



# Bandicoot Tails

Newsletter of the Friends of Scott Creek Conservation Park Inc.

No. 198  
March—May 2025

Website: [www.friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au](http://www.friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au) Facebook: [www.facebook.com/friendsofscottcreekcp](http://www.facebook.com/friendsofscottcreekcp)

*Unless otherwise indicated, all articles and photos by editor Peter Watton. Please send any contributions for the winter edition to [info@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au](mailto:info@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au) by mid-May.*

Welcome to your autumn edition of Bandicoot Tails.

During autumn our scheduled bushcare activities will return to the regular time of 9.00am, meeting at the nearest gate for the location of the activity. An email will be sent to bushcarers advising the location in advance.

To receive the emails, any new members can contact the leader on [info@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au](mailto:info@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au).

## The President's words:

### *What we don't see (and hear)...*

It seems that every week a house in the streets near my home in Panorama is being demolished. The amazing part is how soon I forget what was there before the scarified block emerges. Within weeks a new concrete slab is down and I cannot remember what used to be there.

'Social scientists call this phenomenon "survivorship bias" – we are more likely to notice people and things that are still with us, rather than those that have vanished.'<sup>1</sup>

Sadly, the same kind of memory lapse happens in our Park. If it was not for a decent photographic record, I would not know what some of the pre-2021-burn bush was like. In a similar way, I find I am talking myth to new bird banders about Bassian Thrushes, Yellow-rumped Thornbills and Chestnut-rumped Heathwrens. Even more of a concern, how quickly we put aside awareness of what the environment and weather was like 20 years ago. In fact, many records make 20 years the 'benchmark' for current conditions. John Wamsley's observations on insect and plant life are a dire warning against taking short-term views.

This is critical for conservation work. Twenty years ago, the environment was already rapidly deteriorating, so it was hardly a valid benchmark. Maybe we even must go back to pre-European presence to honestly find a genuine environmental standard.

At the heart of it all is the country. My insignificant 24-year involvement at Scott Creek Conservation Park is a poor measure against the tens of thousands of years of deep relationship that nurtured this

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place. As our nation plunges into yet another ‘election-mode’ experience, is it too much to hope that our one and only Earth (let alone our 720 hectares of conservation park) will not again just become a political plateau of competing priorities?

A quote from Tim Winton is sobering on these points. *‘Our current predicament infects my every waking thought. It colours my view of my friends, neighbours and colleagues. It’s led to the awful realisation that I have enemies, by which I mean powers and principalities that pose a threat to my grandchildren and their children. And yours. Forces that must be defeated.’*<sup>2</sup>

On a lighter note, we are now ‘Inc’d’. There will be little change to our routine work and schedules apart from adding ‘Inc.’ to our name. It has taken some time for our committee to get a constitution written and accepted – a big thank you to all who gave input, especially to Anna who led us through the knots of red tape we encountered.

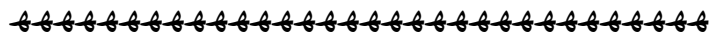
Such administration seems remote and even somewhat irrelevant to the work that our dedicated volunteers put in month after month. From a committee perspective it is good to be confident that the ‘back-room’ stuff is now properly set up to support our on-the-ground work.

Jim Spiker

President Friends of Scott Creek Conservation Park Inc.

<sup>1</sup> David Ritter, *The Inspirations of Nostalgia*, in ‘On This Ground’ David Witty Ed. Monash University Publishing, 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Tim Winton, *Writing in Nature*, in ‘On This Ground’, *ibid.*



*Our bushcare team got the opportunity to test out the new memorial seat for John Butler, we thank all the donors who contributed to the purchase, and our NPWS staff who installed it.*

## Bushcare activities:

For the first time since the January 2021 fire, we have had a hot and dry summer. Following a drier than average 2024, we have seen a lot of our native vegetation in the park looking heat stressed. Hopefully we will see a more usual rainfall during 2025, which will inevitably result in much of the vegetation returning strong, healthy growth again.

In the meantime, we may finally be able to get on top of some of the rapid regeneration of several of the fire responsive weeds, including the Montpellier and English Brooms, Boneseed and *Acacia longifolia*. Seedlings of these, and other species like Erica, will hopefully succumb to the hot, dry summer, so we have less to deal with later in the year.

Many of the native wattles are also now looking heat stressed and are starting to thin out again. Immediately after the fire, these were a vital component of the post-fire recovery of the park. They helped prevent erosion and returned nutrients to the soil, all the while helping protect other native vegetation regenerating in the understory.

### Almanda Bush Gardening:

The Almanda Bush Gardening team continues to regularly meet and work along the Almanda and Scott Creek areas adjacent to Dorset Vale and Matthews Roads, encouraging the riparian vegetation to regenerate as weeds are removed, and doing the occasional planting.

There are four regular members of this group, and they would welcome along anyone else who has three or so hours they can contribute every now and then to this important work in quite an accessible part of the park. In general they meet Tuesday mornings, but it is best to let them know if you plan to attend, in case of cancellation. Contact us at [info@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au](mailto:info@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au) for more details.

### Scheduled bushcare activities during autumn:

3rd December—11 volunteers worked on Montpellier Broom, *Acacia longifolia* and Boneseed, along with a few Sollya, South African Daisy and *Acacia baileyana*, around the end of Yacca Track.

8th December—9 volunteers headed to the Panhandle, to follow-up work on the extensive area of Montpellier Broom, Sollya and Erica across the creekline to the west.

28th December—11 volunteers followed up Montpellier Broom in upper Gahnia Gully, next to Pennant Ridge, before rain interrupted the activity.

7th January—9 volunteers patrolled along Panhandle Creek and the uphill slope from Panhandle Track, finding lots of Montpellier Broom, Erica and Sollya, plus a few Boneseed.

12th January—10 volunteers headed into gate 1, to patrol for Sollya across Yakka Hill west, and deal with several different woody weed species near the old Ranger's House.

**Below left and right:** Treating a patch of *Acacia longifolia* near the end of Yacca Track in December and the final result.





**Above left:** Some of the Montpellier Broom removed from the end of Yacca Track in December.



**Above right:** Working on a large patch of Montpellier Broom north-west of Panhandle Creek in December.

**Below left:** Montpellier Broom, Sollya and African Daisy removed from Panhandle Creek in December.

**Below right:** Just a part of the large lignotuber of an Erica knocked out in the Panhandle in January.



**Below left:** Sollya being treated in the Panhandle in January.

**Below right:** Working on a patch of Sollya on Yacca Hill west in January.





**Above left:** A handful of small Sollya removed from a patch on Yakka Hill west during January.



**Above right:** Working on a patch of Erica in the Panhandle in February.

25th January—10 volunteers returned to Yakka Hill east, continuing our work on *Acacia longifolia* and Boneseed between Helipad Hill Track and Yacca Track, also finding a small number of Sollya.

7th February—we rescheduled our regular Tuesday activity to the Friday due to heat, and 5 volunteers came out to continue working on *Acacia longifolia* and Boneseed on Yakka Hill, finishing the area started last time.

9th February—10 volunteers returned to the Panhandle, to continue work on Boneseed, Erica and Sollya along the south side of Panhandle Track, including a roaming patrol across the higher parts of the hillside and down Fantail Creek.

23rd February—another rescheduled bushcare activity due to heat saw 9 volunteers follow-up previous work on Montpellier Broom in Blechnum Creek.

#### Additional bushcare activities:

8th December—Following the regular bushcare activity, Peter and Glenn stayed to spray large number of smaller regrowth Montpellier Broom in the Panhandle.

7th January—Peter stayed after bushcare to spray Blackberry and Montpellier Broom along Panhandle Creek.

9th January—Peter sprayed Rock Rose at the old Ranger's House near gate 1 and drilled and filled a Weeping Willow near Mackereth Cottage.

**Below left:** Montpellier Broom being removed in Blechnum Creek in February, amongst tall strappy native Varnish Wattle.

**Below right:** One of many piles of Montpellier Broom treated in Blechnum Creek in February. We sometimes pile tall skinny weeds like this where there is no native understorey, or hang them up to ensure others can see an area has been covered.





**Above left:** Morning tea in Blechnum Creek amongst the Bracken Fern in February.



**Above right:** Montpellier Broom in Blechnum Creek in February.

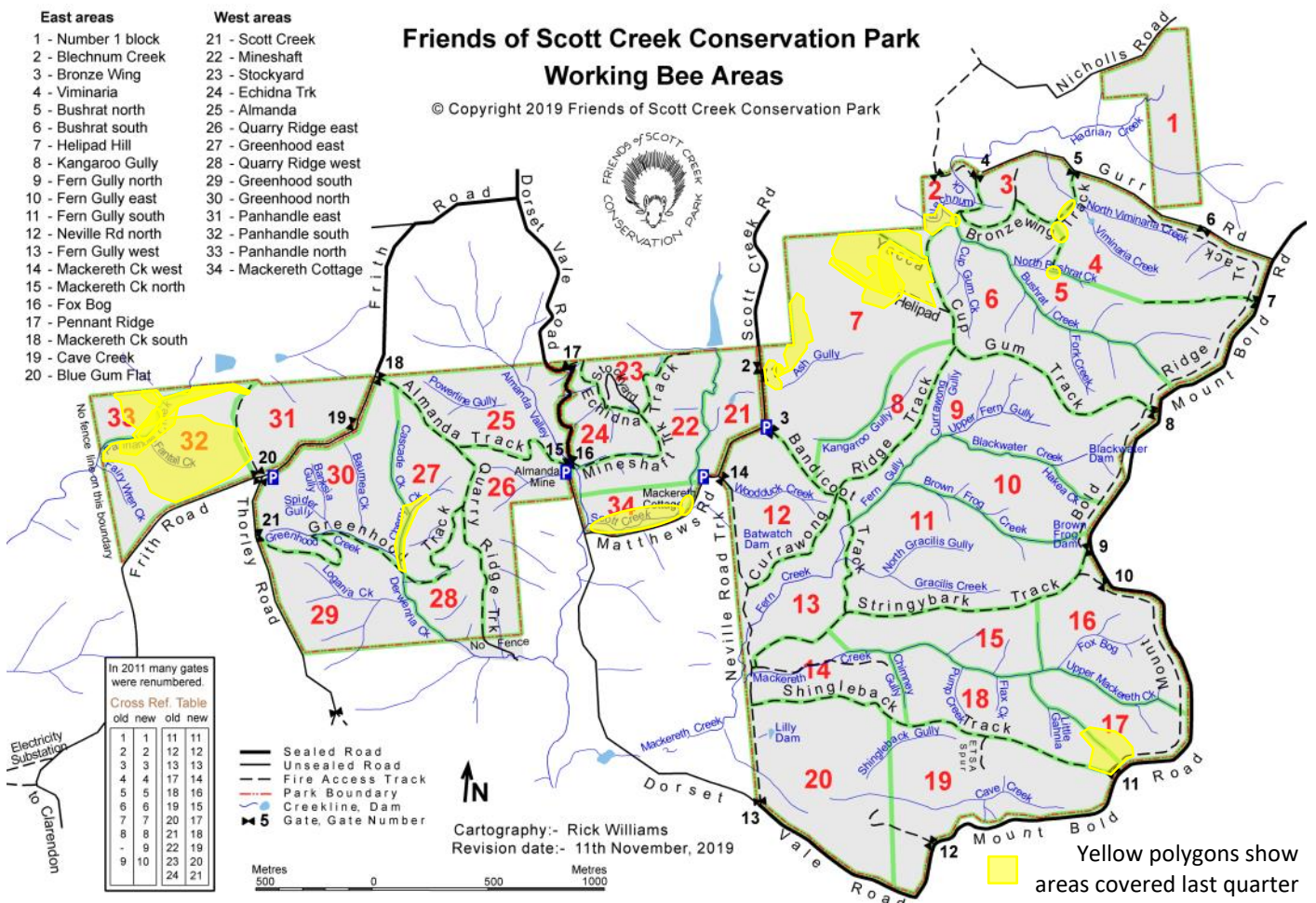
7th February—Glenn stayed after bushcare to spray Blackberry and a few other weeds at the end of the track down to North Bushrat Creek.

7th & 8th February—Peter sprayed Blackberry and weedy Mint around Scott Creek, south of Mackereth Cottage and under Weeping Willows that will be drilled and filled.

16th February—after bird banding, Peter sprayed Blackberry and treated a few other weeds up Cherry Creek in Derwentia Valley.

23rd February—after bushcare, Glenn sprayed Stinkweed along Bronzewing Track, near Viminaria Creek.

Peter Watton



# Funding and Contractor report:

## Funding update:

- Received approval of Friends of Parks and Nature (FoPN) grant for \$15,000 for project “Creating post-fire resilience in Scott Creek Conservation Park: focus on difficult to access creeklines”.



**Government of South Australia**  
 Department for Environment and Water



- We were unsuccessful in our application for FoPN grant for \$15,000 for project “Eradicating Erica from upper Almada Valley in Scott Creek Conservation Park” due to large numbers of applications received.
- Received approval of Green Adelaide Grassroots Grant Round 5 application for \$30,000 over two years for work in the Scott Creek catchment (*Post-fire recovery of Scott Creek - creating long-term resilience*).
- Received donation of \$10,000 from the Carthew Family Charity Trust via Landcare Australia.

Below is a list of the main work that contractors have completed during summer:

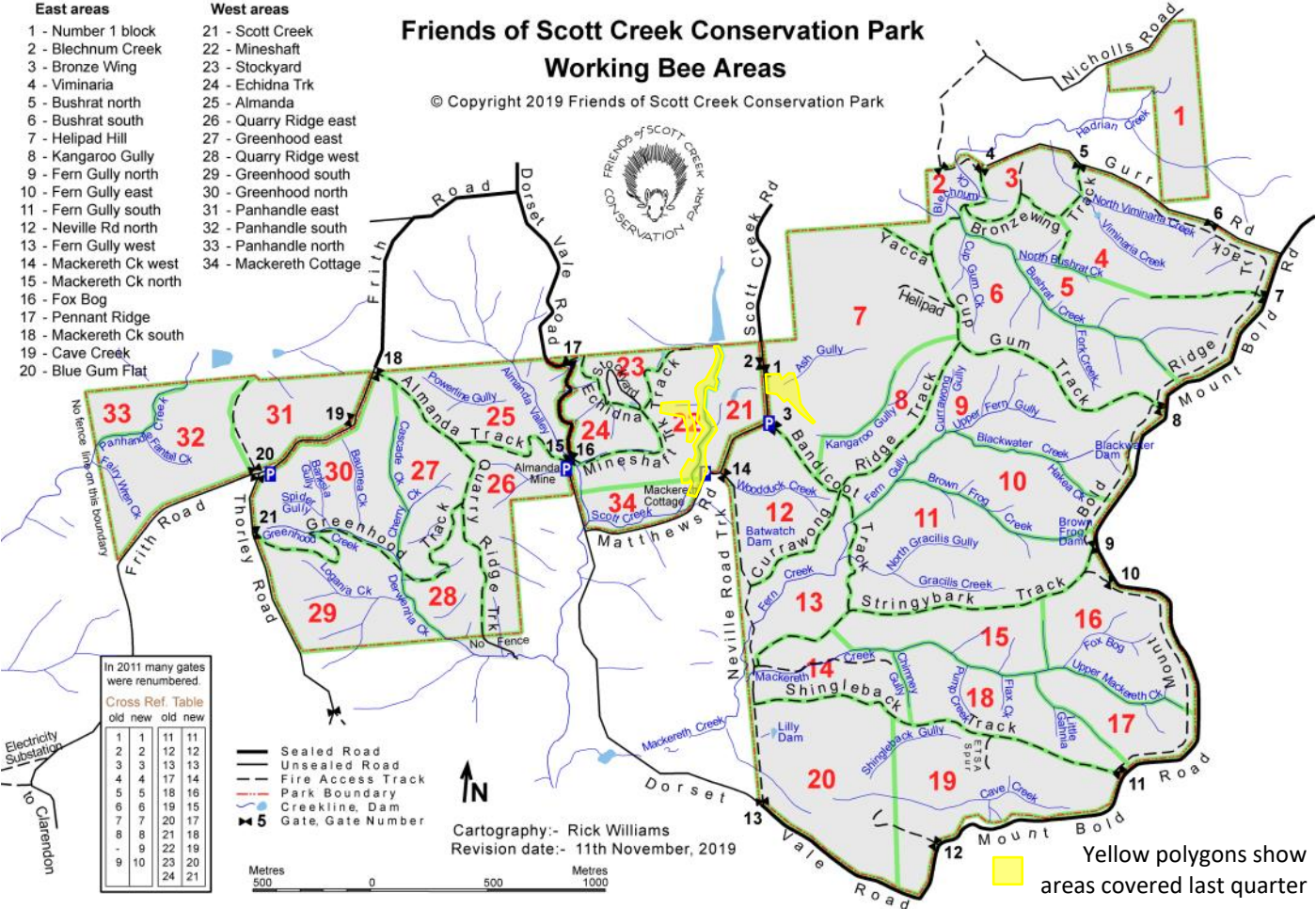
- Funded by Green Adelaide Grassroots Grant
  - ⇒ Gate 1, Kangaroo Gully—TFL Works started work on Erica and other priority weeds.
  - ⇒ Scott Creek—TFL Works completed a first patrol treating Blackberry along the length of the creekline on the western side, from Mackereth Cottage to the northern fenceline, plus a section on the eastern side.

This project is funded by Green Adelaide.



Green Adelaide also provided funding for the treatment of large Boneseed on the eastern side of Mackereth Hill, from their threatened flora budget.

Peter Watton—Grants & Funding, Contractor Liaison & Reporting





**Above left:** Blackberry patch sprayed along Scott Creek.



**Above right:** English Broom treated at the gate 1 Kangaroo Gully work site.



**Above left:** Erica (Tree Heath) regrowth spot sprayed at Kangaroo Gully.



**Above right:** More Erica (Tree Heath) seedlings spot sprayed at Kangaroo Gully.



**Above left:** Inspecting Boneseed control on the eastern side of Mackereth Hill.



**Above right:** A large patch of Montpellier Broom treated up Short Gully on Mackereth Hill.



## Bird Banding Notes December 2024 – February 2025:

Banding was briefly put on hold at the end of November and early December because we found that the directives regarding H5N1 Avian Flu and our banding methodology would not work. This was clarified after the first week in December, particularly because the precautions now in place are more of a ‘wait and see’ approach as the infection has not been found anywhere in Australia. A few other timetable difficulties resulted in conducting only 6 banding sessions for this quarter. Three sessions were cancelled because of Total Fire Ban and predicted temperatures over 30 degrees. We banded on 11 January (a Friday) to make up for lost sessions.

Regular visitors to the Park will know that we have experienced much in the way of hot, dry weather this quarter. Most birds generally avoided the ground and resorted to the tree canopies. Only 10 species were encountered in our banding, and only two recaptures – with one (6+ years) White-browed Scrubwren presenting at Derwentia Valley. It is at times like these that we need to keep our ‘scientific’ approach in mind and be diligent about continuing to record what is happening rather than lust after the buzz of capturing many birds each time we go out. Low counts simply direct us to enquire about what the causes may be and how it fits with the 30+ years of our longitudinal project.

For the whole of 2024, we captured only 9 New Holland Honeyeaters; this year we have already processed 6 – it may be a sign that they are again finding food in the Park, but these captures were in sites not burnt in 2021. The dry conditions are clearly having an impact, so we need to wait longer before drawing any conclusions about the longer term.

Our banding project is referenced among many other projects and observations in the newly published, ‘Action Plan for reversing the decline of Mount Lofty Ranges woodland birds. 2025-2100’. There are 18 ‘partners’ involved in this alliance, which has named its recovery program ReBird the Ranges. Our banding project will offer some important insights, especially because of our extensive data records. For more information on this ambitious program, or to read the Action Plan, visit <https://rebirdtheranges.org>.

Please check the program at the end of this newsletter for dates and times of future banding sessions. Visitors are welcome to ‘come and see’ banding without having to commit to an early start. If you would like to receive an email notice, get in touch with me at [president@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au](mailto:president@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au).

Jim Spiker  
Bird Banding Coordinator



Bird	14 Dec Almanda Track	6 Jan The Panhandle	11 Jan Mineshaft Track	7/8 Feb Almanda Battery	16 Feb Derwentia Valley	Total
Brown Thornbill					1	1/0
Striated Thornbill			2	1		3/0
Grey Fantail			1			1/0
Golden Whistler		1	3			4/0
New Holland Honeyeater				2	4	6/0
Silvereye	3					3/0
White-browed Scrubwren		2	2	1	1/1	6/1
Eastern Spinebill		1		1		2/0
Yellow-faced Honeyeater			1			1/0
Superb Fairy-wren	1		1	2	1/1	5/1
TOTAL	4/0	4/0	10/0	7/0	7/2	32/2



**Above left:** Yellow-faced Honeyeater banded at Mineshaft Track in January, one of two species of honeyeater netted during summer.



**Above right:** New Holland Honeyeater banded in Derwentia Valley in February, a welcome return to our nets.



**Above left:** An immature Golden (Western) Whistler, note the bronze colouring becoming patchy on the head and wings.



**Above right:** Another young Golden (Western) Whistler, this one putting on the golden male plumage, both were banded at Mineshaft Track in January.



**Above left:** Juvenile Eastern Spinebill banded at Almanda Battery in February.



**Above right:** Silvereye banded at gate 18 Almanda Track in December.



**Above left:** Female White-browed Scrubwren banded at Almanda Battery in February.



**Above right:** Male Superb Fairy-wren in full adult plumage banded at gate 18 Almanda Track in December



**Above left:** Superb Fairy-wren banded at Almanda Battery in February.

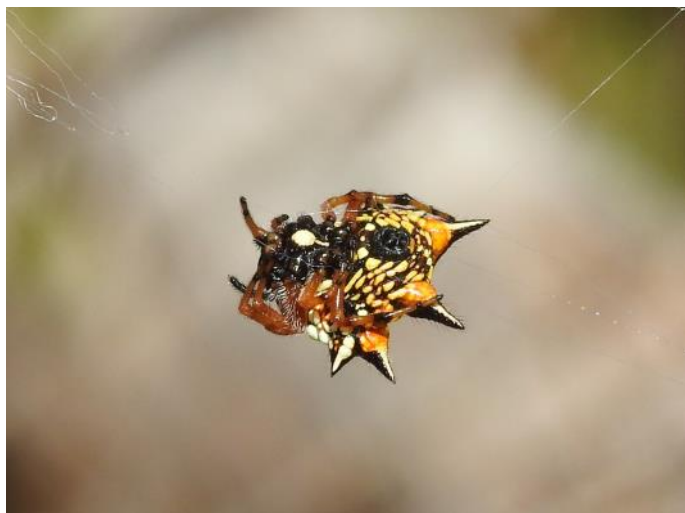


**Above right:** Male Superb Fairy-wren developing adult plumage, banded in Derwentia Valley in February.

## Photo Gallery:



**Above left:** Prickly Geebung (love that name!) flowering in the Panhandle in January.



**Above right:** Jewel Spider in the Panhandle in February.



**Above left:** Brown Cutworm moth in the Panhandle in December.



**Above right:** Some mosses seen near Pennant Ridge in December.



**Above left:** Tall Lobelia, sometimes referred to as False Orchid, on Yakka Hill in January.



**Above right:** Janet spotted this native bee on the flower of a native Bluebell in Number 1 Block in late November.



**Above left:** Koala at Almanda Mine car park on a hot day in February.



**Above right:** One of our eagle-eyed bird banders spotted this large Bearded Dragon at Mineshaft Track in January.



**Above left:** Termites seen at bushcare in the Panhandle in December where bark fell away from a dead branch.



**Above right:** A Badge Huntsman on Cup Gum Track in January.



**Above left:** Omnivorous Tussock Moth caterpillar at bushcare on Yakka Hill in January.



**Above right:** Andrew M got this terrific photo of a bluish fly at the same bushcare activity on Yakka Hill in January.

Any queries on Friends activities, please contact the relevant person below, general queries to: [info@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au](mailto:info@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au)

**Committee:**

**President:** Jim Spiker email: [president@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au](mailto:president@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au)

**Vice President:** Peter Watton email: [info@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au](mailto:info@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au)

**Treasurer:** Andrew Biven email: [treasurer@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au](mailto:treasurer@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au)

**Administration Assistant:** Jenny Dawes email: [info@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au](mailto:info@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au)

**Minute Secretary:** Anna Dutkiewicz email: [webmaster@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au](mailto:webmaster@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au)

**General Committee Member:** Andrew Hogg

**Other roles and positions:**

**Correspondence Secretary:** Andrew McLaughlan email: [secretary@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au](mailto:secretary@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au)

**Membership Officer:** Petra Hanke email via: [info@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au](mailto:info@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au)

**Bird Banding Coordinator:** Jim Spiker (contact details above)

**Bushcare Coordinator:** Jenny Dawes (contact details above)

**Assistant Bushcare Coordinator:** Glenn Giles

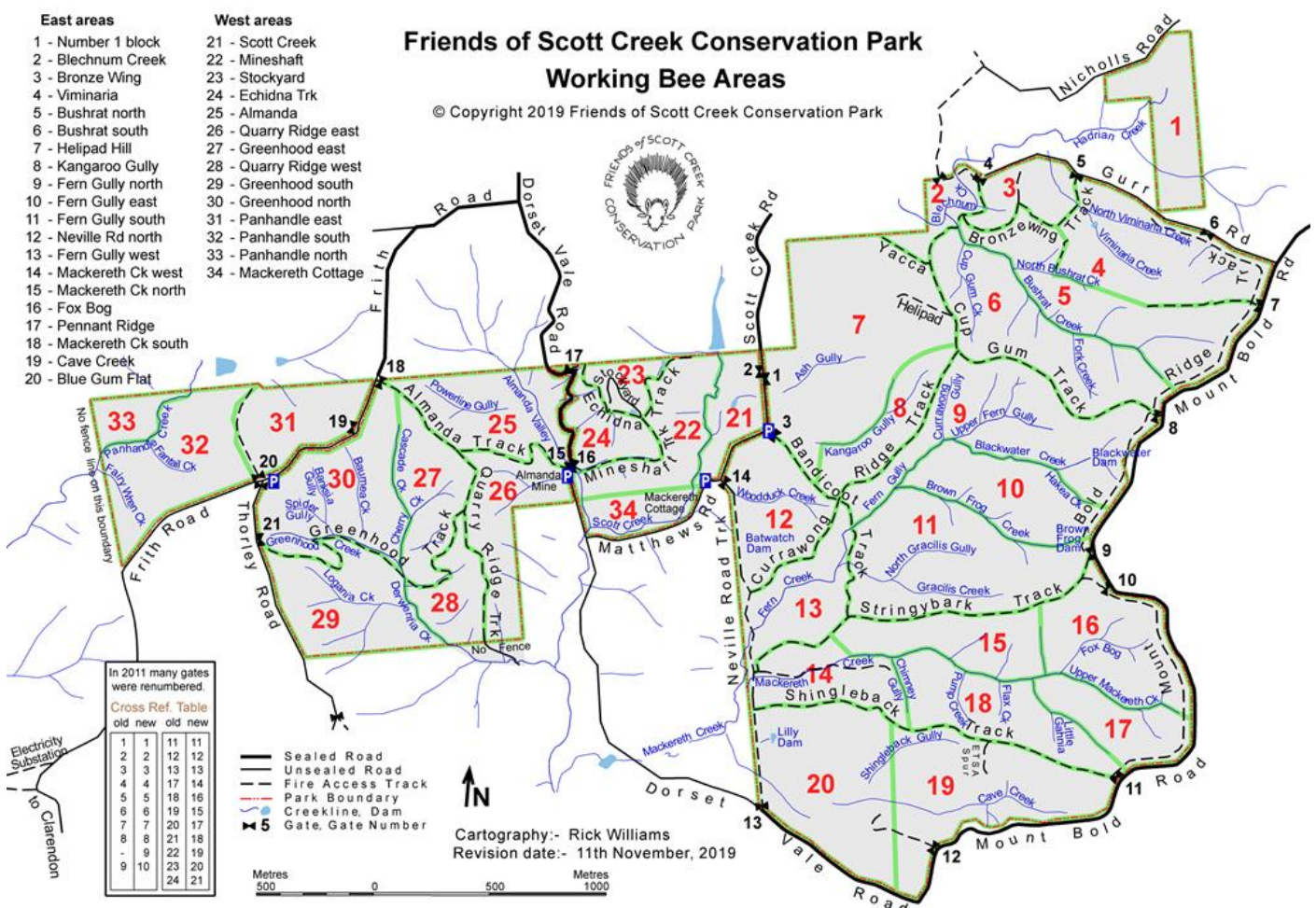
**Bushcare — Grants & Funding, Contractor Liaison & Reporting:** Peter Watton (contact details above)

**Bush Gardening Alminda Creek:** John Wamsley email: [john@johnwamsley.com](mailto:john@johnwamsley.com)

**Editor Bandicoot Tails & Facebook:** Peter Watton (contact details above)

**Website Coordinator:** Anna Dutkiewicz email: [webmaster@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au](mailto:webmaster@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au)

**Social & Events Coordinator:** Jenny Dawes (contact details above), Sue Braddock-Smith



## Autumn Program of Activities March–May 2025

The Friends of Scott Creek Conservation Park value your support and encourage you to visit any of our park activities, including bushcare, bird banding and bush gardening, and to become a member.



Your enquiries are welcome at [info@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au](mailto:info@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au)

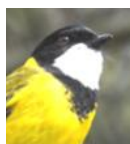
Our Facebook page also has excellent photos of the park's treasures and our activities.



**Bushcare:** three mornings a month (weather permitting) is an excellent way to learn more about the whole park, appreciate its treasures, help it by removing weeds, enjoy friendly company and it is also good for your physical and mental wellbeing.

Get in touch if you would like to come on a visit to see what is involved.

All you need are some sturdy footwear and clothes (and hat) to suit the weather, plus some gardening gloves if you have them, and BYO water and morning tea you can carry. Once the forecast is known, we let you know which park gate we will meet at and drive in from, to get as near as possible to the work area.



We also have a small, more accessible area of the park cared for by our **Bush Gardening** team.

**Bird Banding:** Contact the Bird Banding Coordinator at [president@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au](mailto:president@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au) for further information or to receive emails about activities.

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** Local activities will be **cancelled** if a **fire ban** or **severe weather warning** is announced for the **Mount Lofty Ranges**. Bird banding will also be cancelled in conditions that may adversely affect the birds.

Check for adverse conditions on BOM & CFS websites below.

**BOM website:** <http://www.bom.gov.au/australia/meteye/dorset-vale>

**CFS website:** [https://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/site/bans\\_and\\_ratings](https://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/site/bans_and_ratings)

Month/Day	Date	Activity	Location
<b>MARCH 2025</b>			
Saturday, Sunday	1, 2	Bird Banding	TP The Plantation, Gate 7, 7:30 am
Tuesday	4	Bushcare	Area and main focus to be advised
Sunday	9	Bushcare	Area and main focus to be advised
Saturday	15	Bird Banding	PR Pennant Ridge, Gate 11, 7:30 am
Tuesday	18	Committee mtg	
Saturday	22	Bushcare	Area and main focus to be advised
Tuesday	25	<b>Social Lunch All Welcome</b>	Joan's Pantry—Hawthorndene at noon (Watahuna Ave opposite the oval)
<b>APRIL 2025</b>			
Tuesday	1	Bushcare	Area and main focus to be advised
Saturday, Sunday	5, 6	Bird Banding	TC Twisted Chimney, Gate 13, 7:30 am (Daylight Savings Time ends Sunday)
Sunday	13	Bushcare	Area and main focus to be advised
Saturday	26	Bushcare	Area and main focus to be advised
Sunday	27	Bird Banding	FB Fox Bog, Gate 9, 7:00 am
Wednesday	30	<b>Social Lunch All Welcome</b>	Sheoak Café—Belair at noon (cnr Sheoak and James Roads, parking on three sides)
<b>MAY 2025</b>			
Sunday	4	<b>Autumn Event</b>	More information to come
Tuesday	6	Bushcare	Area and main focus to be advised
Sunday	11	Bushcare	Area and main focus to be advised
Saturday	24	Bushcare	Area and main focus to be advised
Sunday	25	Bird Banding	MC Mackereth Cottage, 7:00 am
Thursday	29	<b>Social Lunch All Welcome</b>	Joan's Pantry—Hawthorndene at noon (Watahuna Ave opposite the oval)
Saturday, Sunday	31, 1	Bird Banding	KG Kangaroo Gully, Gate 3, 7:00 am