



# **FEFN Volunteers Manual**

**Helpful Information for  
Friends Groups of Frankston**

**Rev: 0 August 2013**

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### Disclaimer

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## PREFACE

### ABOUT THIS MANUAL

This manual has been produced to assist the Friends Groups of Frankston, to provide clear and concise information that may be of use in establishing, managing and evolving Friends Groups. The majority of these Friends Groups come under the management of Frankston City Council; however some groups work with other management authorities, notably, Parks Victoria and Melbourne Water.

The manual is designed predominately to be an essential reference to the Activities Leaders of the Friends Groups; however, much of this information will be of interest the members as well.

Where your Friends Groups' management authority is Frankston City Council, this manual is to be read in conjunction with the Council's Guidelines for Friends Group Volunteers document, in the separate self-contained section of this folder.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Frankston Environmental Friends Network gratefully acknowledges the following sources of information and inspiration for the development of this manual:

- Frankston City Council - Environment Department; and Foreshore and Natural Reserves Teams, Operations.
- Parks Victoria and Victorian Environmental Friends Network – Volunteer and Friends Information Kit – 2009.
- Coastcare Victoria Volunteer Guide – 2011.
- Information provided by Leon Costermans of the Friends of Langwarrin Flora and Fauna Reserve.
- Shire of Nillumbik – Friends Group Volunteer Manual.

### GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following table provides a list of acronyms and abbreviations used throughout this manual.

Abbreviation	Description
DEPI	Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries (formerly DSE)
FEFN	Frankston Environmental Friends Network
VEFN	Victorian Environment Friends Network

The following table provides a list of commonly used terms throughout this manual.

Term	Description
Activities Leader	The person responsible for organising and supervising the Friends Group's working sessions. For larger groups, this may be more than one person.

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## 1. ABOUT FRIENDS GROUPS

### 1.1. WHAT IS A FRIENDS GROUP?

A Friends Group is a group of people with a shared interest in supporting the protection of a particular park, reserve, area or species. These 'Friends' volunteer their time to be involved in activities that can range from tree planting in local reserves to teaching other people about special places or species. In return, the volunteers gain a sense of satisfaction, new knowledge and meet with new people. Anyone can be a friend — all that is needed is some spare time and a bit of enthusiasm!

Friends Groups are like a support group, working in partnership with, and under the guidance of, the management authority (e.g. Frankston City Council, Parks Victoria, and Melbourne Water – see section 1.4 – Types of Management Authority).

Friends Groups typically work on a variety of tasks, which may include:

On-ground Work	Community Education	Group Facilitation
• Weed removal	• Information stalls	• Recruiting new members
• Revegetation	• Guided walks	• Secretarial duties
• Seed collecting	• Design of group website	• Training new volunteers
• Plant propagating	• Signage and brochures	• Representing group at meetings
• Flora & fauna surveys	• Friends Group newsletter	• Liaising with management authority
• Track maintenance	• School & group talks	• Managing funded projects

### 1.2. FRANKSTON ENVIRONMENTAL FRIENDS NETWORK

The Frankston Environmental Friends Network (FEFN) was formed in 1996 and is an umbrella organisation of the Friends Groups that work within the Frankston municipality. All Friends Groups, regardless of which management authority they fall under, are eligible to become a member of the FEFN.

The FEFN provides regular and effective avenues of communication between:

- Frankston City Council, including environmental staff and rangers;
- other management authorities, such as Parks Victoria and Melbourne Water; and
- the individual Friends Groups themselves.

The objectives of the FEFN include acting as a collective voice for Friends Groups in addressing environmental issues affecting the Frankston municipality and assisting individual Friends Groups to see their reserve or role in relation to the 'bigger picture'. More details of the way the FEFN works can be found in the Objectives and Procedures document at Appendix 1.

FEFN meetings are held regularly, generally at the Frankston Civic Centre. For more information on the FEFN, contact the Frankston City Council Environmental Education and Volunteer Support Officer on 9784 1768.

### 1.3. FRIENDS/VOLUNTEER GROUPS IN FRANKSTON

Frankston City is extremely fortunate to have fifty five natural reserves and a large number of dedicated Friends Group volunteers who, in partnership with Council, Parks Victoria or Melbourne Water, spend countless hours working to enhance and preserve these areas.

In addition to the Friends Groups, there are other volunteer groups that focus on different aspects of our local biodiversity. There are groups that care for injured wildlife, such as AWARE and Animalia; and other groups that enjoy observing and sharing knowledge about local flora and fauna, for example, the Peninsula Field Naturalists Club. There is also a band of dedicated volunteers who assist in seed collection and propagation at Frankston City Council's Indigenous Nursery, under the guidance of the Indigenous Nursery Officer.

For a current list of active Friends Groups and contact details, see the Council's Guidelines for Friends Group Volunteers section, Appendix 8; and Appendix 13 for our wildlife rescue members.

### 1.4. TYPES OF MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

The Friends Group operate in partnership with the relevant land manager, and whilst still being autonomous and independent, they must have prior approval of any planned work by their management authority. The partnership is a cooperative, mutually supportive relationship, which encourages volunteer participation and recognises the legal responsibilities of the management authority. In Frankston, different Friends Groups work under the auspices of various management authorities, depending on who 'owns' or manages the reserve. These authorities are:

- State Government, such as:
  - Parks Victoria – The Pines Flora and Fauna Reserve, Frankston Reservoir, Langwarrin Flora and Fauna Reserve; and
  - Melbourne Water – co-manages with Frankston City Council Kananook Creek, Seaford Wetlands, Upper and Lower Sweetwater Creek; and Boggy Creek Reserves.
- Local Government, Frankston City Council in our case, but we also liaise with Mornington Peninsula Shire and the City of Kingston.

### 1.5. ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

While Friends Groups are autonomous, there are environmental organisations which the group may have access to. They are:

- Frankston Environmental Friends Network:
  - The FEFN was formed primarily to provide a forum for communication between the community groups associated with Frankston's natural reserves, and the Frankston City Council environmental officers and reserve maintenance staff.
  - One or two representatives from each Friends Group attend the FEFN meetings and are responsible for passing on two way information between group members and the Council representatives at the meetings. The FEFN meets regularly each month (except January), generally at the Frankston Civic Centre.
  - As circumstances have changed over the years, the FEFN has broadened its membership to include representatives of other bodies working for Frankston's natural environment, and it has also extended its concerns to take up environmental issues beyond the natural reserves when it considers this appropriate and necessary.



- For more details on the Objectives and Procedures of the FEFN, see Appendix 1.
- For contact details, see to the Council's Guidelines for Friends Group Volunteers section, Appendix 8 or visit the FEFN home page – [www.fefn.wordpress.com](http://www.fefn.wordpress.com).
- Victorian Environment Friends Network
  - The Victorian Environment Friends Network (VEFN) exists to help represent the common interests of all Friends groups in Victoria. Coordinated by a committee elected at a biennial conference, the Network produces a quarterly newsletter, arranges seminars, celebrates volunteering with the Best Friend Award and liaises with managing authorities.
  - For contact details see the Council's Guidelines for Friends Group Volunteers section, Appendix 8 or visit the VEFN home page – <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~friends/>.
- Frankston Indigenous Nursery
  - The Frankston Indigenous Nursery is operated by Frankston City Council and located in McCulloch Avenue, Seaford, next door to the Seaford State Emergency Service (SES) (Melways 99 F8). The nursery is managed by Council's Indigenous Nursery Officer and staff, and supported a group of volunteers who assist in seed propagation. For contact detail of the nursery see the Council's Guidelines for Friends Group Volunteers section, Appendix 8.
- Peninsula Field Naturalists Club Incorporated
  - The Peninsula Field Naturalists Club has been going for more than 60 years, with monthly evening meetings and weekend field trips to explore native vegetation and wildlife. The field trips are generally one-day outings around the Mornington Peninsula and Gippsland, with an annual camp going further afield. The club is a member of the FEFN. The monthly meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month at the Uniting Church hall in High Street, Frankston. Guest speakers present an informative and interesting presentation each month. For contact details of the Peninsula Field Naturalists Club, see the Council's Guidelines for Friends Group Volunteers section, Appendix 8 or visit the Peninsula Field Naturalists Club website – <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~penfnc/>.
- Defenders of the South East Green Wedge Incorporated
  - The Defenders of the South East Green Wedge have been operating in the cities of Kingston, Greater Dandenong and Frankston since 2002. Its role is to assist Local, State and Commonwealth Governments to achieve effective partnerships with the community within the context of Local Agenda 21 by encouraging conservation, cultural heritage and environment groups within the South Eastern region to participate in consultation processes.

## **2. WORKING WITH YOUR MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY**

### **2.1. RESPONSIBILITIES ARE TWO-WAY**

By approving the formation of a group, the relevant management authority has the responsibility for approving and supporting the activities of the group where this impacts on the authority's land. It also has the responsibility for ensuring that volunteers (as for employed staff) are adequately instructed and prepared for the work activities they are undertaking.

The Friends Group's responsibility is to ensure that members are operating within the management authorities' and group's guidelines for approved activities. The Activities Leader of the group must ensure that all members (especially new members) are adequately prepared and overseen in undertaking work tasks. The requirements of the management authority, such as sign-on sheets and activity procedures, must be followed to ensure the safety of the volunteers.

For Friends Groups working with Frankston City Council, the Guidelines for Friends Group Volunteers section (pages 7-9) provide details of their requirements. Page 8 of the Guidelines for Friends Group Volunteers provides details of the forms required by the Friends Groups, which are included as appendices. These forms include:

- Safe Work Methods Statement (SWMS)
- Induction of New and Existing Volunteers
- Safety Prompts
- Daily Site Checklist for Friends Group Activities Leaders
- Attendance Sheet for Working Bees
- Annual Registration Form for Volunteers
- Incident and Hazard Report Form.

The above listed forms are included as appendices to the Guidelines for Friends Group Volunteers. Additional information regarding the responsibilities of Activities Leaders is also contained in section 4.3 of this document.

In the case of Frankston City Council, the FEFN is the principal group which maintains communication between the responsible Council Officers and the Friends Groups, with respect to procedures, training, etc. Apart from this, groups maintain a close working relationship with particular reserves staff, whether they are Council or ranger staff from other relevant management authorities.

The FEFN also maintains contact with representatives of other authorities, such as Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) (formerly DSE), Melbourne Water, and neighbouring municipalities.

### **2.2. MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY SUPPORT**

#### **2.2.1. Council Support**

The Frankston City Council offers a range of support to the applicable Friends Groups; refer to the Council's Guidelines for Friends Group Volunteers in the separate self-contained section of this folder.

### **2.2.2. Other Management Authorities**

Friends Groups operating under the auspices of other authorities, such as Parks Victoria or Melbourne Water, will have regular contact with their reserve management staff. These personnel are the first point of contact for assistance and advice from these authorities. It is important that the Friends Groups, and in particular the Activities Leaders, foster good relationships with their reserve management staff.

## **3. FORMING AND MAINTAINING A GROUP**

### **3.1. HOW TO START A FRIENDS GROUP**

Anyone can form a Friends Group but there is some work to do before a decision can be made as to whether it can go ahead. A few ideas to start with are:

- Develop a clear idea about the reasons that a Friends Groups should be formed.
- Do some research, such as who is the managing authority (Frankston City Council, Parks Victoria) and what is already happening in the reserve.
- Contact the management authority and discuss the idea – the management authority will need to provide support for the potential Friends Group, so they must be on side.

This is a starting point only; there are many other factors that need to be considered. Refer to Appendix 2, an extract from the Parks Victoria and VEFN Volunteer and Friends Information Kit – 2009, for further information on how to establish a Friend Group.

There is also the consideration that once the Friends Group is up and running, there will be a need provide stimulus to keep it running, so having a few dedicated people working with you will help maintain the momentum. Appendix 3 provides some ideas on how to keep the Friends Group functioning, along with addition information about the operations of groups generally.

### **3.2. INCORPORATE OR NOT?**

#### **3.2.1. What is incorporation?**

Incorporation is the official registration of a group name. Benefits of incorporation are:

- Ability to make contracts
- Ability to own property
- Liability rests with the Incorporated Association not with members of the Committee
- Ability to sue and be sued
- Ability to receive grants from private and public organisations.

Advantages of remaining unincorporated are:

- Ease of dissolution (generally)
- Privacy of affairs
- Difficult to sue
- No legal reporting requirements.

#### **3.2.2. Do volunteer groups need to be incorporated?**

The answer to this question is yes, if:

- The association wishes to receive funds from a government body or other fund, which requires incorporation.
- The activities of an association involve any real risk of personal injury or any other claim for damages.
- The group wishes to hold property.

- The group proposes to enter important contracts.
- The group is prepared to satisfy the continuing reporting and procedural requirements of an Incorporated Association. There is a requirement to lodge an annual return.

For a group to be eligible to receive grants under most grants programs, it must either be:

- incorporated, or
- able to make arrangements with another incorporated association to auspice their application.

However, to receive a Parks Victoria Healthy Parks Healthy People Grant, Friends Groups do not need to be incorporated as there is no transfer of funding to the community group.

Incorporated status also protects the personal assets of the committee members and individual volunteers in the event an incorporated volunteer group is sued. The incorporated body could only be sued for the value of the incorporated body's assets (e.g. property, cash in bank, tools, equipment, and other assets).

However, if an incident occurred as a result of an authorised volunteer activity, the legal liability may be borne by the Friends Group's relevant management authority, provided the Friends Group has followed the procedures specified by the management authority.

Appendix 4 contains further information about the formalities of Friends Groups, in addition to a sample constitution suitable for a group that does not wish to incorporate.

For further information on incorporation, contact Consumer Affairs Victoria on 03 8765 5222 or <http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/clubs-and-not-for-profits/incorporated-associations>.

### **3.3. STRUCTURE OF FRIENDS GROUPS**

Many of the Friends Groups in Frankston are incorporated, and as such, are required to have a committee of management comprising of at least:

- a President
- a Vice President
- a Secretary,
- a Treasurer, and
- ordinary members (optional).

With changes to the Consumer Affairs Victoria's Model Rules in 2012, the role of Public Officer has been removed, with the responsibilities being transferred to the Secretary.

If your Friends Group is not incorporated, it's still a good idea to follow a similar structure of management – this allows decision making to be democratic. An important role for any Friends Group is that of the Activities Leader, the person responsible for organising and supervising the Friends Group's working sessions. For larger groups, this may be more than one person.

### **3.4. FEFN REPRESENTATIVES**

The FEFN is the umbrella organisation of Friends Groups and other environmentally oriented groups in Frankston, as detailed in section 1.2. The FEFN encourages all Friends Groups to become members of the Network – a simple process of presenting your Friends Group's aims at one of the FEFN meetings. The benefits of membership are broad ranging; from being part of a collective voice in addressing

environmental issues affecting the Frankston region, to assistance and support from the FEFN by way of sharing experiences, and developing skills and knowledge through forums and training sessions.

As a member group, you'll need to elect at least one of your members (but ideally two) as representative to the FEFN. The FEFN Objectives and Procedures document (Appendix 1) specifies that each Friends Group is entitled to have two representatives attend the FEFN meetings, however in the event of a vote being called, only one representative may vote on behalf of their group.

### **3.5. MAINTAINING A SUCCESSFUL GROUP**

A key requirement to maintain a successful Friends Group is to build a small team of dedicated members who are willing to help coordinate activities. An essential ingredient is good communication between the Friends Group's committee, the members and the management authority. A good relationship with the management authority is vital, with regular communication both ways, so both you and your management authority contact have a good understanding on what you both want to achieve.

With running of a Friends Group, there are a range of opportunities to engage with your members. For instance, many people will join a Friends Group to become involved with pulling out weeds at the local bushland reserve. However, there are lots of other tasks that need doing in order for the group to function well, such as:

- writing a newsletter for the group,
- preparing morning tea for the working sessions,
- doing the paperwork to apply for grants; or
- propagating plants for the reserve.

These are just a few examples, depending on the Friends Group's circumstances – other opportunities may include writing an article for the local newspaper about your reserve, setting up a website or speaking to school groups – the list is only limited by what you want to realistically achieve.

As with any activity, it is important that the Friends Group has clearly defined goals – both short and long term. Longer term planning may be considering a new planting area, such as clearing, seed propagation, etc.; whereas short term goals could be applicable to the next working session, such as what you want to achieve on the day.

Friends Group projects should be achievable and relevant; with the objectives aligned with both the group and the management authority. It's also important to be engaged with the local community, especially those people who live near your reserve. By making marked improvements in the quality of the vegetation and amenity of your reserve, the locals will appreciate the efforts of the group and may be inspired to become participants in the Friends Group's activities – this helps instil a sense of ownership in the reserve.

An important aspect is the social connections between the Friends Group members, something that should be promoted. By knocking off work and sharing a tea break is a great start, and even the occasional social gathering away from your reserve is a good way of building a cohesive team. Even people who only turn up to a working session once or twice a year are a valuable asset to your group – make sure they are welcomed and that their efforts are appreciated. By emphasising that there are no obligations to attend every working session, most volunteers generally make an effort to attend whenever they can.

In summary, build good relationships and have appropriate and realistic aims as to what the Friends Group can achieve. Keep group formality to a minimum, as too much regimentation can be off-putting to people who just want to help out for a few hours.

## **4. THE GROUP IN ACTION – PRACTICAL MATTERS**

### **4.1. PREPARING FOR PROJECT ACTIVITIES**

Friends Groups generally hold working sessions at regular intervals at their reserve. The Activities Leaders of Friends Groups associated with Frankston City Council need to refer to the Working Safely section (page 7) of the Guidelines for Friends Group Volunteers section. This provides a general overview of the volunteers responsibilities when working in Council reserves. To ensure that these working sessions achieve the desired outcomes, the following points should be considered:

- Notify members of the forthcoming working sessions. Even though it may be a regular monthly event, it is still a good idea to inform everyone to ensure maximum attendance.
- Plan the work that is to be undertaken by the Friends Group – this ensures the best use of the volunteer's efforts on the day. Regular communication with the management authority is vital to ensure everyone has a clear understanding of the desired outcomes.
- The Activities Leader (see section 4.3 below) is the site person in charge, and takes responsibility for the delivery of equipment such as wheelbarrows, rakes, loppers, saws, weeding tools, kneeling mats, etc. to the working session site. Ideally, this person should be the first to arrive at the work site.

### **4.2. SOURCES OF EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES**

There is a variety of equipment and resources that may be of use to Friends Groups: from practical tools for use during working sessions, to less tangible resources, such as meeting rooms and access to office equipment.

Most Friends Groups will have a selection of hand tools which the group owns. These may have been bought through the aid of a funding grant, refer to section 4.8 for further details.

For Friends Groups that operate under the direction of Frankston City Council, there are several resources available:

- Meeting room – located at the Frankston Indigenous Nursery, the meeting room seats approximately 12 people and can be accessed outside of business hours if required. It can be booked for use by contacting the nursery directly, see the Council's Guidelines for Friends Group Volunteers section, Appendix 8.
- Community Volunteer Support Trailer – this trailer is equipped with a broad range of tools and is available to community groups in Frankston. It is booked and stored at the Frankston City Council's Operations Centre in Buna Avenue, Seaford. Refer to the Council's Guidelines for Friends Group Volunteers section, Appendix 9 for the list of equipment available and booking details.
- Photocopying and printing – for Friends Groups events and flyers, Frankston City Council Environment Department's Volunteer Support Officer can assist, including helping to publicise these events via the council's website and bimonthly Frankston City News.

Additional sources for photocopying can be our local state and federal Members of Parliament. Refer to the Council's Guidelines for Friends Group Volunteers section, Appendix 13 for contact details.

Friends Groups not associated with Frankston City Council have access to equipment and resources from their respective management authorities, however member groups of the FEFN also have access to some resources offered by Council.

Located at the meeting room at the Frankston Indigenous Nursery is a range of books available for loan to Friends Groups. These books cover a broad range of flora and fauna references, many of them specific to our local area. A list of the books available is at Appendix 5.

### 4.3. ACTIVITIES LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The Friends Group Activities Leader is the person who supervises the Friends Groups working sessions. For larger groups, this role may be undertaken by more than one person. Ideally, the Activities Leader should be trained and currently accredited in First Aid – the management authority will generally arrange First Aid and refresher courses for nominated members of Friends Groups.

The Activities Leader(s) has the following responsibilities:

- Upon arrival, the Activities Leader should survey the work site to identify any potential hazards, such as tripping hazards, broken glass, etc. Appendix 6 in the Council's Guidelines for Friends Group Volunteers section contains a copy of the Daily Site Checklist for Friends Group's Activities Leaders, which should be completed prior to the commencement of work.
- For Frankston City Council reserves, the Activities Leader must complete a Safe Work Methods Statement (SWMS). A SWMS template is included as Appendix 14 in the Council's Guidelines for Friends Group Volunteers section.
- As people arrive at the site, welcome them and explain the planned tasks. For new members, having a simple fact sheet available will help people understand how the Friends Group operates, as well as some practical information. A sample of a fact sheet is provided at Appendix 6. If there is a range of tasks, where possible, give the members the opportunity to select the task most suitable to their abilities.
- Ask the members to sign the attendance sheet when they arrive – this provides a record of who attended the working session; refer to section 4.4 for further details. The Council's Guidelines for Friends Group Volunteers section includes an Attendance Sheet for Working Bees at Appendix 3.
- Ensure each volunteer is suitably equipped for the activity:
  - Appropriate clothing and footwear to provide adequate protection from the environment, including the weather, the bush and insects. This may include other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as safety glasses, gloves, hearing protection, mask, etc. Gloves would be the most commonly required PPE, and ideally the volunteers will bring these along but it is a good idea for the Friends Group to have a few spare pairs with their tools.
  - Sun protection cream and insect repellent, although the Friends Group may provide these.
  - A drink bottle – it is important to stay adequately hydrated, especially when working in the sun or on warm, windy days.
- Bring along the range of tools and equipment required for the tasks for the day. An essential part of the tool list is an adequately stocked First Aid kit. Refer the Council's Guidelines for Friends Group Volunteers section, Appendix 7 for the suggested contents list for First Aid Kits.
- The Activities Leader should also ensure that morning or afternoon tea is available to the volunteers when a rest break is required – a time to socialise is an important aspect of the Friends Group's activities. A thermos or two of hot water and tea, coffee and milk will suffice if members are encouraged to bring along their own cups.
- At the end of the day, ensure all equipment is collected and any bags of weeds or rubbish are gathered together at a suitable location for collection by the management authority.



- Finally, ensure that all volunteers are accounted for at the end of the activities, and that the Activities Leader is the last person to leave.
- Following the working session, the Activities Leader should report to:
  - the Friends Group committee about progress or any issues that may have arisen, and
  - their Ranger, to provide an informal report on what was achieved, and to advise on where any bags of weeds or rubbish are ready for collection.

The Activities Leader(s) would ideally be a member of the Friends Group's management committee, thus ensuring effective communication between the committee's intentions and the working session activities.

In addition to the above, the Activities Leaders working with Frankston City Council has other responsibilities, including:

- developing Annual Work Plans in conjunction with their Ranger,
- inducting new volunteers,
- ensuring the Annual Registration Form for Volunteers is completed and supplied to Frankston City Council, and
- completing the Incident and Hazard Report Form when required.

#### **4.4. RECORD KEEPING**

As with any organisation, it is important to ensure all relevant records are kept for future reference. This can include meeting minutes, information from your management authority and day to day records of the Friends Group's activities. All groups must have an attendance sheet, which provides a record of who attended each working session. It should be signed by the volunteer when they arrive and include provision for their name, signature and contact details. This is required particularly for insurance purposes, refer to the insurance section in the Council's Guidelines for Friends Group Volunteers for further details.

Periodically, you'll be asked by your management authority to provide a copy of the attendance sheets to them for their record keeping. This data is important, especially in the event of an injury claim.

As data is gathered, it is important that it is suitably archived periodically; and that more than just one person knows where it is kept. For Friends Groups associated with Frankston City Council, the data that needs to be collected includes all the forms listed on page 8 of the Council's Guidelines for Friends Group Volunteers section. These forms are included as appendices to that section of the Manual.

#### **4.5. THE 'BIODIVERSITY PROJECT'**

In 2003, the Network initiated what it called its 'Biodiversity Project', the main aims of which were:

- To collect as much information as possible on Frankston's flora, fauna and natural communities, and to catalogue this documentation with multi-field accessibility. Such information would include historical records.
- To set up a database system into which the results of any studies can be entered, or any observations of significance, especially in our natural reserves, can be recorded.

While a considerable amount of material has been assembled, setting-up difficulties has meant that the proposed database has not eventuated.

However, having up-to-date records of the flora and fauna in our reserves is still seen as an important part of FEFN's role. As Frankston City Council now has a biodiversity team, it is seen as an appropriate role of FEFN's Biodiversity Action Group to work in conjunction with that team to build up and have access to records of flora and fauna, particularly as a base for monitoring and research projects.

The FEFN has a form entitled 'Report of Significant Flora/Fauna Sighting in a Reserve' (Appendix 7). All groups are urged to use this form to record details of sightings, and to return such records to FEFN. Frankston City Council encourages the use of the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas on the DEPI website as the most appropriate database for these sightings. The Victorian Biodiversity Atlas is located at: <http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/plants-and-animals/native-plants-and-animals/victorian-biodiversity-atlas>

#### **4.6. FRANKSTON INDIGENOUS NURSERY**

Frankston City Council operates the Indigenous Nursery in Seaford. It is staffed by council employees and supported by a group of dedicated volunteers, who assist with the collection and propagation of seeds. The nursery is opened to the public for sales of plants on selected dates and time throughout the year.

The nursery, in conjunction with the Frankston Council Rangers, is a valuable resource for the supply of suitable plants in your reserves. For further details, refer to section 1.5 in this part of the manual; and also the Council's Guidelines for Friends Group Volunteers.

The nursery is also home to the small library of flora and fauna reference books available to Friends Groups. A current list of these books is at Appendix 5, and can be accessed by contacting the nursery, refer to the Council's Guidelines for Friends Group Volunteers section, Appendix 13.

#### **4.7. WORKING IN THE COMMUNITY**

As members of a Friends Group, you will be working in public areas and most likely coming across people visiting your reserve, possibly enjoying a walk, taking a shortcut or walking the dog. It is important that you engage with these visitors where possible, and let them know what the Friends Group is doing to improve the reserve's amenity – it's not uncommon for these passers-by to become interested enough to join your Friends Group.

The Friends Group may become involved with community activities, such as Clean Up Australia Day or Tree Planting Days, thereby engaging at a grassroots level with the local community. Not only does this showcase the work the Friends Group is undertaking, but is a great way to promote the group and build membership.

Other activities that could be considered are offering the local community a guided walk through your reserve, or engaging with a local school. Your Ranger, and for Frankston City Council managed reserves, the Environmental Education and Volunteer Support Officer may be able to assist with planning and publicity for a guided walk. Some ideas for developing a guided walk in your reserve are provided at Appendix 8.

Engaging with a nearby school is a great way of promoting the local environment, and an opportunity to run mini working sessions, special planting days and educational walks with the students. By working with the school's environment teacher provides opportunities to build a relationship between the Friends Group and the school, and can pay dividends with building your membership numbers.

## **4.8. APPLYING FOR GRANTS**

Community grants are available from a range of organisations, such as Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, Frankston City Council and CoastCare, amongst others. Information regarding these grants is usually available on these organisations' website, refer to the Council's Guidelines for Friends Group Volunteers section, Appendix 13 for a list of contacts. The management authority must give consent for any grant projects which are to be implemented on the land they manage.

For Friends Groups which are not incorporated, another group may be prepared to act as the auspice body for the grant. The auspicings group will need to manage the grant funding on the Friends Group's behalf.

## **5. APPENDICES**

### **5.1. GENERAL**

The following appendices contain information that is subject to periodic replacement. This may be due to changing details, such as information that has 'use by date'. Other information included here may be useful reference material but is considered not directly relevant for inclusion in the body of this manual. Remember, the information included in this document is to be read in conjunction with the Council's Guidelines for Friends Group Volunteers section of this manual.

### **5.2. APPENDIX REPLACEMENT PROCEDURE**

This consolidated Volunteers Manual has been issued to the relevant Friends Groups by Frankston City Council and the Frankston Environmental Friends Network. When initially distributed, it contained the complete set of appendices, as listed on the cover sheet to the appendices section.

The desired intention is that a representative of each Friends Group will take ownership of this manual, thereby taking responsibility to ensure it is kept up to date. Periodically, Frankston City Council will issue a replacement appendix, along with an updated cover sheet, to each Friends Group. The person responsible is to replace the relevant appendix, along with the supplied amended cover sheet.