



# COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter  
January 2018

**Previous meeting**  
**Sunday 17 December**  
**Lincoln Place**

There is always a lot happening for people in the run up to Christmas. However, six members of the Group (Linda, Chris, Rohan, Jenny, Doug and Rob) turned up for the monthly working party meeting. Linda had arrived an hour earlier in case it was going to be hot. Fortunately, it was a pleasantly cool, sunny morning which only began to get hotter near the end. Everyone fanned out across this part of the Ridge and along the walking track to keep on top of *Phalaris*, *Verbascum*, *St John's Wort* and *African Love Grass*. A small blackberry was also dug out. As Linda said later, 'the hillside looked decidedly cleaner'.



Rohan & Jenny bag *St John's Wort* Photo: R. Lundie

Rob Lundie

**Next Meeting**  
**Sunday 21 January**  
**Mt Arawang**

**Time:** 8.30 am – 11.00 am

**NOTE:** If there is a fire ban in place, this activity will be cancelled

**Meet:** Opposite the horse paddocks on Namatjira Drive

**Bring:** hat, gloves, secateurs, doover-dabber, hacker, drink, raincoat if it is wet

**Task:** plant identification, weeding

### **Seen on the Ridge**

White *Lachnodius* cocoons (a felted scale) on a *Eucalyptus nortii* near the Kathner St dam. Many insects use tree trunks as vantage points for dispersal, attracting mates, reproduction, looking for prey and other activities.



Photo by Pat Ryan

## Attention: weeds!



Seen on Isaacs Ridge

Photo by Rob Lundie

### Graham: a CRPCG worker

Graham is one of those people in any volunteer organisation who are not office bearers, not on the committee, but are always there to do the basic work (weeding): the lifeblood. Graham has been a member of the CRPCG for about nine years. Like many of us who have lived in the shadow of Cooleman Ridge and walked along it, he joined after speaking with some Parkcare rangers and volunteers about the work of the Group and the Ridge environment.

Graham and his wife Jenny have lived right on the edge of the Ridge in Chapman since 1975. Like many, he always felt safe there until the horrific 2003 fires. Fortunately he was able to save his house although his garden was destroyed.

A keen observer of nature, Graham had previously noticed that there seemed to be fewer birds and animals around than there had been in earlier years. Not as many 'kookas which used to sit on the power lines behind us and cackle the way they do.' Not as many 'kangas (greys) which would meander behind us and at times jump around the back yard.' He also recalls a brown snake which resided in their broken stormwater outlet outside the

garage. 'It would sleep on our front steps in the cooler weather prior to winter but hasten away when we opened the front door'.

He believes the reduction in wildlife around his place was due to the growth in population which also brought in more cats and dogs. But now Graham lists maggies and doves and willie-wagtails and cute finches and parrot varieties and wattle birds that all frequent his garden. He thinks this rejuvenation may be due to the installation of a birdbath. And lizards. So maybe all is not lost.

Graham walks along the Ridge most days and says his favourite part is 'everywhere'! He particularly enjoys seeing big kangaroos lazing around the track as if nothing worried them. He has noted that the Murrumbidgee side of the Ridge always produces many 'kangas' which stand and look at him as he passes. 'Lovely!' He loves the way he can walk around magpies which barely move off the track as they stare up at him. He only wishes the parrots could be similarly trusting. He thinks it is his very large, wide-brimmed hat! He also really enjoys the changing colours of the Murrumbidgee during the year, especially in the mornings and evenings. 'Delightful. I feel I am far away from the madding crowd!!

If Graham could change one thing it would be the pace of cyclists. He has been startled a few times and just hopes there is not a mishap particularly when the evenings set in. He wonders if a few signs may slow bike riders so that we can all enjoy the Ridge in safety.

Graham's passion is weeds and their eradication, or at least their control. He never just goes for a walk. He is always on the lookout for weeds. If he can't pull them out as he goes he will return later to deal with them. Large infestations of *Verbascum* or blackberries or African Love Grass are a rather daunting sight. Not for Graham. He sees it as a challenge, almost a mission, to see their demise. So, if you see a tall man in white overalls with a big hat beavering away for hours at a time on the side of the Ridge, that will be Graham. Give him a wave as he is one of the stalwarts who help maintain Cooleman Ridge as one of our favourite places.

*Rob Lundie*