

## Spotlighting Tour

The Spotlight Tour at **Hartmann Reserve** after night fall on the 5<sup>th</sup> of April was well supported by 50 residents. We set out as three groups and most managed to find a Tawny Frogmouth, Brushtail Possum and some even a Sugar Glider. The Tawny Frogmouth is a light weight and can fly without making a sound which is a great advantage when hunting insects at night.



**Tawny Frogmouth**  
Photo by Howard Rickert (FEP)

We were also dazzled by the array of different insects and spiders in the area including a tent spider with a large tent like web using the tree to support the top.



**Tent spider**  
Photo by Coral Sharrock (FEP)

## Committee Meetings

FEP members are invited to attend the committee meetings. Meetings are held on the last Friday of every second month. The **next meeting is scheduled for Friday 30<sup>th</sup> May** from 1pm at the TRC Parks and Gardens office cnr Stephen Street & Anzac Avenue.

## Parkcare Groups

**Parkcare groups** are volunteers carrying out bush rehabilitation in our local bushland parks.

*Would you like to get involved?*



**Duggan Park**  
(Leslie & Collier Streets, Rangeville)

(Schedule is to be advised)

(Contact Rod Spalding 0418 710 232)

**Redwood Park (Each Monday 8:30am)**  
(Plus 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday each month)  
(Warrego Highway below the saddle)

This group is active each Monday plus 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday from 8:30am.

Access to the park is through the bottom car park on the down section of the Toowoomba range crossing, on the left just after the first 100km speed sign.



(Contact Hugh Krenske [info@fep.org.au](mailto:info@fep.org.au))  
(or call Hugh 0418 748 282 or 07 4635 1758)

**Hartmann Bushland Reserve**  
(Cnr Alderley St & Rowbotham St)  
(Wednesday from 7:30am each week)  
(NEW 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday each month from 9am)

(Contact Greg Lukes 0428 288 077)  
([glukes@bigpond.com](mailto:glukes@bigpond.com))

**Nielsen Park (Tarlington St off Ramsay St)**  
(1<sup>st</sup> Saturday each month from 9am - 12)  
(Plus 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month from 9pm)

(Contact Rob Brodribb 0407 124 863)  
([rwbrodribb@ozemail.com.au](mailto:rwbrodribb@ozemail.com.au))

**Panorama Crescent Park**  
(1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday each month from 3pm)

We would like to get more Prince Henry Heights residents active carrying out bush rehabilitation activities each month.

Pedestrian access is down the laneway between 4 & 8 Panorama Cr, Prince Henry Heights.

(Kathy Gouldson 4613 0195 or 0437 920 936)

**Echo Valley South Park (Ramsay St)**  
(2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Saturday each month from 9am)

This small group is active 2 or 3 Saturdays each month from 9am – 12 noon.

(Contact Greg Lukes 0428 288 077)

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## Friends of the Escarpment Parks Toowoomba Inc.

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Newsletter Editor Greg Lukes

[glukes@bigpond.com](mailto:glukes@bigpond.com)

0428 288 077



**You are invited to check out our parks and progress (See Parkcare Groups)  
Would you like to support FEP? Membership is only \$5 per year (\$10/Family)**



The  
**Escarpment  
Park Friend**  
**May – Jun 2014**

*Hugh Krenske 4635 1758*

[info@fep.org.au](mailto:info@fep.org.au)

[www.fep.org.au](http://www.fep.org.au)

*FEP, Caring for Toowoomba's Bushlands*

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**FEP Open Day Redwood Park**

The FEP Open Day at Redwood Park was a great success with perfect weather. The day started with an early morning birdwalk guided by Mick Atzeni from Toowoomba Bird Observers and was followed by a number of tours featuring "Plants of the Dry Rainforest" by Trish Gardner and Butterflies and other ecology by Don Sands. These tours highlighted some of the many interesting features of this amazing bushland park which is virtually located on our doorstep. The event included information displays featuring our environmental groups and a BBQ.

The picnic area was also named.

**Redwood Improvements**

Renaming the picnic area. The picnic area is now named after Edwin Bernays who was one of two honorary rangers appointed by the State Government of Queensland who made a significant contribution to the preservation and conservation of Redwood Park. He and Dr Price who was the other ranger were instrumental in getting many of the birds and fauna found in the park protected under the Animal and Birds Act of 1921.

During their time as honorary rangers, they spent much of their time trying to eradicate tree pear and other noxious weeds from the park. In recognition of Edwin's contribution to the conservation of the flora and fauna of Redwood Park, this picnic area was named "The Edwin Bernays Picnic Area" on the 5<sup>th</sup> April 2014.



Redwood Park now also has a covered rest area. The shelter was reclaimed, relocated and rebuilt by FEP volunteers to provide cover over an existing park table.

The access to the rainforest has been upgraded by council which includes a concrete creek crossing and track work along the main track.

Conservation Volunteers Australia and FEP members have completed a new 360m Rainforest Circuit which involved track work, step building, signposts, etc. The circuit highlights a variety of trees and other plants providing a close up experience.

If you have not been to the park for a while we would encourage you to check out the area and the new facilities. The easiest access to the picnic area in Redwood Park is through the bottom car park on the down section of the Warrego Highway, Toowoomba range crossing, on the left just after the first 100km speed sign.

## Species Watch

### Bull Ant

*Myrmecia brevinoda*

&

### Blind Snake

*Ramphotyphlops proximus*

*Myrmecia*, often called bulldog ants, bull ants, inch ants, sergeant ants, jumper ants or jack-jumpers (although jack jumper only applies to members of the *M. pilosulaspecies* group), is a genus of ants. Bull ants can grow to over 40 mm (1.6 in).

These ants are well known in Australia for their aggressive behaviour and powerful stings. The venom of these ants has the potential to induce anaphylactic shock in those allergic to stings. As with most severe allergic reactions, the reaction may be lethal if left untreated. These large, alert ants have characteristic large eyes and long, slender mandibles. They have superior vision, able to track and even follow intruders from a distance of 1 metre.

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Myrmecia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Myrmecia)



**Bull ant myrmecia brevinoda**

Photo by Frank Arnold

[insectsofaustralia.wordpress.com/2010/01/17/bulldog-ant-myrmecia-brevinoda/](http://insectsofaustralia.wordpress.com/2010/01/17/bulldog-ant-myrmecia-brevinoda/)

The Bull Ants in Hartmann's Reserve are *Myrmecia brevinoda*. This species is very like *Myrmecia gulosa* that is also around Toowoomba but can be distinguished by the colour of their gasters (bulbous rear portion of the body found in bees, wasps and ants) and mandibles (jaws). *Myrmecia brevinoda* also grows larger (15-36mm) whereas *M. gulosa* is smaller (15-23 mm). Both build very similar nests. The Jumper Ant *Myrmecia nigrocincta* is a much smaller member of this genus (12-17mm) that is also around Toowoomba. All are potent stingers. (RH)

**This is where it becomes interesting. Often also living in the mounds of bull ants could be a blind snake.**

The species of blind snake that inhabits the mounds of bull ants and eats their eggs and larvae is *Ramphotyphlops proximus*. They have also been found in the mounds of the harmless sugar ants *Camponotus* spp.

Blind Snakes, *Ramphotyphlops* spp., is a small, non-venomous snake and are rarely encountered. They are nocturnal and usually burrow through the soil, although they may be seen moving on the surface on warm humid nights. They are found in loamy soils, under rocks, in or under rotting logs or in ant or termite nests. All species lay eggs and feed primarily on ants and/or termites. Most are pink or grey in colour with extremely shiny scales. They are incapable of biting.

***Ramphotyphlops proximus*** is a heavily-built species. It is a dark brown with a rounded head, 20 mid-body scale rows and has an average length of 50 cm (maximum 70 cm). The scales protect the snake from ant bites. Females lay up to 35 eggs per clutch.



***Ramphotyphlops proximus***

Photo by Peter Robertson / Source: Wildlife Profiles Pty Ltd  
[museumvictoria.com.au/discoverycentre/infosheets/snakes-found-in-victoria/blind-snakes/](http://museumvictoria.com.au/discoverycentre/infosheets/snakes-found-in-victoria/blind-snakes/)

*Ramphotyphlops proximus* are often found in bull ant's mounds. Generally they are soil dwellers and are only likely to surface in extremely wet, humid conditions where the soil is soaked. On humid nights or in very wet conditions it might be possible to see these interesting elusive snakes out and about. (R.Hobson personal communication.)

Compiled by Greg Lukes (FEP)

## Tree Planting

***Dr John Swarbrick has been working closely with Toowoomba Regional Council (TRC) as a volunteer for almost 25 years – using his incredible knowledge of local flora to assist TRC staff develop a multitude of databases and historical documents.***

Having been a horticulturist and botanist during his working life, Dr Swarbrick has rarely encountered a tree he couldn't recognise. But one simple sapling had him scratching his head when he was asked to identify it for Council's Parks and Recreation staff in 2013. Summoned to a corner of Laurel Bank Park, Dr Swarbrick found the 'mystery' tree sitting innocently beside a pre-dug hole and ***it didn't take him long to recognise it as a common Oak.***

But he had no inkling that he was actually the one in the spotlight and this special tree planting was being held in his honour.



Enthusiastically picking up the adjacent shovel, he soon placed the tree in its new home and with a kiss on the leaves of the young plant, Dr Swarbrick stepped back to admire what will undoubtedly become a living legacy for his three children and 10 grandchildren.

TRC Environmental Health, Parks and Recreation portfolio leader Cr Sue Englart said Dr Swarbrick's long involvement with Council has meant that Parks and Recreation staff have been able to develop management

solutions that are backed by historical information as well as having the support of community members.

"Dr Swarbrick's work with Council has been invaluable, helping develop a booklet on environmental weeds and another on Oak trees in the region.", Cr Englart said.



***Dr John Swarbrick and TRC's Coordinator Public Gardens South Karl Grams***

"He was the leader of the Friends of the Escarpment Parks for 25 years and has conducted tree surveys in our botanical gardens, created nominations for the National Trust, is constantly helping promote Toowoomba's garden image and has provided a strong link to the horticultural community for TRC."

"The information Dr Swarbrick collects is always of a high standard and well-researched and he has also worked with volunteer groups to manage weeds (such as privet) within our bushland parks."

"He provides chronological information about trees which helps to enhance Toowoomba's historical database and advises TRC of tree issues (such as dead and declining trees) which, in turn, helps Council to provide parks that are safer and more attractive for our residents and visitors."

"This is a wonderful idea that not only marks Dr Swarbrick's dedication to a lifetime of botany and the magnificent work he does with Council, but it also enhances our beautiful Laurel Bank Park at the same time," Cr Englart said.

"Council's long partnership with Dr Swarbrick is a perfect example of how Council and community-minded members of the public can work together to achieve real benefits for the region."