



# COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter  
September 2022

**Previous Meeting**  
**Sunday 21 August 2022**  
**Chauvel Circle**

Six of us (Chris Oates, Paul Sheils, Linda Spinaze, Natasha Newman, Jenny Shapcott and Rob Lundie) gathered at Chauvel Circle before beginning the monthly weeding. It was good to have Linda back from holidays and to welcome newcomer, Jenny Shapcott to the Group. Linda informed us that our ranger, Jim has moved on and has been replaced by Colin who we look forward to meeting and hope will be with us for quite some time.. It was a very pleasant sunny afternoon (when the wind wasn't blowing) on the north side of One Tree Hill. We tackled the usual *Verbascum*, bagging its seed heads and digging out its rosettes. It was rather satisfying to look back up the hill with its magnificent trees and weed-free slope. Thanks to Colin who, next day, had removed the 16 bags of seed heads that we had filled.



Natasha Newman Jenny Shapcott Linda Spinaze Paul Sheils Chris Oates stand in front of 16 bags below One Tree Hill  
Photo: Rob Lundie

Rob Lundie

**Next Meeting**  
**Sunday 18 September 2022**  
**The Old Dam**

**Time:** 1.30 pm – 4.00 pm.

**Meet:** Freebody Place.

**Bring:** hat, gloves, water to drink.

**Task:** weeding.

**Contact:** Rob Lundie 0418291735

**Oct meeting:** Sun 16, Darrell Place.

## **Favourite Tree: Red Box** **(*Eucalyptus polyanthemos*)**

Near the end of August, the ABC ran two excellent programs on Australia's favourite native trees. An expert panel chose the Mountain Ash as their favourite. A people's survey voted the River Red Gum as theirs. Neither of these grow on Coleman Ridge. The Red Box (*Eucalyptus polyanthemos*) is my favourite tree species on the Ridge. Not only is it a lovely, traditional "tree" shape, but it has the most beautiful white "wriggly" branches, which are especially attractive when viewed from below with patches of sky framing them.

*E. polyanthemos* is commonly known as Red Box, due to its red-brown furrowed fibrous bark evident on the lower parts of the trunk. The higher branches have smooth white bark. "Polyanthemos" refers to the prolific flowering, which occurs between October and January. The foliage is most distinctive because the leaves are oval, rather than the

long, slim shape of most eucalypts. It provides excellent shade due to its pleasing shape, and attracts birds and bees and other local wildlife. Native to South East Australia, it tolerates dry, stony soils as well as high temperatures and frosts. On Cooleman Ridge it is found on the upper slopes and tops. Apparently it is grown overseas commercially to provide foliage for the cut-flower market. The timber is hard and strong, and is used in fencing, turning and poles, and can be suitable for furniture if planted at high densities and pruned to prevent knots forming in the wood. Next time you are on the Ridge, stand under one of these lovely trees and look up! My favourite is right beside the 25 year anniversary seat.



*Red Box (Eucalyptus polyanthemos) by the anniversary seat*  
Photos: Linda Spinaze



Do you have a favourite tree on the Ridge?

*Linda Spinaze*

## **Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) Annual Planning Meeting**

Linda Spinaze, Paul Sheils and Chris Oates met with Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) on 17 August for the annual planning meeting covering activities on Cooleman Ridge in 2022-2023. Martine Franco (Southern ACT Catchment Group) also attended.

PCS's activities this year will focus on Mt Arawang, tackling serrated tussock, St John's wort, African love grass and blackberries. A controlled burn west of Mt Arawang is planned, but damp conditions make it unlikely before Christmas. We were assured that the burn would be closely monitored by PCS rangers. Other works scheduled for this year include:

- track repair for the southern horse paddock ascent to Mt Arawang
- Replacement of all signage. Hopefully this will now include replacing the perspex on our boxed signs
- The squeeze-through gates along the Centennial Trail will be replaced with wider gaps, a boon to less agile and/or more heavily laden volunteers.

We were advised that a policy document supporting the use of whipper-snippers and brush cutters by volunteers was being put to senior PCS management, and a decision is expected within three months. The policy would encompass appropriate training for volunteers. The PCS's General Volunteer Policy is also being revised, with a draft hopefully being available within the next year.

Parkcare groups are now being encouraged to have a five-year plan, focused on planting initiatives, to help PCS plan for the provision of plants and ground preparation. PCS accepted that these plans were probably less important for our Group with its focus on weeding rather than planting, but it could be handy for continuity as key members leave the Group.

Research into wombat health is being undertaken through surveys. "Flaps" will be put on some burrows to transfer a drug that reduces mange, to the wombat as it goes in and out.

Finally, we met the Ridge's new ranger, Colin Schofield, who replaces Jim Clarke.

*Chris Oates*