

CLOSERange



Convenient Lies & the Ecology of Apocalypse

“Very few Australians know the Australian Government is a world leader in combating climate change” Ian Campbell Federal Environment Minister The Age 28-10-2006

**“So far the Howard’s Government approach (to climate change) has been to hand out hard earned tax payers money out – some of it to big corporations – and proclaim its doing something. John Howard is quickly becoming the Chamberlain of the chequebook...the Howard Government will do the bare minimum to appease public opinion, for it appears to have no one able or willing to absorb the scientific evidence , and to champion a more resolute response through the cabinet”
Tim Flannery The Age 28-10-06**

Suddenly the environment appears on centre stage and everyone is a concerned resident of planet earth, none more so than Government and opposition members. It a time to be on guard as to who is really going to do something and who is just going to wait a little longer to see what happens if we do nothing. Already we have lost eleven important years since the 1995 United Nations climate report warning of “human induced greenhouse warming” (Age 28-10-06) with over half the CO₂ in the atmosphere produced over the last twenty years.

Coming up to write this editorial I collected newspaper articles with which to launch into the usual tirade. Unfortunately most of the news is bad. The hole in the ozone layer is the biggest ever (Age 21-10-06) peaking at 29.5 million square kilometres, up 100,000 square kilometres. The hottest year ever is predicted by scientists for 2007 due to the release of heat energy stored in the worlds oceans from last years El Nino receded (Age 5-1-07). Already this past December-February was the hottest Dec-Feb period ever recorded. The world’s 10 warmest years have occurred in the last 12 years, with 2005 the hottest. The death of ancient ‘iconic’ trees along the Murray River and elsewhere (Age 4-11-2006) across the landscape. Biodiversity continues its nose dive. The Murray – Darling system is in the top ten world damaged river systems. Another 1,000,000 hectares bushlands burnt over the summer. There is more than a whiff of apocalypse in the air. Its easy to be cynical or depressed and to think that humans have made an unpromising future for their species planet.

On top of this comes the Four Corners programme (ABC February 2007), repeating a BBC documentary that explored the relationship between scientists who argued against links between smoking tobacco and cancer and scientists who argued about the lack of links between human produced CO₂ and climate change. The programme was able to demonstrate that the very same scientists were being used to produce arguments against anthropogenic global warming, in some cases supported by big oil business. One written account of this is in George Monbiot’s *Heat- How to stop the planet burning* (2006).

Ted Trainer (Age 1 2007) is in no doubt as to the future. “The fundamental cause of big global problems threatening us now is simply over-consumption. The rate at which we rich countries are using up resources is grossly unsustainable”. Fair point. What then is the answer? “If the question is how we can a sustainable and just consumer capitalist society, the point is that there isn’t an any answer? That cannot be done...(we need a) huge and radical transition (to a) society based on a non-affluent, but adequate living standards, high levels of self-sufficiency, in small scale, localised economies and co-operative and participatory communities...(however) It hardly needs to be said that our chances of making such a huge and radical transition are negligible”

Meanwhile new petrol guzzling cars roll of the assembly lines, some Melbournians celebrate the burning of fossil fuels at the Grand Prix celebrity races, another freeway built without a train line down its centre is about to open, brown coal warriors celebrate sales to China and United States of America talks about lessening the ‘intensity’ of its CO₂ production, and there’s a funny smell in the air...

Presidents Report. August 2005

A few words from the President

Well it's been a busy 6 months since the last issue of Close Range but we've still managed to initiate and achieve a number of things.

On the local front Andy Nixon and I met with Michonne Van Rees, Parks Victoria's General Manager Regional Services. This meeting was to outline the activities that the VRA is undertaking both locally and internationally and our role as a stakeholder to Parks Victoria. This was the first of what we hope to be regular meetings with this position to discuss issues relating to the management of protected areas and rangers in general. Michonne has now left Parks Victoria with Gerard O'Neil to be the new GM Regional Services with whom we will seek to continue the relationship.

Fires have kept most people very busy over the last few weeks. I am not sure if everyone is aware the Chris Worrell, Ranger in Charge Moorabool which includes the Brisbane Ranges, lost his house in the Anakie fire. The VRA are planning to provide some sort of support and assistance to Chris over the next few months. We have a number of ideas eg a working be at his house site, fund raising, and donation of items not replaceable under insurance etc. David Farrar is coordinating this for the VRA so please email Dave with any ideas you may have at dfarrar@parks.vic.gov.au.

The big thing on the horizon this year is of course the International Ranger Federations 5th World Congress to be held in Stirling, Scotland in June. We have I believe 10 members attending which is very exciting with at least 2 members delivering presentations. Iain Marshall is the deserving member receiving the VRA support for attendance. The VRA in conjunction Parks Victoria will also be sponsoring a delegate from one of our neighbouring countries. At this stage it is likely to be a ranger from Malaysia, PNG or Indonesia. We hope that there may be opportunity for this ranger to also visit Victorian parks. Parks Victoria has also provided some other support for Parks Victoria members attending the congress, thank-you to John Senior for helping to facilitate this support.

Note from the Editor

Thanks for the contributions to Close Range by Fiona Smith, Ricardo Simao, Mick Keenan, Andrew Nixon, Peter Cleary and Sean Wilmore. Without their efforts there would be no edition of CR. I have not been able to use a computer at home for several months due to a shoulder injury. I am grateful for the help these few people providing their thoughts on things and getting CR out. We work in some of the most exciting and treasured environments and mostly it seems that we are not moved enough to write something about them for Close Range. Even to send in a photograph.

Bonnie Raitt is one of my favourite songsters. One of the songs she sings called "Angel from Montgomery" has the lines..."how the hell can a person, go to work in the morning, come home in the evening and have nothing to say".



In Search of an Identity

How confident do you feel when approaching the public in your park? The uniform you wear may have a big influence on this.

Until recently, park users were indifferent toward me, (if they did not disregard me totally!) This made me feel unhappy about asking visitors to behave appropriately within the park, because without a characteristic uniform, I felt that I was not easily identified as a Ranger and that this caused confusion among the public. I also felt that it reflected poorly on our public image.

You see, like a lot of other councils, in 2003 Frankston City Council moved to mandatory high-visibility clothing for their outdoor staff.

Of course, we weren't called Rangers back then; our official title was 'Natural Reserves Team Members'.

We worked with the HR department to change that.

One reason for change was because our title was a mouthful and left the public confused about who we were and what we did. Another reason was that we believed our qualifications, roles and the diversity of our duties were well aligned to Park Rangers elsewhere. We demonstrated to management that our field roles included natural resource protection and management, visitor management, law enforcement support functions (without having any real enforcement powers), public education, park infrastructure maintenance, fire risk management (and many others!) and that we were appropriately educated and trained to do so.

So our title was changed to 'Natural Reserves Ranger', which was easily translated to 'Park Ranger' when dealing with the public and we gained additional respect.

The problem remained, however, that we didn't look like Rangers, so unless we engaged in conversation with park users and identified ourselves, they did not know there was a Ranger on duty. They assumed that we were possibly gardeners, or truck drivers strolling through the park on their lunch break, or who knows? Hi-vis gear is everywhere.

In December 2005, we put forward a proposal to management that the Rangers needed to adopt an image that symbolises conservation, recreation and heritage management, which aids in portraying an image of professionalism, specialist function and knowledge and conveys Rangers' authority when promoting Frankston City Council's natural resource management goals.

After a bit of red tape and almost nine months later, we finally got our new uniforms. We designed the badges ourselves and after some compromising with the PR Department, achieved a look we were all happy with.

The new uniform has enhanced our professional image and made us more visible to visitors. The public now readily identify Frankston City Council's Natural Reserves Rangers, who are always willing to help with any problems. Of course, we still don our high-visibility vests in accordance with OH&S policies, in situations requiring such clothing.



The new Ranger uniform also had some surprising benefits – what was already good team morale amongst the Rangers was further improved! Our uniform gave us a clear sense of identity and strong sense of belonging. We love our new look, and wear our uniform with pride. It reflects Frankston City Council's commitment to managing its natural reserves and the value it places upon the staff entrusted to do so.

Ricardo Simao
Senior Ranger
Natural Reserves
Frankston City Council



Membership an Invitation

Afternoon All,

This a reminder that all our membership fees are now due again and were from the 1st of January. As you may recall, couple of years ago we moved from a financial year to a calendar year for membership subscriptions to comply with changes to the constitution or incorporation, I forget which.

I must apologise for the delay in reminding people about renewals being due but, like most others I have been heavily involved with the fire effort in the past couple of months and been more than a little distracted.

The process is very simple for renewals, Ion and I have refined things a little from last year, you can credit funds directly to the VRA Bendigo Bank account as per the attached membership form or a good old fashioned cheque to Ion at the address listed on the form. If you direct debit/credit to the account please use your surname as an identifier so we know who to write receipts for.

Once Ion has the funds, he will advise me and I will issue memberships cards, remember that discounts are available to VRA members at selected establishments.

A reminder that we have a range of exclusive merchandise that is available through me, check the website for further information.

If you have any membership queries or if you know someone new to a ranger service or feel inclined to encourage a few of your work mates to join the VRA, please don't hesitate to contact me on the details listed below,

Cheers,
Mick K

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Fax (03) 5755 1802

Hooray for Blanket Bay

They say every cloud has a silver lining and this was certainly the case last December, when we took our 9 month old boy on his first camping trip. Originally, we had planned to go to Mt Buffalo but unfortunately the fires up there changed that idea. So we decided to head down to The Otways.

After meeting Carlie Bronk at our recent workshop on Phillip Island, it was great to be able to ring her and get the low down on all the good spots and sights. She suggested Blanket Bay, which was a gem of a spot just east of Cape Otway and we ended up staying for five nights.

There were more koalas than campers down there and the king parrots came regularly for afternoon tea in the Leucopogons. The rocky coast line meant we had to slip the pusher into 4WD to get the most out of the rockpools and cliffs. It was great to relax and cook on an open fire again between hands of 500 and games of scrabble. In an ironic twist on the total fire ban day forecast, the change came through at about 11am, our tent almost got swamped and the mercury plummeted to about 15 degrees.

So it's Hooray for Blanket Bay and you just have to check out the boardwalk at Triplet Falls!

Pete Cleary





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WORLD PREMIERE- AT YOUR HOUSE!

6/3/07

Well the VRA is partly responsible for this whole new journey ive taken , so read on to find out how you can get involved in this next step.

On July 31st this year, the International Ranger Documentary-“The Thin Green Line” ,that ive been working on -(since the Congress at Wilsons Prom in 2003) will premiere in over 50 countries and up to 500 locations around the world on the one night! And you can be part of it!

If you’ve ever been to one of the IRF congress’ then you’ll know what inspired me by meeting our colleagues From all over the world., if not you need to watch the doco when it comes out!

I wanted to try and document their daily struggles, stories and anecdotes and importantly raise the level of awareness and support for our work. I hope you can help showcase this film on July 31st

It just so happens that this date-July 31st - is the first U.N sanctioned International Rangers Day, and we thought it appropriate to launch a world first documentary look at rangers around the globe. Filmed on 6 continents and 23 countries. “The Thin Green Line” takes a look at the human side of protected areas. The animals and the landscapes become the important backdrop for this look into the lives of the professional Park Ranger.

Importantly 100% of the profits raised through this whole project including DVD sales, sponsorship and the premieres will go to aiding rangers around the world in their conservation efforts, including supporting the International ranger federations Dependency fund- that supports the families of rangers wh have been killed in the line of duty.

So we need you as rangers to get involved in this night by

1. volunteering on the 31st of July night for our Melbourne Premiere- The Green Carpet Gala which will feature guest speakers and bands an 1000 guests a the Astor Theatre in St Kilda. Email me on seanwillmore@iprimus.com.au
2. If you’re further afield –then organise your own private or public premiere on the same night- at your house for friends-the park office for colleagues and community or in your local cinema or hall- registration forms are online or you can email me for one.



3. purchase the final version of the DVD when it is out in late april early May
4. Spread the word about the premiere and the website- www.thingreenline.info to everyone-

So with your help, our colleagues and communities around the world we can make a big noise for conservation and raise some much need funds for _The Thin Green line.

We need your help- it eill come around quick so please register now.

www.thingreenline.info

Cheers



Quotable

One of the penalties of an ecological education is that one lives alone in a world of worlds. Much of the damage inflicted on land is quite invisible to laymen. An ecologist may either harden his shell and make believe that the consequences of science are none of his business, or he must be a doctor who sees the marks of death in a community that believes itself well and does not want to be told otherwise.

Aldo Leopold, A Sand Country Almanac

Early in the history of life, Nature began to shape new species to fit into habitats already occupied by other species. Never since the Archaean Period has a living thing evolved alone. Whole communities have evolved as if they were one great organism. Thus all evolution is coevolution and the biosphere is now a confederation of dependencies.

Victor B. Scheffer. Spire of Form. Glimpses of Evolution



Chin Wagging

Here it is, a new section that contains snippets of information that you VRA folk may be interested in. Please feel free to send on any thoughts, minor info, interesting news, facts that would be good to share :

- ❖ If you're not joined up already and wish to have a free-wheeling chance to talk and discuss all things parks and rangers, then register with the Aus Ranger Federation website at www.ranger.org.au/forum . This 'chat-room' has 150+ members to date so plenty of opportunity to chin-wag on topical issues.
- ❖ Cassie Wright, VRA past member and IRF Youth Development officer has returned from her work with the Northern Territory Parks Service to a job with Greening Australia based out of Leongatha in Gippsland. She looks forward to catching up with her Victorian ranger colleagues, and Scotland Congress folk, in the months ahead.
- ❖ Late last year, Kenyan wildlife authorities resumed the relocation of hundreds of elephants from an overcrowded reserve in Kenya's coastal region to a more spacious park further inland. The second phase of the relocation from the Shimba Hills National Reserve to Tsavo East National Park, about 300 km southeast of the capital, will target about 250 elephants. During the first phase, about 150 elephants were transferred in the exercise that was billed "the single largest translocation of animals ever undertaken since Noah's Ark"...."
- ❖ Suriname...most people think that this country lies somewhere in Asia, but NO it is located in South America. A former Dutch Colony it has 14% of its land reserved under protected area classifications. There are 16 PA's and 16 rangers (game wardens). Not as good a ratio as we enjoy I think.
- ❖ *Guradaparque* is the new bi-weekly newsletter from the IRF. It will compliment **Thin Green Line**, providing a regular news update of park and ranger events happening that month. Items of interest should be sent to Bill Halainen at TGLedit@ptd.net If you are a current VRA member we will arrange to send it on to you electronically or you can subscribe by contacting Bill direct at the noted address.
- ❖ **Planet Earth** – fantastic. If you have been watching (or reading) this phenomenal production from the BBC / David Attenborough, then well done. If not then do so. Available from the ABC shops.
- ❖ An oldie but a goodie..."an Oklahoma judge recently noted the role of the ranger as the worlds oldest profession when the managing authority at the time (God) placed the cherubic guard within the Garden of Eden to protect it from the only two people in the world !"

Andy Nixon at anixon@parks.vic.gov.au

Andrew Nixon



Grampians Fire 2006





And the World Began at Midnight

We are all undoubtedly familiar with the 24hr clock analogy which places the long history of planet earth as a 24hr day. A concept we can grasp far more easily than 5 and a half billion years.

And so the world begins at midnight. Until 10 o'clock in the morning the earth is an inhospitable place for life. But then in time, the first signs of life appear at 11 a.m. as the threads of chemistry come together to form the first single-cellular structures. Life forms both plant and animal, are on time at 2:00 in the afternoon. Over the next seconds, minutes and hours life evolves into a galaxy of forms and wonder. It's not until 5pm that the dinosaurs appear and they dominate for the next hour and a half. But time ticks on and they leave the planet to our forbears, an evolution of mammals. What wonder they give us, we too as a part of that family. At just under 2 minutes to midnight early ancestral man first appears on earth. Modern man about arrives late, at 11.59 and 50 seconds. Captain Cook sails into the great south land at 11:59:59 or thereabouts. And we,are just but a moment. However for much of this time (1.5 million years) man has lived in the plains and valleys, mountains, savannahs, jungles, coasts and deserts. Places of immense beauty and bountiful provision. Places not unlike much of what we call protected areas today. For all this short (or long time) man has found sustenance and safe harbour from these places.

Therefore it surely becomes a role for us as rangers, to provide an understanding of that atavistic link to our birthplace and cradle. How much do we interpret to those that visit parks this important nexus ? Perhaps it is best messaged by those countless indigenous nations across the worlds who have maintained the link. They have a connection, but where is ours ? The fact that for the immense bulk of mans life on Earth he has lived on the edge of the forest, means that there is that connection there, no matter how deep and hidden for some. Unquestionably we do all have that link. But finding it is not easy. It is therefore important that every ranger can make that connection of origin. To pass on to our fellow humans an understanding of our origin and our destiny is a crucial responsibility of our custodial roles. May this find importance in our busy agendas.



Blue Tongue Reviews

The Biophilia Hypothesis edited by Stephen R. Kellert and Edward O. Wilson (Island Press)

excerpts from David Orr:

(on biophilia):

"E O Wilson suggests a deeper sort of attachment that goes beyond the particularities of habitat. We are, he argues, a biological species who will find little ultimate meaning apart from the remainder of life. We are bound to living things by what Wilson describes as an innate urge to affiliate which begins in early childhood and cascades into cultural and social patterns.

"If natural diversity is the wellspring of human intelligence, then the systematic destruction inherent in contemporary technology and economics is a war against the very sources of mind . . . It is impossible to unravel natural diversity without undermining human intelligence as well.

"If you study life deeply, its profundity will seize you suddenly with dizziness . . .

"Let a man once begin to think about the mystery of his life and the links which connect him with the life that fills the world, and he cannot but bring to bear upon his own life and all other life that comes within his reach, the principle of Reverance for Life." A. Schweitzer

Orr proposes:

The recovery of childhood -

we will not enter this kingdom of sustainability until we allow our children the kind of childhood in which Biophilia can put down roots.

Recovering a sense of place -

Call it bioregionalism, or becoming native to our places, either way it means deciding to relearn the arts that Jacquetta Hawkes once described as "a patient and increasingly skillfull lovemaking that persuades the land to flourish".

Education in Biophilia -

Upward mobility has come to mean putting as much distance as possible between the apogee of one's career trajectory and one's roots. We should worry a good bit less about whether our progeny will be able to compete as a "world class work force", and a great deal more about whether they will know how to live sustainably on the earth.

A New Covenant with Animals -

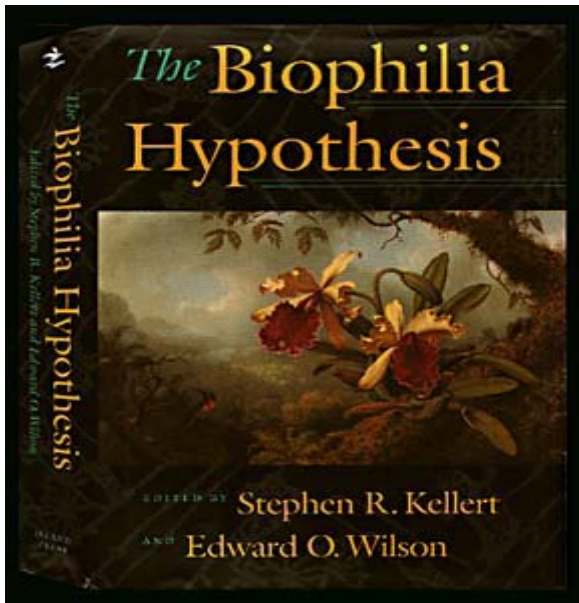
Paul Shepherd is right, to recognise animals and wildness is to decide to admit deeper layers of consciousness into the sunlight of full consciousness again.

The Economics of Biophilia -

The Biophilia Revolution will require national and global decisions that will permit life-centredness to flourish at a local scale.

Biophilia and Patriotism -

Patriotism, the name we give to the love of one's country must be redefined to include those things which contribute to the real health, beauty and ecological stability of our homeplaces and to exclude those which



do not. Patriotism as Biophilia requires that we decide to rejoin the idea of love of one's country to how well one uses the country. To destroy forest, soils, natural beauty and wildlife in order to swell the gross national product or to provide short term and often spurious jobs, is not patriotism but greed. Real patriotism demands that we weave the competent, patient and disciplined love of our land into our political life and our political institutions. No one has expressed this idea more clearly than the former Czech President, Vaclav Havel, "We must draw our standards from the natural world. We must honour with the humility of the wise the bounds of that natural world and the mystery which lies beyond them, admitting that there is something in the order of being which evidently exceeds all our competence."

excerpted from David Orr, "Love it or Leave it; the Coming Biophilia Revolution"

Edward O. Wilson:

"The great philosophical divide in moral reasoning about the remainder of life is whether or not other species have an innate right to exist.....

Wilson proposes:

Biodiversity is the creation

"Biodiversity is the most information-rich part of the known universe. More organisation and complexity exists in a handful of soil than on the surfaces of all the other planets combined.

Other species are our kin.

"Biodiversity of a country is part of its national inheritance - the product of the deep history of the territory extending long back before the coming of man.

Biodiversity is the frontier of the future -

"Humanity needs a vision of an expanding and unending future. This spiritual craving cannot be satisfied by the colonisation of space. The other planets are inhospitable and immensely expensive to reach. The nearest stars are so far away that voyagers would need thousands of years just to report back. The true frontier for humanity is life on earth, its exploration and the transport of knowledge about it into science, art and practical affairs. Again, the qualities of life that validate the proposition are: 90% or more of species of plants, animals and micro organisms, lack even so much as a scientific name; each of the species is immensely old by human standards and has been wonderfully moulded to its environment. Life around us exceeds in complexity and beauty anything else humanity is ever likely to encounter.

"The manifold ways by which human beings are tied to the remainder of life are very poorly understood, crying for new scientific enquiry and a boldness of aesthetic interpretation.

excerpted from Edward Wilson, "Biophilia and the Conservation Ethic"

Dorian Sagan and Lynn Margulis:

"All life on earth is a unified spatiotemporal system with no clear-cut boundaries. Encouraging our biophilia, preserving blocks of biodiversity before they are converted to concrete skyscrapers and asphalt parking lots, is a way of enhancing the possibility that human beings will persist into the future. This future may be indefinite, as some few species do not become extinct but "scale back" and become symbiotically attenuated and reintergrated into new forms of life and patterns of living organization. If we consider, for example, the ancestral oxygen-respirers that evolved into the mitochondria of all plants, animals, and fungi, we would have to say that this mitochondrial "species", codependent as it is, has resisted extinction, surviving and spreading (and still going strong) in multifarious forms for some 2,000 million years. Humanity seems to have been presented with an opportunity, rare in evolution, to do likewise. By allying ourselves more closely with once distant life-forms, by affiliating ourselves biophyletically, not only with

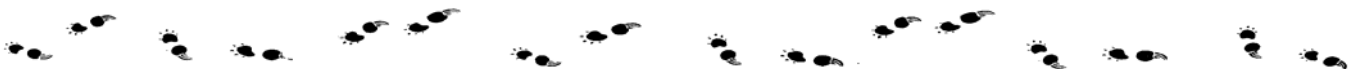


the plants and animals whose ongoing demise weighs so heavily at present on our memory, but also with the waste-recycling, air producing, and water-purifying microbes we as yet take largely for granted, we may be able to aid in the flowering of earth life into the astronomically voluminous reaches of space."

excerpts from Dorian Sagan and Lynn Margulis, "God, Gaia, and Biophilia"

The Biophilia Hypothesis

edited by Stephen R. Kellert and Edward O. Wilson (Island Press)



Membership Application

The VRA is a non-profit professional organisation. Membership and travel costs to meetings and functions are tax-deductible.

Contact details (Please indicate preferred method for future contact by ticking the box alongside)

Name _____ Agency _____
 Postal address _____ Location _____
 Phone (BH) _____
 (AH) _____
 (mob) _____
 Fax _____
 Email _____

CLOSErange

Please nominate how you would like to receive CLOSErange:

By mail By email



Please make cheques/money orders

Payable to: 'Victorian Rangers Association'

Send to: Victorian Rangers Association

C/O PO Box 159 Mansfield Box, VIC 3722

Signature _____ Date _____

Membership Category

Cost

Full (new) – includes VRA badge	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ 30.00
Full (renewal) – badge not included	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ 30.00
Associate (new) – no badge	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ 10.00
Associate (renewal) – no badge	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ 10.00
VRA Badge	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ 6.00

Executive Committee Contacts – 2005 / 06

Name	Position	Ph Work	Fax	Location
Fiona Smith	President	9390 1082	9390 1607	Grasslands
Andrew Nixon	Vice President	9844 2659	5866 2859	Warrandyte SP
Sam Nester	Secretary			
Ion Maher	Treasurer	5786 5351	5726 5691	Kinglake
Annie Leschen	Membership secretary	5159 0603	5159 1665	Omeo
Glen Jameson	Editor	8627 4718	9629 3196	National Parks Branch
Miles Stewart-Howie	Co-Editor	5754 4693	5754 1594	Marysville
Elaine Thomas	Elected Representative	5680 9528	5680 9516	Wilson's Promontory N.P
Sean Willmore	Elected Representative			
Peter Cleary,	Elected Representative			
Corrina James	Elected Representative	9881 6703	9613 4589	Bushy Park
Libby Jude.	Elected Representative	9334 0502	9336 1462	Maribyrnong Valley Park

VRA Member Discounts

Present your VRA membership card at any of these stores to receive a discount

Mountain Designs 15% Discount

373 Little Bourke St. Melbourne Phone: 9670 3354 15% discount

Outsports 10% discount off gear and hire for cross-country skiing, paddling, climbing and bushwalking

70 Wells St. Frankston. Phone: 9783 2079

886 Nepean Highway, Moorabbin. Phone 9532 5337

Aussie Disposals 10% discount at all 36 of their stores across the state

