



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter
December 2022

Previous Meeting and AGM Sunday 20 November 2022 Darrell Place

Despite the threatened rain and high winds (which didn't eventuate) eleven of us (Linda Spinaze, Natasha Newman, Natasha Oates, Chris Oates, Jenny Horsfield, Jenny Shapcott, Helen Govey, Paul Sheils, Doug Tinney, Rohan Thomas and Rob Lundie) walked up to the left of Darrell Place to tackle St John's Wort and the occasional *Verbascum* and fleabane. Natasha O and Jenny S worked on Natasha's patch.

After a couple of hours we adjourned to the AGM where we were joined by Mike and Rosalie Pearson, Alan Ford and Peter Lindenmayer. Linda presented a summary of the Group's year in her President's report and praised the work of the Group. Treasurer Rohan revealed that we still had \$3,163.88 in the Group's account.

The CRPCG Committee was elected unopposed as follows:

President: Linda Spinaze
Vice-President: Chris Oates
Secretary: Rob Lundie
Treasurer: Rohan Thomas:
Public Officer: Natasha Newman
Committee: Jenny Horsfield, Jenny Shapcott, Paul Sheils, Natasha Cole, Helen Govey

In Other Business, Helen raised concerns about future housing development on the Western edge between the Ridge and the Murrumbidgee River. It was agreed to find out further information about these plans and to write to local and federal politicians.

Next Meeting Sunday 18 December 2022 Lincoln Place

Time: 8.30 am – 11.00 am.

NOTE NEW TIME

Meet: Lincoln Place.

Bring: hat, gloves, water to drink.

Task: weeding.

Contact: Linda Spinaze 6288 6916

Jan meeting: Sun 15, Chauvel Circle.

Rob explained that identification signs are being placed at the base of or around the trunk of certain trees on the Ridge in order to better educate people about the names of the trees people are walking past. It was agreed to continue with this project.

The Group's bank account signatories will be updated and to ensure that the account is still active, it was agreed the Rob be reimbursed for some of the money spent on the tree identification project.

During the year Rohan expressed his desire to step down from management of the Group's website. This will be taken over by Jenny Shapcott. Thanks to Rohan for all his hard work on the website.

After morning tea, thanks in large part to Helen, we inspected the site of the recent tree plantings by the Forrest Scout Group. It was good to see that most of them were thriving, the plants that is.

Rob Lundie

Does access equal accessibility?

There are at least eight access points to Cooleman Ridge: Kathner St, Chauvel Circle, Freebody St, Titharidge Pl, Darrell Pl, Guinness Pl, Lincoln Pl and Namatjira Dr. This is fine for walkers, runners and bike riders. They can navigate steep slopes, narrow rutted paths, steps and around locked gates. But how about people in wheelchairs? Despite the number of access points, just how accessible is the Ridge for them? Not very. There is just one viable access point, possibly two: Darrell Pl, and Guinness Pl. At Darrell Place the slope is manageable in an electric wheelchair, there is just enough room to navigate around the end of the locked gate, and the track up to a vantage point looking over to the Bullen Range is wide enough and, to date, not too rutted by recent rain. What can be done to improve access here and at other points? Maybe construct long gentle-sloped paths up from the access point to the fire trail on the Ridge? These would also encourage walkers who find some of the current access routes difficult to manage. I wonder what accessibility is like on Canberra's other nature reserves?

Rob Lundie

Curious Cooleman

Does anyone know who or what has caused the scattering of bark from the tree in the picture below?



Photo: Rob Lundie

Rob Lundie

Have you heard about the Western Edge Investigation?

The ACT Government is investigating land use options on the western border of the ACT. This area is bordered by the Murrumbidgee River and the urban areas of Weston Creek, the Molonglo Valley and Belconnen. In 2020-21 the Government engaged consultants who undertook nine assessments mainly covering environmental issues to help inform future land-use decisions. A [report](#) on the project shows a map of the investigation area. The information provided does not give a clear understanding of what is being done, but attempts to allay concerns about housing development by saying that the work done to date involves 'preliminary investigations into the Western Edge to assess the suitability of the area for future development'. It refers to the Commonwealth and ACT statutory rezoning and environmental approvals that would be required before any land use change could occur. It also attempts to allay concerns by saying 'This is the beginning of a long-term planning process over many years for the Western Edge. As the overall project progresses, community engagement will be undertaken at key stages.' Added to this, in 2018, the ACT Auditor General reported that there was a lack of accountability and transparency by the ACT Government in its dealings with agents and developers when it 'purchased' land it had leased to private users along the Western Edge. Nine properties were the subject of the report, including the horse agistment paddocks behind Cooleman Ridge, Milapuru. ([Riotact 3 July 2018](#)). At this stage, the situation is not clear. However, as this area includes the valley to the west of Cooleman Ridge, leading down to the Murrumbidgee River, there is concern about the long-term sustainability of the Murrumbidgee and the fragile environment surrounding it if urban development occurs. The CRPCG AGM agreed to consult with, among others, the ACT Minister for the Environment, Rebecca Vassarotti, and the Conservation Council of the ACT Region to learn more and to make our concerns known. I will provide updates of but if anyone else would like to help me, let me know. Thanks to my colleagues for their support.

Helen Govey