

Stagwatching Information for Volunteers

Explore Victoria's amazing Mountain Ash forests of the Central Highlands. NatureWatch volunteers will learn about the ecology of the Central Highlands forests, their 10 years of recovery from the Black Saturday bushfires and their future within the Great Forest National Park. We will be assisting researchers from the Australian National University's Fenner School of Environment and Society. Under the direction of Professor David Lindenmayer, AO, for over thirty years, ecologists have been investigating the possums and gliders of the forests and the decades of impacts from timber harvesting and bushfire.

NatureWatch volunteers will be led in the stagwatch by the team's forest ecologists, Dave Blair & Lachie McBurney, who specialise in forest disturbance and recovery and Leadbeater's Possum recovery.

What is a stagwatch?

Stags are old trees that provide essential tree-hollows for native possums and gliders who emerge each night to forage. Stagwatching involves sitting or lying on the forest floor, looking up to the silhouette of the stag tree against the night's sky to watch for emerging animals. Training is provided so you can identify if you are seeing a greater glider preen on a top branch before gracefully gliding between trees or a Mountain Brushtail Possum lumbering down the trunk. You may get lucky and experience critically endangered Leadbeater's Possums springing from their tree hollow into neighbouring wattle tree canopy, seeking tree saps and insects for a night-time feast.

Meeting Times and Places

Please note: the meeting places vary between days so please check the locations and be prepared to leave the meeting point as soon as the team arrives. If you would like to get some take away dinner please get it before the meeting time. Both meeting points are close to lots of take away food options and public toilets.



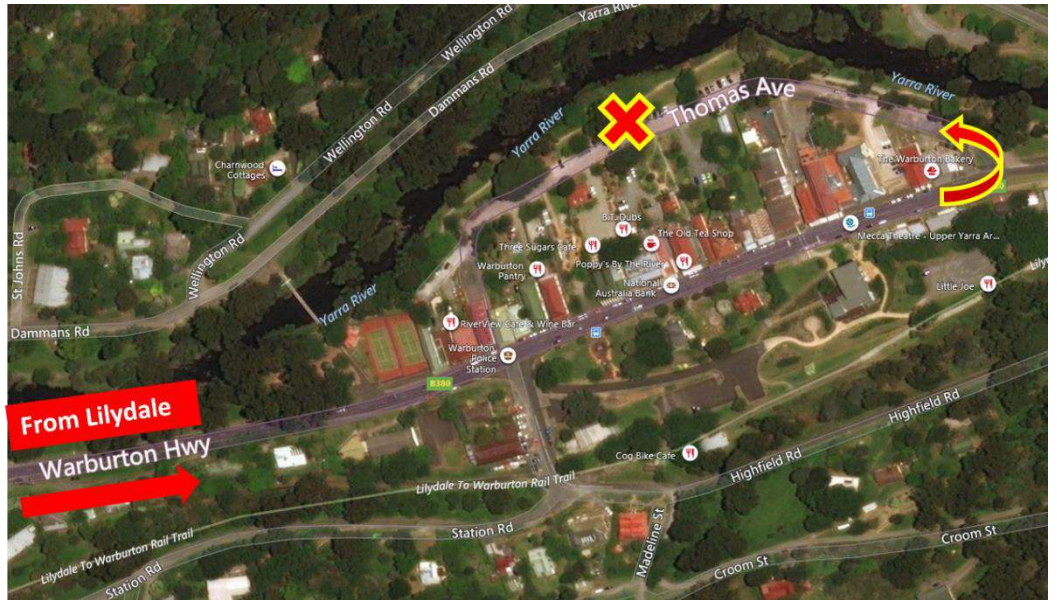
Conditions for cancellations:

Stagwatching will be cancelled if the conditions are deemed high risk to volunteer safety such as total fire ban days and days where high winds or heavy rainfall is predicted.

Volunteers will be notified by text by 3pm on the stagwatch day to notify them if the event is cancelled.

**Tuesday 12 February:
6pm in Warburton**

Meeting Place: Thomas Avenue along the river, enter at the end of the main street shops.



**Saturday 16 & Friday
22 February:
6pm in Healesville**

Meeting Place: Parking lot at 110 River Street, Healesville, adjacent to Coles.



The Plan:

- *If required, pick up at Lilydale Train station*
- Everyone meet in Warburton or Healesville as indicated above
- For Healesville meeting point days, we will have a short carpool to Maroondah Dam Park for our picnic, in Warburton we will have our picnic by the river.
- Chat about the Central Highlands Forests and the plan for the Great Forest National Park.
- Approximately 7-7:15pm carpool to stagwatching site.
- Stagwatch training provided on-site.
- Volunteers will be guided to their spot in the forest.
- Stagwatch for 1 hour over dusk (approximately 8:20pm).
- Return to vehicles after stagwatch, report and discuss results.
- Walking spotlight along the road for 30-60 minutes, as desired.
- Return to meeting points.
- Return to Lilydale for train connection if required.

Transport:

4WD vehicles will be required to access the research sites. Some of these will be provided by the projects, in other cases we will need to ask volunteers to drive their own vehicles. Road conditions will vary but there will be times when we may be on narrow, dirt roads that may be steep, covered in sticks, and have pot holes. Generally 4WD capability is not required, but reasonably high clearance is essential. For example: vehicles such as a Toyota Hilux is ideal but Subaru Foresters will be fine as well. Please let Sera know if you are happy to drive your vehicle with other volunteers in convey with the project vehicles.

Pick up from Lilydale Train Station (Lilydale Line):

If you need assistance getting to Healesville, Sera can offer a lift to 6 volunteers from the Lilydale train station, returning after the stagwatching.

- **Pick up times: Tuesday 12 @ 5:20pm; Saturday 16 @ 5:30pm; Friday 22 @ 5:20pm.**

What to bring:

- **Long pants, long sleeved shirt**
- **Waterproof jacket**
- **Long socks to tuck your pants in to.**
- **Sturdy shoes or walking boots**
- **Beanie or other hat, gloves if likely to be cold**
- **Head torch or hand torch**
- **Picnic dinner ready to eat**
- **Insect repellent**
- **A small foam mat, picnic blanket or camp chair to sit on in the forest**
- **Water, snacks**
- **Any essential medical supplies (Ventolin, epi-pen etc.)**

What is provided?

- Training on possum and glider identification
- Tea and coffee after the stagwatch
- First Aid equipment

Links to information about the research we are contributing to and the community-driven campaign for the Great Forest National Park.

<https://www.greatforestnationalpark.com.au/>

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=leadbeaters+possum&&view=detail&mid=20EE9D869B0C7BEC05BE20EE9D869B0C7BEC05BE&&FORM=VDRVRV>

<https://www.leadbeaters.org.au/>

<https://fennerschool.anu.edu.au/research/research-stories/survival-leadbeaters-possum>

<https://researchers.anu.edu.au/researchers/lindenmayer-db>

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=leadbeaters+possum&&view=detail&mid=C97776F86CB01FB324D9C97776F86CB01FB324D9&&FORM=VRDGAR>

Volunteer Insurance and Personal Car Use

Public Liability Insurance: The VNPA has a public liability insurance policy. For details contact the VNPA office. Your participation in this training activity is as a 'volunteer'.

Liability: Every person participating in a VNPA activity does so at their own risk in all respects and as such accepts full responsibility for his/her suitability, fitness and preparedness for the activity and for any injury to her/himself. The Association, its office bearers, organisers, leaders and helpers are absolved from any liability in respect of any injury, loss or damage suffered by the participant while engaged in any VNPA activity to the extent permitted by law.

VNPA Occupational Health and Safety Policy: OH&S involves shared responsibilities and a team approach. Everyone associated with the VNPA has a duty of care which requires each person to be capable and responsible for their own health and safety as well as for the health and safety of others. So far as is practicable VNPA is committed to providing and maintaining a working environment that is safe and effectively eliminates or minimises the risks to the health and safety of staff, members, volunteers, contractors and visitors.

Use of personal vehicles for VNPA activities: Volunteers are advised that personal vehicles used for VNPA business/activities are not covered under the VNPA Public Liability or any other insurance. Volunteers should have as a minimum Third Party Motor Vehicle insurance or Full Comprehensive insurance when undertaking activities with the VNPA.

Volunteer personal accident insurance: All VNPA volunteers less than 80 years old are fully covered for personal accident injuries whilst undertaking authorised VNPA activities. Those 80 years old and over can contact the VNPA office for further information.