



# NEWSLETTER

## Friends of Oxley Creek Common Inc.

*"Our Community Caring for Our Common"*

June 2025 - Number 57



### SAVE THE DATE

**FOOCC Bird walk 6.30 am Sunday, 31<sup>st</sup> August, followed by morning tea and a General Meeting at 10am.**

Register for the bird walk via the Facebook page or the website. FOOCC members are given priority, then newsletter subscribers. Check your email for notifications. All welcome.

#### **Tuesday Common Carers**

**Tuesdays 7 – 9 am.** Meet in the car park. New members welcome. No experience necessary.

#### **Walk and Weed**

**1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of the month. 7-9am**  
To register call 0429911555

#### **Bushcare and Beer**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month, 2.00pm**  
Afterwards a quencher at Helios Brewery.

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING May 18th, 2025

The Friends of Oxley Creek Common Annual General Meeting was attended by 13 people with 3 apologies. Reports were presented by Hugh Possingham (President), Matthew Mendel (Treasurer), and Mary Lou Simpson (Tuesday Common Carers). See the Snapshot box below.

Pam Douglas chaired the meeting for the election of office bearers. The office bearers for the next year are:

<b>President:</b>	Hugh Possingham
<b>Secretary:</b>	Robyn Mulder
<b>E-Secretary:</b>	Karen Gillow
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Matthew Mendel
<b>Creekcare Coordinator and Newsletter Editor:</b>	Mary Lou Simpson
<b>Media Secretary:</b>	Cath Tavatgis
<b>Committee:</b>	Zina Dinesen, Simon Murray, Lynn Whitfield, Trevor Armstrong, Andrew Duell.

### General Business

Cath Tavatgis brought the new stickers with our logo for distribution.

A grant obtained by OCCA will allow new plantings along Willy Wagtail Way, the Secret Forest and along the major gullies.

**To help with these plantings look out for notices on Facebook regarding National Tree Day on Sunday July 27<sup>th</sup>.**



Berenice Manning Spotted this Cuckoo on the birdwalk.

## SNAPSHOT of FOCC

### Membership:

- 4 Life memberships
- 44 5-year memberships
- 6 1-year memberships

Currently, there are some lapsed memberships. Join Friends of Oxley Creek Common, contribute to our finances and be involved in the future developments.

### Finances

There is a healthy bank account, but continued memberships ensure we can buy plants, expand our profile and maintain the equipment. See the membership information at the end of the newsletter.

### Bushcare

Since last May, **Tuesday Common Carers** have worked over 1,000 hours, with an average of 15 people attending. More than 350 seedlings have been planted.

### Facebook

FOCC's Facebook page has 1930 followers.

## TUESDAY COMMON CARERS

Since February, the challenges facing this group have multiplied. The rain, roughly 1260 mm since November, has meant a huge weed load. We set about removing weedy summer growth at Stoney Gully, Scrub Wren Point, Robinbank and Jagera Corner.

Then came the threat of Cyclone Alfred, which meant that all the tanks had to be secured, the green bags, water bottles, plant guards and black plastic collected. With the help of the BSU team from OCCA, all this equipment was put in the container.

Although we thankfully missed the cyclone, the subsequent rain caused an enormous amount of damage. The water at Fern Gully reached nearly 2 metres, removed at least 6 inches (150 cm) of topsoil and multiple plants, leaving the roots of trees bare. Similar damage occurred in other places. The force of the water was evident at Snake Gully, where the railings were flattened. These have now been repaired, significantly narrowing the culvert.

As the rain continues, hundreds of weedlings of Blue Billygoat Weed have emerged. A new crop of *Commelina benghalensis* has emerged at every site, glycine is rampant and Coral berry (*Rivina humilis*) is in seed. We have been working to try to restore the damaged areas, by collecting dried

flood debris, weeding and planting ground covers, but it is difficult to know just where the most urgent attention is required. It could take years for these damaged areas to recover.

Currently, the track is unsuitable for 2x wheel drive vehicles, which means we have been unable to access areas beyond Jagera Corner. Fire ants relocated themselves from the paddock, mainly to the section between Jagera Corner and Fern Gully. These nests have been treated, but there are active nests constantly being found.

Amazingly, some native plants have survived the deluge of water and weeds. *Lomandras*, *Breynia*, *Pittosporum revolutum*, *Einadia* and *Acacia* species survived. Quail have been seen using *Einadia* for shelter. Everyone was delighted to observe the *Callicarpa pedunculata*, covered in purple fruit, once the glycine had been removed. See below.

This year we have averaged 15 workers each morning, counting several new members. Congratulations to all the weeders, who have looked at the damage and not lost heart but have begun to clear weeds, collect seeds and salvage native plants. Considering the enormous weed load, without their work, the native plants would be smothered.

Mary Lou Simpson





The birds were looking for high ground.



Stoney Gully was impassable.



Oxley Creek where Fern Gully reaches the Creek.

## ALFRED at THE COMMON



Water nearly reaches the track, completely covering the riparian strip.



When Stoney Gully had subsided, water was still racing through Fern Gully.



Looking towards Nosworthy Park from Tank 2. The whole of the riparian level is under water. The mangroves indicate the usual creek bank.





Railings on both sides of the culvert at Snake Gully were flattened.



Water lay for days in this area, where there had been an infestation of weeds. When the water receded, it left a large patch of Johnson Grass.



Flood waters removed the topsoil, dumped the gravel, along with masses of weeds. This is one cluster of Blue Billygoat weed.



The force of the water shifted this Tilkey tank off its pallets, despite being full of water. The crates were lashed to the tank. The glycine, which had woven itself around the tank and crates has gone.

## THE LEGACY



The general result of this inundation has been a proliferation of weeds. Glycine is now rampant in areas that were clear of it. Undoubtedly, when we find the native vegetation there might be some welcome germinations.



The debris in the tree indicates the height of the water.



# FUNGI



Because of the damp conditions, there is plenty of fungi appearing at the Common, which is essential for the decomposition of wood. The fungi we see is the 'flower' of the threads of the underground web of mycelium that is working away underground, in concert with tree roots, helping the tree to flourish.

Scarlet bracket fungi (*Trametes coccinea*) can break down all components of wood, including lignin, that other fungi cannot. (AB Bishop, *Gardening Australia*, Sep 2024).





## SEEN at THE COMMON



Pythons like to rest under a good cover, in this case weeds.



*Callicarpa pedunculata*

This bush was discovered under a mass of glycine. It has dense, arching branches and grows to 2 metres. It belongs to the mint and sage family and is native to tropical areas throughout south-east Asia, the Philippines, New Guinea and Australia. The soft velvety leaves give it the common name of Velvet Leaf. The flowers and fruit are attractive to birds and other wildlife. Its survival is amazing, and its hardiness evident as it coped with flood and smothering and still produced a large crop of fruit.



*Centratherum punctatum* near Cockspur Halt.



The Striped Honeyeaters' lovely bubbling call alerted birdwatchers to their presence in the paddock past Snake Gully. They can be found from coastal areas and inland from Rockhampton to Victoria, frequenting open woodlands and swamp and mangrove forests, preferring dense foliage. (Source: Menkhorst et al, *The Australian Bird Guide*).

Please send contributions,  
especially photos, comments and  
corrections to Mary Lou Simpson.  
[marylouit@hotmail.com](mailto:marylouit@hotmail.com)  
Photo credits: Mary Lou Simpson  
and Berenice Manning

## BECOME INVOLVED

**JOIN** the quarterly bird walk. You will  
learn so much from Hugh Possingham.

**JOIN** Friends of Oxley Creek Common. See the  
end of the newsletter.

**JOIN** one of the weeding groups to help  
maintain the natural bushland. Check Save  
the Date on page 1.

**LIKE** the **Facebook Page** of Friends of Oxley  
Creek Common to keep in touch.

**CHECK** bird sightings on **Oxley Creek  
Common Birds Facebook Page** and **eBird**.

**VISIT** the FOCC website:  
<https://friendsofoxleycreekcommon.org>



Scan this image  
for a guide to the  
birds at Oxley  
Creek Common.



Early morning at the Common.

**Friends of Oxley Creek Common Inc.**  
**is dedicated to preserving this natural  
habitat for wildlife.**

**Become a friend of The Common**

**Pay** your membership directly into our BOQ  
account BSB 124017 – Ac 20161909  
and send the appropriate details to:  
[friendsofoxleycreekcommon@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofoxleycreekcommon@gmail.com)

or

**Return** a cheque with this form or the appropriate  
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PO Box 319, SHERWOOD, Qld 4075

You will automatically receive the Newsletter.

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Membership:	1 year	5 years	
Single	\$15	\$60	<input type="checkbox"/>
Concession:	\$12	\$48	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family:	\$20	\$80	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Life Membership \$400      Concession \$320  
Donation: \$....