



Friends of the Box-Ironbark Forests (Mount Alexander Region) Inc.

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You are cordially invited to the 2011 Annual General Meeting of the
Friends of the Box Ironbark Forests (Mount Alexander Region)

Castlemaine Continuing Education Centre, Templeton St, Castlemaine at

7.30 pm, on Monday, July 11

After brief reports and elections to the committee, the meeting will be addressed by
Damian Wells, CEO of the North Central Catchment Management Authority on

'Managing our waterways in time of flood'

Nominations to the committee are open. They must be signed by FOBIF members moving
and seconding the nomination, and by the nominee. If insufficient nominations are
received by July 11 to fill all positions, nominations will be accepted at the meeting.

Walks

Numbers attending FOBIF walks have been steadily rising in the last two years, and two walks this year have seen attendances of around fifty. Naturally we are pleased with the popularity of the walks program, but are curious to know if any members find the groups too large, or whether there is any demand for greater 'educational' presentation on the part of walks leaders. This will affect our planning for next year's program.

Mt Alexander shire enviro plan

The mayor, Janet Cropley, launched the Shire's Environment Strategy at the very successful World Environment Day Expo at the Market building on June 5. The Council has budgeted money to hire a project officer for six months to promote the strategy. We believe that this is not enough time and have written to Council urging that the officer needs more time to be effective in the large number of roles the task involves.

The strategy is unfortunately only available on the web:www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/environment
It is a mixed document, with some very praiseworthy ideas, but a shadow hanging over the Shire's ability to carry through its promises. We have seen a lot of nice documents come and go over the years.

As an example, FOBIF has written to the Shire asking for clarification of its policy on roadworks. The letter was provoked by recent roadwork on the Tourist Road in Kalimna Park. This work was definitely necessary, given damage in recent rains, and some corrugation. The worry for us is that in this, and in many other cases, such work seems to be accompanied by significant and unnecessary widening. The battered sign at the top of Lyttleton St warning of a 'narrow road' is now well and truly misleading.

The Enviro strategy aims to have the shire 'leading by example' in environmental matters. We believe one way to start would be to brief council workers about the need not to encroach on bushland when doing road works.

VEAC recommends training for workers in land management

On a related matter, the Victorian Environment Assessment Council has recommended that 'Managers, contractors and on-ground workers be made aware of their responsibilities and appropriate work protocols whilst working around native vegetation, and that mandatory formal education and training be incorporated into all accredited training courses.'

The Council is evidently responding to dissatisfaction with the way Parks Victoria and DSE sometimes conduct their operations in the bush. We have our own problems in that regard, especially in connection with road maintenance and fire management.

DSE opens consultation on fire operations plans

DSE has invited FOBIF and other concerned groups to contribute input to the upcoming draft Fire Operations Plan for the Murray Goldfields region. The draft will be available for public consultation in August. The Department is moving to implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission.

We have submitted a list of six matters of particular concern to us. It can be found on www.fobif.org.au

It should be emphasised that we are not opposed to fuel reduction burning, but believe that DSE should follow its own protocols in this matter more diligently. We are also concerned about the apparent lack of coordination on fire between those responsible for public and private land. In particular, we are completely in the dark about fire protection measures for the Moonlight Flat plantations.

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