their young.

FIRE










Native vegetation has a long history of association with fire. Sometimes species are reliant on fire to renew and regenerate and without disturbance they may die or the vegetation may become less diverse. The use of fire in the Reserve for ecological purposes has the potential to be difficult, however, burning in small sections was undertaken in 2011, both to reduce Burgan cover and increase germination of fire-dependent indigenous species.

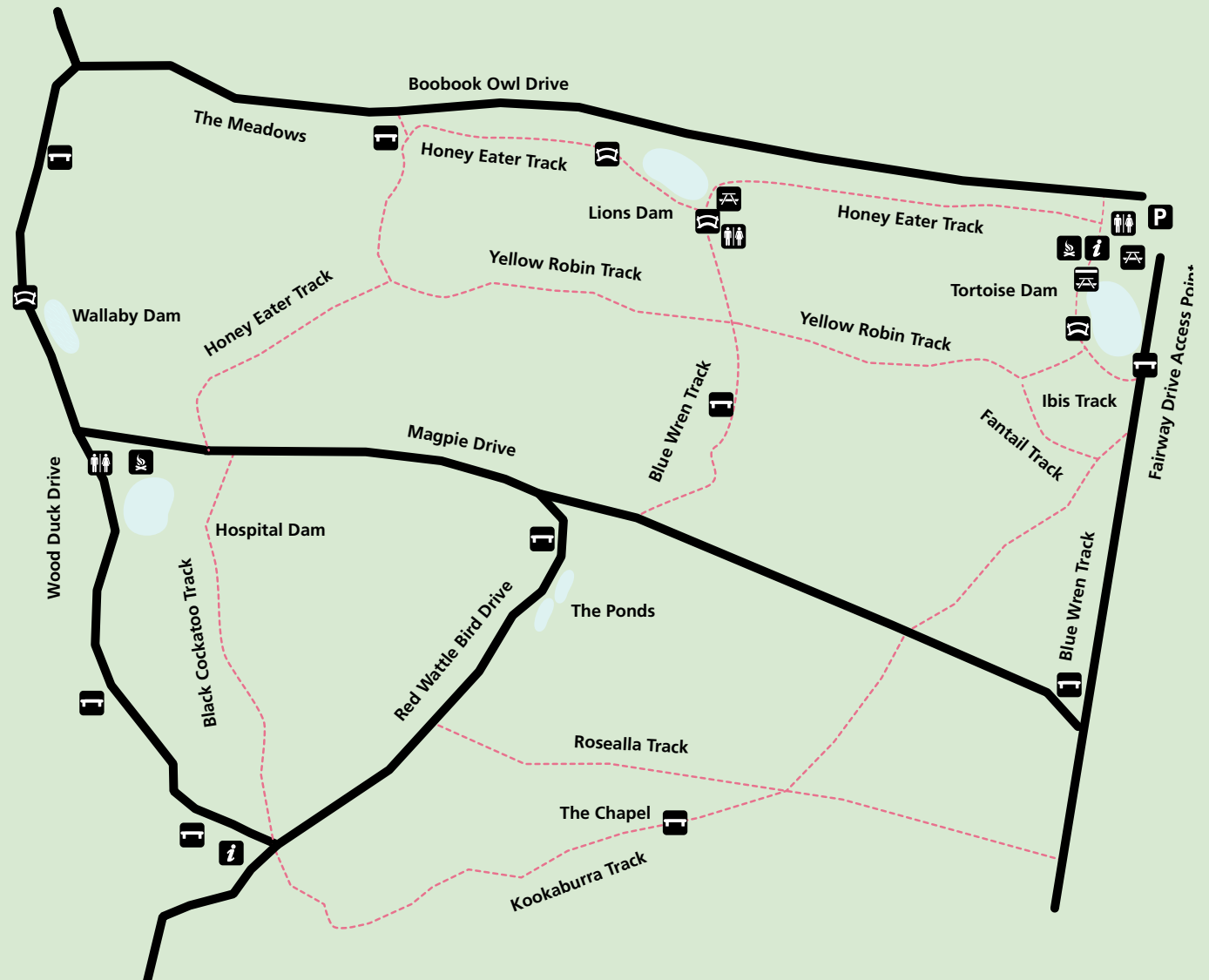
Bushfire experts have recommended that burning be undertaken following Burgan control to keep these areas open for ground storey species and to reduce the risk of burning with high fuel loads. LCC and the volunteer committee will continue to explore ways to use fire as part of the Reserves management in the future.



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Site Infrastructure

-  Bridge
-  Car Park
-  Information Board
-  Picnic Area
-  Toilet
-  Seat
-  Picnic Area (Under Cover)
-  Wood BBQ
-  Vistor Shelter



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