

LIVING NEXT TO NATURE

Being a good neighbour to Bendigo's Bushland



**VICTORIAN
NATIONAL PARKS
ASSOCIATION**
Be part of nature



This booklet is your guide to being a good neighbour to the Bendigo bushland.

It introduces you to Bendigo's great natural features and covers some of the key issues that arise from people living next to nature.

You can find handy hints and tips for actions you can take in your backyard, in the reserves and in your community that will make a big difference to nature!

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CONTENTS

Being a Good Neighbour	4
Bendigo's Bushland	6
Recognition of Traditional Lands and Owners	8
Gardens for Wildlife	10
Tremendous Trees	12
Stopping Weeds at the Source	14
Caring for Nature	16
Going with the Flow	18
Fire: Finding the Balance	20
Pets and Wildlife	22
Getting into Nature	24
Bendigo's Natural Treasures Map	26
Handy Contacts & Resources.....	28



Photos Liz Martin

BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOUR

CREATE A WILDLIFE GARDEN

Your garden can play an important role in providing food and shelter for wildlife. Plus you can have nature close to you.

There are many ways of creating your very own 'wildlife garden' including planting locally native plants, adding a bird-bath or making a high-rise home for beautiful native bees. You'll have the birds and butterflies flocking your way as you provide a stepping stone to nearby bushland.

GET INVOLVED!

A great way to get to know people and enjoy the Bendigo bushland is by joining a community and/or sporting group, many of which host activities in the Bendigo bushland. The City of Greater Bendigo also runs educational events and community tree planting activities. Contact details for these organisations can be found in our handy contacts section, pages 28-31.

VISIT YOUR LOCAL RESERVE

Exploring your local park or bushland reserve is a great way to have fun, get fit and spend time in nature. By keeping to the tracks, taking your waste home and leaving the area as you found it, you'll help ensure the bushland is kept healthy.

GO WITH THE FLOW

Bendigo is naturally a very dry area, and so its creeks and wetlands play a critical role in providing cool refuges and homes for plants and animals.

You can help keep these waterways clean by reducing water use in the home and garden, ensuring no pollutants go down your drain, and by mulching. It also helps to reduce the amount of hard surfaces such as concrete around your home.



Photo Pam Sheean

PLANT A TREE

Trees, especially large mature ones, are a key part of the landscape. They provide shelter, food and breeding sites for many plants and animals. Planting or looking after trees helps ensure we have big trees in the future. Install a nesting box if your trees do not contain hollows and help create a home for wildlife!

FIRE - BE INFORMED AND PREPARED

Fire management is an important issue. Local plants and animals have evolved to cope with some levels of fire but too much can be damaging.

Having the right knowledge to make informed decisions can help us find a balance in our backyards between the needs of native wildlife and being fire-ready.

Visit www.bendigo.vic.gov.au or www.cfa.vic.gov.au for more info.

KEEP YOUR PETS AND WILDLIFE SAFE

Protect your pets and local wildlife by keeping your best friends on your property – your pets can easily become injured or lost in the bush. It's also important to remember that the City of Greater Bendigo has established a sunrise to sunset cat curfew. A good way to keep your cat happy is to install a cat enclosure to keep them safe while allowing them access to the outdoors.

FIND WILDLIFE IN ALL SORTS OF PLACES!

Many animals live and visit unlikely places outside of the bushland. One of these places is Rosalind Park at dusk when you can see Brush-tail Possums and Grey-headed Flying-foxes. Kangaroos and their joeys graze on the lawns at La Trobe University, golf courses and other grassed areas around Bendigo. What else can you find?

BENDIGO'S BUSHLAND

BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOUR

Bendigo is lucky enough to have many parks and bushland reserves close by. State and national parks surround much of the city. This attracts many people to the region to live and visit, making it a great place to be outdoors and getting to know nature. Unfortunately, sometimes this closeness between people and nature can impact on the local plants, animals and bushland.

Plants and animals do not recognise boundaries such as reserve fences. They live, eat and breed in backyards, along roadways, in parks and on farms.

This means we can all contribute to ensuring Bendigo's natural environment remains healthy – even little things can make a big difference to nature.

A GROWING CITY

Bendigo is a fast-growing regional city. Its population is planned to almost

double from 2011 levels to 145,000 by 2031.

The City of Greater Bendigo has developed strategies to plan for this growth and manage its impacts on the local natural environment.

The Greater Bendigo Residential Strategy (released in 2014) aims to secure the urban growth boundary for 20 years, concentrating on the majority of new housing within already urbanised areas. Visit the City of Greater Bendigo's website for more information.

While this is the case there will still be some new suburbs built at the edges of the city and in satellite towns.

As Bendigo grows it is important that both new and current residents enjoy Bendigo's beautiful natural environment. This booklet aims to encourage that enjoyment and share ideas on how everyone can be a 'good neighbour' to the bushland.

*Box-Ironbark
trees are among the
most prolific flowering
eucalypts.*



Photo Pam Sheean



Photo Dja Dja Wurrung

RECOGNITION OF TRADITIONAL LANDS AND OWNERS

The Dja Dja Wurrung People are the Traditional Owners of Jaara Country and the land on which Bendigo is located. This booklet refers to the lands of urban Bendigo and its surrounding suburbs.

In a time when the landscape was bare and featureless, the ancestral spirits shaped the earth with Bunjil, creating song lines, raising trees out of the soil and making places of power where an object was left behind, where a spirit had entered the earth or where a journey was completed and a spirit sat down on the land. The ancestral spirits of the Jaara (people), that have shaped our Country and remain in the landscape today are Waa the Raven, Gamadgi the White Cockatoo and Mindi the Giant Serpent (punisher of lore-breakers) who travels through the tree tops.

Bunjil and his brother Waa created

the people and bestowed the moiety/kinship system for the people to have Eagle children and Crow (raven) children that would be unrelated. Once the Jaara, animals and plants were created, Bunjil taught the people how to behave on earth and the lore to follow. A part of these lessons was how to conduct the ceremonies that would ensure the continuation of life.

When Bunjil was satisfied with his work, he changed form into the Wedge-tailed Eagle and flew up into the sky to watch down on the earth. Today he is still looking down through the eyes of the Eagle and at night sits by his campfire in the sky known today as Jupiter.

— Rebecca Phillips (Descendant of Caroline Malcolm), Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation

WHAT MAKES BENDIGO'S BUSHLAND SPECIAL?

Before European settlement forest covered about 90% of Victoria. Since then more than 14 million hectares, about 60 per cent of our landmass, has been lost, making Victoria the most cleared state in Australia.

Bendigo is part of the Goldfields bioregion, north of the Great Dividing Range. Its forests and woodlands are broadly referred to as 'Box-Ironbark' country. Rock types are a mix of sedimentary and metamorphic ridges, which contain gold-bearing reefs.

The Box-Ironbark forests have been significantly altered and reduced in size as a result of the gold rush and timber harvesting. Plant and animal communities are stressed, with many species now extinct or endangered.

Bendigo's iconic tree is the Ironbark, which has a distinct, rough black trunk and is found among other eucalypts such as Box or Stringybark trees.

Bendigo's bushland puts on a great display in winter and spring with showy yellow wattles and pea plants, beautiful wildflowers and orchids.

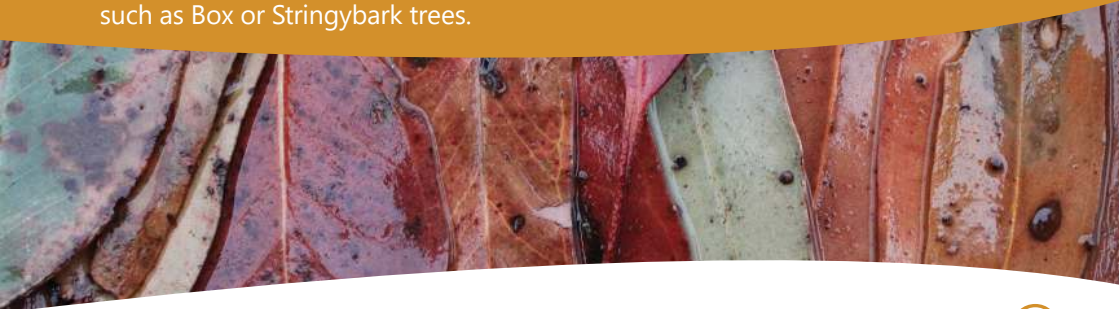
The somewhat shrubby nature of our bush makes it a very important place for woodland birds – some of Victoria's best birdwatching can be found nearby.

River Red Gum woodlands exist largely along waterways and on the northern plains. These woodlands and associated grasslands are now rare and harbour a unique suite of wildlife.

To the north of Bendigo Box-Ironbark gives way to the Riverina plains, where endangered grassland and northern plains woodland plant and animal communities live.

Plants flower at different times of the year, providing a continuous food source to local and migratory birds and animals.

To find out more about these ecosystems visit the Friends of the Box-Ironbark Forests online at www.fobif.org.au.



GARDENS FOR WILDLIFE

CREATE HABITAT

You can create a wonderland for birds, butterflies and other beasts by planting your very own habitat garden.

Our gardens can really add to the mix of places available for animals to rest, feed, play and live. They are often less dry than the rest of the landscape and can contain features that complement or add to habitat in local bushland, such as extra shade, water points, nesting and roosting points.

Habitat gardens can:

- **Attract small birds** with compact and prickly shrubs as well as perching points near a water bath.
- **Attract honeyeaters** and insects with flowering plants.
- **Attract butterflies** with wildflowers, grasses and sedges.

Having wildlife in your garden will also give you an opportunity to study nature and seasonal changes without having to leave the comfort of your own home!

GET CONNECTED!

Plants and animals need to be connected and your garden can form an important stepping stone or link.

As urban Bendigo expands, areas that currently connect habitat will come under increasing pressure, leaving some plants and animals unable to access everything they need to survive. Urban expansion can also fragment natural areas, leaving them vulnerable to impacts from weeds, roaming pets, drought, disease and other pressures.

Gardens can play an important role in helping nature adapt to these changes by acting as links between parks and bushland reserves as well as along waterways, which are important links in their own right.

When planning your garden think carefully about how it can help native plants and animals move throughout the landscape and encourage other people you know to do the same.

*Wildlife habitat
includes leaf litter,
ground flora, shrubs
and trees.*



Photo Mary Trigger

HOW TO CREATE A HABITAT GARDEN

- **Visit your local native plant nursery** for advice on selecting indigenous plants that suit your garden.
 - **Plan a variety of different spaces** if you have the room. For example, allow for open and grassy areas, shrubby areas and ideally some trees.
 - **Grab a free copy of *Indigenous Plants of Bendigo*** from the City of Greater Bendigo and *Smart Gardens for a Dry Climate* from Coliban Water for design ideas and plant identification. Both booklets are also available online.
 - **Place logs, rocks and spiky native bushes around your garden** to shelter small animals from harsh weather and predators.
 - **If you have a damp patch** consider building a frog pond.
 - **Install a nest box** for bats or birds.
 - **Consider halving your lawn** with local native plants. They require much less water than traditional garden plants, saving you money and helping you save water during dry times.
 - **Remove barriers to wildlife** such as solid fences. Lizards, frogs and some mammals will be able to move more easily beneath fences that have gaps.
 - **Use plants that flower or produce seeds at different times** for birds and butterflies. Different local wattles flower from winter to summer.
 - **Once your garden is complete get others involved** and see if you can create habitat links throughout your neighbourhood!
- More information is available from a variety of sources. Contact details can be found in our handy contacts section, pages 28-31.**

TREMENDOUS TREES

LIVING ICONS

Large eucalypt trees, also known as gum trees, are an iconic part of the Australian landscape. They are an essential part of Bendigo's natural environment and often what attracts people to the region.

NATURE'S HIGH RISE APARTMENTS

Trees are habitat for more than 300 species of native animals including bats, birds, possums, gliders and reptiles. All of these animals use tree hollows that only develop in mature trees, some more than a century old, making protecting mature trees very important for our wildlife. Shrubs and ground layer plants also rely on the shelter provided by mature trees to survive.

NATURAL COOLING TOWERS

Trees supply clean air and create shade along our streets and in our

backyards. In urban areas concrete, roads and buildings absorb the sun's heat, making the surrounding area hotter. Shade from mature trees can offset this heat, soak up carbon dioxide and protect homes from temperature fluctuations. This reduces the need for additional heating and cooling to keep your house comfortable inside.

The shade offered by trees on hot summer days can help reduce localised temperatures by up to 2°C. This might not sound like much but on days over 30°C the risk of heat-related morbidity and mortality for people aged over 64 increases significantly. Evidence suggests that people in buildings with little or no surrounding vegetation are at higher risk of heat-related morbidity.

Trees are also homes for bats and other animals that help keep your garden healthy by preying on pest insect populations.

Bats, birds, possums, gliders and reptiles use hollows in big old trees for habitat.



Photo Sue Fraser

WHAT CAN I DO?

- **Lop don't chop** – always consider pruning rather than tree removal when addressing safety concerns.
- **Look after trees** in your backyard or on your nature strip.
- **Learn about the trees near you!**
- **Get professional advice** regarding tree care if you need it.
- **If you have limited space, consider planting smaller species of trees**

(local Mallee species are often ideal in smaller gardens). Make sure you give trees plenty of space, away from homes and powerlines.

- **Install nesting boxes** in existing trees if they don't already have hollows.
- **It is an offence to collect firewood from roadsides or bushland reserves.** Report illegal activity to the City of Greater Bendigo on 5434 6000 or email requests@bendigo.vic.gov.au

FADING FROM THE LANDSCAPE

Large mature trees are being lost from the landscape.

Stresses associated with old age, isolation, drought and the impacts of

urbanisation and damage mean big old trees are dying or being removed.

In many cases, these trees are not being replaced, leaving our landscapes in much poorer condition and our native animals bereft of their homes.



Photo Liz Martin

STOPPING WEEDS AT THE SOURCE

BUSH INVADERS

Weeds are simply plants growing in the wrong place. In bushland they are any plant introduced into that area.

Weeds thrive because they are so fast growing, spread quickly and can outcompete indigenous plants. This is especially true in disturbed areas close to suburbs. Indigenous plants in these areas are already under stress from pressures such as fire and rubbish dumping, and don't need the added stress of competing with weeds.

Local native plants are an important source of food and shelter for wildlife, they keep our environment healthy

by filtering water along creeks and wetlands. Losing local plants to weeds affects the entire environment. We lose species diversity (biodiversity) as weeds crowd out local plants.

YOUR BACKYARD

Some of the weeds invading our bushland have escaped from gardens. This happens when seeds are dispersed by the wind, on boots and in pet fur. Weeds are also spread by birds and from being dumped as garden waste in bushland.

*Weeds can
provide food and
shelter for feral animals
and other pests.*

WHAT CAN I DO?

- **Visit your local native plant nursery,** a good source of information about what to plant and what to avoid.
- **Replace weedy plants** in your garden with varieties that do not spread.
- **Some environmental weeds are** **Gazania, Cape Broom, non-native grasses,** some succulent species and Cootamundra Wattles. These are just some of the noticeable garden escapees in Bendigo's bushland.
- **You can dispose of green waste** during any of the City of Greater Bendigo's four free green waste disposal weekends. The council will also introduce a kerbside organics collection for urban Bendigo and Marong in late 2016, offering another way of disposing of your green waste. Visit www.bendigo.vic.gov.au for more information.
- **Volunteer with one of the community groups** listed at the back of this book to help control weeds in your local reserve.
- **Keep pets from roaming in reserves,** unless it is an off-leash area. Weed seeds and plant diseases get caught in fur and dispersed through bushland.
- **Find out more about weeds** by searching online for the Weeds Identification Guide of North Central Victoria – there are many other resources and local groups online that can help too.



Photo Leah Cripps

CARING FOR NATURE

NATIVE BUSHLAND

Australia's unique natural environment has evolved with an abundance of plants and animals found nowhere else on earth. An incredible 85% of our terrestrial mammals, 91% of our flowering plants, 90% of our reptiles and frogs and more than half the world's marsupial species are only found in Australia!

This makes us custodians of an incredible natural heritage.

Unfortunately, Victoria is the most cleared state in Australia. That's why it's so important we retain as much native vegetation as possible. This makes good economic sense – a 2002 study summarised the monetary values for retained native vegetation in Australia:

- **Pollination:** \$1 billion a year.
- **Tourism:** \$6.6 billion a year.
- **Clean water:** \$230 million a year.

Studies have also shown that if the amount of native vegetation in the landscape falls below 10-30%, birds such as Fairy Wrens and Kookaburras can disappear.

WHAT CAN I DO?

Always ask before you cut

Native vegetation is protected by law in Victoria and some threatened species and vegetation communities are also protected nationally.

In many cases a permit from council is required to clear or lop native vegetation. There are some exemptions but it is always important to ask. Clearing without a permit can result in penalties.

Make native vegetation your first consideration

If you are buying a property or considering clearing native vegetation always make a call to the council your first step. They can give you important information and help you meet all relevant planning requirements, making your subdivision, building or renovation project a lot smoother and saving you money.



Photo Lucas Hodgins

AIM TO AVOID

When considering clearing native vegetation, always apply the three-step approach. Try not to resort to the final step, offsetting:

1. Avoid: Has every attempt been made to avoid removal of native vegetation?

2. Minimise: Has every attempt been made to minimise damage/impact to native vegetation?

3. Offset: Which areas of native vegetation or actions are proposed to offset the removal/impact?

GOING WITH THE FLOW

WATER, TEEMING WITH LIFE

Many different kinds of plants and animals live in and along our creeks and rivers, including frogs, native fish, turtles, and beautiful River Red Gums.

These plants and animals have evolved to suit the conditions of their waterways – water levels, regularity and the speed of water flows. Keeping these conditions within natural limits is essential for ensuring our water is fresh, clean and productive.

In the past, Bendigo's creeks were part of a natural system that included clear bodies of water surrounded by trees, shrubs and grasses, creating habitat for plants and animals and naturally filtering water flows.

BENDIGO: DRY ON THE SURFACE WITH AN UNDERGROUND SEA

Bendigo is naturally dry on the surface but underneath holds a vast groundwater system. The

groundwater is high in salts (salinity) and in some areas contains arsenic, which is harmful to humans and the environment. It is close to the surface in some low-lying areas, and can damage buildings, roads and gardens.

CREEKS TO CONCRETE

Bendigo's creeks and gullies were significantly altered during the gold-mining boom and later to mitigate flooding. In some areas, natural creek lines and plant cover were replaced with concrete and drains.

Footpaths and roads have also added to the increase of hard surface areas in urban Bendigo, making it prone to flash flooding. During heavy rainfall water can run very quickly across these hard surfaces and is not absorbed.

When stormwater reaches waterways it can damage creek banks and the plants and animals that live in and around the watercourse.

Frogs absorb water through their skin, making them vulnerable to heavy metals.



Photo City of Greater Bendigo

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Be **water wise** in the home and garden and adhere to permanent water saving rules or water restrictions.
- Visit the Coliban Water website at www.coliban.com.au for water saving tips and to obtain *Smart*

Gardens for a Dry Climate.

- Use **environmentally friendly cleaning products**, as they don't contain harsh chemicals that can harm aquatic plants and animals.
- Install a **water tank or grey water system** to water your garden or to supply toilets and washing machines.

In several new and existing suburbs wetlands have been built to filter stormwater. They also add habitat and recreational values to the area.

SHARING OUR WATER

Our water is in limited supply in meeting the needs of people, industry and the natural environment.

To help conserve water it's important we only use what we need and do our best to ensure enough remains in the system to keep waterways healthy and to supply plants and animals with much-needed habitat.

FIRE: FINDING THE BALANCE

THRIVING IN THE HEAT

Fire is an important part of Australia's landscape. Many of our native plants and animals have evolved to cope with fire, though few actually depend on it.

Banksias and hakeas store seed in woody fruits that open as a result of fire. Some plants, including some orchids, rely on fire to regenerate – so occasional mild fire in the landscape can be a good thing.

Most areas of bush benefit from a range of times since the last fire, to allow for the different requirements of different birds and animals. Making sure we keep areas of long-unburnt bush can be important.

PROTECTING OUR LIVES AND ASSETS

Many of Bendigo's suburban areas are near bushland, and so it is very important that people living in these areas take fire risk seriously.

The forested areas and parkland around Bendigo are managed to help protect people and properties from wildfires. This includes fuel reduction burns and the maintenance of fire breaks.

In addition, Bendigo airport has an airbase for helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft designed for fire suppression, which helps keep fire response times as fast as possible.

Properties near bushland can be subject to flying embers from a bushfire, especially on days of more severe fire weather. Households must be prepared in advance by keeping flammable material away from their yards and around buildings.

All households should understand the risks, and have a well-informed fire plan including when to leave.

Visit www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare for information on planning and preparing for fire.

BE PART OF THE SOLUTION

With more people moving to Bendigo pressure is increasing on ensuring new suburbs are designed to reduce the chance of fire. But sometimes people themselves increase the risk. This can be the result of deliberate or incidental fire ignitions (cigarette butts, electricity wires, car exhausts).

An increase in introduced grasses and weed cover or rubbish dumping can also contribute to higher fire risk environments.

If we are all fire aware and prepared, and encourage others to do the same, we can make Bendigo a safer place during the fire danger period.

Photo City of Greater Bendigo

INFORM YOURSELF AND BE FIRE READY

- Visit the Country Fire Authority website for advice on being fire ready: www.cfa.vic.gov.au.
- On high alert days listen to ABC radio, visit the CFA website or phone the Victorian Bushfire Information Line on 1800 240 667 for information.
- Install the FireReady app on your smart phone to receive alerts.
- Report any suspicious fire activity to Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.
- Do not light fires on Total Fire Ban days and exercise caution in warm dry weather.
- Have a fire plan.
- Get involved with fire planning and events in your area. More info at www.delwp.vic.gov.au.



PETS AND WILDLIFE

PROTECT YOUR PET

You love your pets and they naturally become part of the family. The safest place for them is on your property. Pets roaming freely in bushland areas and near roads are at greater risk of being injured or killed.

Pets that are kept indoors, contained in runs or walked on leashes generally live longer and healthier lives. Ensure reptiles, birds and fish do not escape and potentially become invasive species.

PROTECT OUR WILDLIFE

Pets are particularly threatening to smaller mammals, reptiles, birds and frogs.

Keep dogs on a lead during their walk unless in a designated off-leash area.

A dog's scent can frighten and disturb wildlife. Pets are also perfect carriers for diseases and weed seeds, which can become caught in fur.

Some more exotic pets like reptiles or fish can be highly disruptive or predatory to native plants and animals if they escape or are released into the wild.

PLACES TO EXERCISE YOUR DOG IN BENDIGO

Bendigo has a number of safe places where you can exercise your dog off-leash. Visit www.bendigo.vic.gov.au and search for places to exercise your dog.



Photo City of Greater Bendigo

WHAT CAN I DO?

- **Walk dogs on a leash**, except in designated dog parks or off-leash areas.
- **Remember to take a bag** and dispose of dog waste thoughtfully.
- **Keep your cat indoors** and in your backyard by building a cat run or installing floppy fence tops. Visit the RSPCA website for DIY options or see our handy contacts section at the back of this book for a list of providers.
- **You can borrow humane trigger plate animal traps** and report wandering pets to the City of Greater Bendigo's Parking and Animal Services, visit www.bendigo.vic.gov.au or phone 5434 6000. If the animal is a pet, its microchip can be scanned and the owner will be contacted to take it home. If it is a stray, it will have the opportunity to be re-housed.
- **Never dispose of exotic animals** in the wild. Bury dead pets at home.

GETTING INTO NATURE

EXPLORING BENDIGO'S BUSHLAND

We are fortunate to have a variety of beautiful natural parks and reserves in Bendigo and many opportunities for nature and sporting activities. Look for details in the handy contacts section at the back of this book.

Spring is perfect for enjoying the Box-Ironbark forests in flower, although all seasons have their special attractions. Getting out is a great way to discover the bush next door. See Bendigo's Natural Treasures map on pages 26-27 for inspiration.

LOVING IT TO DEATH

While it is wonderful to explore nature, it is important to do so responsibly. Some of our most popular areas suffer from overuse and illegal activities such as littering and firewood collection. These activities threaten sensitive plants and animals and can quickly degrade the local environment.

Creating new tracks for vehicles, bikes

or walking has serious impacts in bushland areas, destroying delicate understorey plants such as orchids or leaving them vulnerable to weed invasion.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- **Keep to formed tracks** and take note of 'no access' signs. This will help protect important habitat.
- **Avoid taking your pet into sensitive areas**, especially if they are declared no pet zones. Where dogs are permitted, remember to keep them on-leash at all times and to dispose of their waste thoughtfully.
- **Do not collect firewood, rocks or parts of plants.** These are important homes and sources of food for insects, birds and reptiles.
- **Do not touch or capture wild animals.** They are delicate and will not survive in your home or garden.



Photo City of Greater Bendigo

- **Collect rubbish and take it home with you.** Even food scraps can make animals sick or spread weeds.
- **Call the land manager to report any problems.** See the handy contacts and resources section at the back of this book for contact numbers.
- **Learn about your local groups and get involved!** Explore Bendigo's bushland whenever you can – with family and friends, with a group or enjoy it on your own!

BENDIGO'S NATURAL TREASURES MAP

1 BENDIGO BUSHLAND TRAIL

This 65km loop includes bicycle and walking tracks as well as some road tracks. Follow the blue and gold sign posts that feature 'Rex' the Echidna. This trail will guide you through some of Bendigo's best natural spaces. Keep an eye out for wildlife as you go!

2 ROSALIND PARK

In the centre of town Rosalind Park is home to a large colony of Grey-headed Flying Foxes. These animals are amazing to watch as they hang upside down and chat to each other. Rosalind Park is also a good place to grab a torch for possum spotting at night.

3 LAKE WEEROONA

This popular recreation spot is great for watching the ducks and waterbirds including swans and moorhens.

4 BENDIGO CREEK TRAIL

Follow the Bendigo Creek, contemplating the important role waterways play in providing sanctuary for animals and creating linkages in the landscape.

5 CRUSOE RESERVOIR AND NUMBER 7 PARK

The perfect spot to relax, walk, fish and try a spot of birdwatching. The water attracts an array of birdlife and provides a beautiful backdrop to the forest.

6 THE MULGA BILL BICYCLE TRAIL

This short trail to the north of Bendigo connects Lake Neangar to Lightning Hill Lookout in the Greater Bendigo Regional Park.

7 WELLSFORD STATE FOREST

The home of some of the region's largest old Ironbark trees and one of the best places to see wildflowers in spring. Ride out on the O'Keefe Rail Trail and make a day of it.

8 SPRING GULLY RESERVE & TRAIL

A lovely bushland reserve catering for the whole family with barbeque and picnic facilities. Marvel at some of the magnificent red gum trees that used to feature along Bendigo's waterways. Ride or stroll along the Spring Gully Trail that joins the Bendigo Bushland Trail.

9 ONE TREE HILL LOOKOUT

A great sunset spot surrounded by lovely bushland. Wander up at the end of the day and reap the benefits.

10 KENNINGTON RESERVOIR

A bushland gem in the 'burbs. This lovely reserve contains grassy woodland flats, bushland and the reservoir. A great place to see which animals are visiting the water.

11 DIAMOND HILL

Gaze out over the township and admire the history in the landscape. Take a walk through the regenerating forest. In spring marvel at the wildflowers. Keep an eye out for birds and animals.

For further details and maps of these adventures see 'Information for self guided tours' on page 30.



HANDY CONTACTS & RESOURCES

ORGANISATIONS

The City of Greater Bendigo website has an array of resources and advice on issues covered in this book. Search for the Sustainable Living Guide that links to community groups and online publications. You can also phone 5434 6000 or visit www.bendigo.vic.gov.au.

Coliban Water has great water saving tips – www.coliban.com.au, phone 1300 363 200.

Conservation Volunteers manages volunteers and others in environmental projects. Phone 5444 0777 or visit www.conservationvolunteers.com.au.

Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning (DELWP) and Parks Victoria are responsible for public land management, wildlife, fire, water and much more. Phone 5430 4444 or visit www.delwp.vic.gov.au, www.parkweb.vic.gov.au.

Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation is the Traditional Owner Entity for Dja Dja Wurrung people and the Registered Aboriginal Party for Dja Dja Country. Phone 5444 2888 or visit www.djadjawurrung.com.au.

North Central Catchment Management Authority (NCCMA) manages sustainable farming, environmental flows, biodiversity, Landcare programs and much more. Visit www.nccma.vic.gov.au or phone 5448 7124.

Trust for Nature works with private land owners to place Conservation Covenants on titles to protect native plants and wildlife on their property. Find out more by visiting www.trustfornature.org.au.

FIELD GUIDES & LAND MANAGEMENT PUBLICATIONS

The Bendigo Field Naturalists Club has a range of books about Bendigo's plants and animals at www.bendigofieldnaturalists.asn.au.

'Caring for Country' is a sustainable land management guide for north central landholders. Visit www.nccma.vic.gov.au or phone 5448 7124 to obtain a copy.

Birdscaping Australian Gardens by George Adams is a guide to using native plants to attract birds to your garden.

The Victorian National Parks Association has field guides for the Box-Ironbark and other Victorian plant and animal communities. Visit www.vnpa.org.au.

The Weeds Identification Guide is produced by the North Central CMA. Visit www.nccma.vic.gov.au or phone 5448 7124 to obtain a copy.

PETS

Cat parks keep your pet entertained and safe. Our wildlife will love you for it! Phone 1800 639 998 or visit www.catnip.com.au.

City of Greater Bendigo's parking and animal services unit is where to report lost and injured pets. Phone 5434 6000.

The RSPCA has information on **how to be a responsible pet owner** and on **the world of animal welfare** for students and teachers. Visit www.rspca.org.au or phone the Bendigo office on 5441 2209.



Photo Chris Tzaros

WILDLIFE & HABITAT

Backyard Buddies and **Birds in Backyards** are great resources for children and parents to find out who is visiting your backyard – www.backyardbuddies.net.au and www.birdsinbackyards.net.

Knox City Council's Gardens for Wildlife program provides great information for those wanting to create their own Gardens for Wildlife, visit www.knox.vic.gov.au/g4w.

Land for Wildlife offers support and recognition for landholders wanting to develop or protect wildlife habitat and is a great source of information. For details visit www.delwp.vic.gov.au.

World of animal welfare provides a good guide for wildlife friendly gardening at www.woaw.org.au/8andUnder/wild-living-guide-wildlife-gardens-victoria/.

Wildlife Rescue & Information Network is your contact if you find injured or orphaned wildlife. Go to www.wrin.asn.au for details.

COMMUNITY GROUPS

Note: To ensure you have current information about active groups working in Bendigo, please check with the NCCMA or the City of Greater Bendigo first.

NCCMA: Visit www.nccma.vic.gov.au or phone 5448 7124 for information about active Landcare, Waterwatch, biodiversity, farming groups and more.

City of Greater Bendigo: Visit www.bendigo.vic.gov.au or phone 5434 6000 for information about groups working in reserves and parks in town and for community environment events.

Bendigo and District Environment Council is a group that advocates for the conservation of Bendigo's natural environment. PO Box 557 Bendigo 3552.

Bendigo Family Nature Club hosts monthly excursions around Bendigo for children and responsible adults – bendigofamilynatureclub.blogspot.com.au.

Bendigo Field Naturalists Club encourages the study, conservation and

enjoyment of nature and meets monthly. For more information visit www.bendigofieldnaturalists.asn.au.

Bendigo native plant group encourages the growing of Australian native plants in gardens and public places, email bendigonativeplantgroup@yahoo.com.au.

Bendigo Sustainability Group brings together people with a shared interest in sustainable living through to nature conservation – www.bsg.org.au.

Friends of the Box-Ironbark are interested in conservation outcomes for areas of Box-Ironbark forest in Central Victoria. Visit www.fobif.org.au.

Victorian National Parks Association is the key voice for nature conservation in Victoria – www.vnpa.org.au.

RECREATION GROUPS

The Bendigo Bushwalking and Outdoor Club offers activities for anyone who is interested in the great outdoors – www.gobush.org.au.

Bendigo Orienteers promote the sport of cross-country navigation using a map and compass in Bendigo bushland. Find them online at www.bendigo-orienteurs.com.au.

Cross country running is hosted by five athletics clubs in Bendigo during cooler months – www.athleticsbendigo.org.au.

Bendigo Mountain Bike Club hosts rides within Bendigo and Central Victoria. They work closely with park authorities in promoting sustainable tracks. Visit www.mtbbendigo.com.

INFORMATION FOR SELF GUIDED ADVENTURES

Bendigo Tourism has a range of cycling and walking tour maps of Bendigo and surrounding bushland. Visit www.bendigotourism.com. The information centre is at 51-67 Pall Mall Bendigo or phone 5434 6060.

Goldfields Track is a 210km track from south of Ballarat to Bendigo. Visit www.goldfieldstrack.com.au to find out where to purchase books and maps.

O'Keefe Rail Trail is open from Bendigo to Heathcote with plans to extend to Kilmore. Visit the Friends group at www.bendigokilmorerailtrail.com.

Parks Victoria has maps and information about the state and national parks surrounding Bendigo. Phone 13 1963 or visit www.parkweb.vic.gov.au.



Photo Emma Clohesy



VICTORIAN
NATIONAL PARKS
ASSOCIATION
Be part of nature

The **Victorian National Parks Association** (VNPA) helps shape the agenda for creating and managing national parks, conservation reserves and other important natural areas across land and sea in Victoria.

The VNPA works with all levels of government, the scientific community and the general community to achieve long term, best practice environmental outcomes.

The VNPA is also Victoria's largest bushwalking club and provides a range of information, education and activity programs to encourage Victorians to get active for nature.

CONTACT

Victorian National Parks Association
Level 3, 60 Leicester Street,
Carlton, VIC, 3053
Phone: 03 9341 6500
Email: vnpa@vnpa.org.au
Website: www.vnpa.org.au



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