



2024 - 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

**Friends of
Mossvale Park inc.**



Our mission

Our aim for our arboretum is to add to the historic, aesthetic and social significance of South Gippsland Shire. Historically, Mossvale Park is important as an example of 19th century landscaping that demonstrates how European settlement and development of this area sought to radically modify the natural and cultural landscape. It is also notable for its development as an important regional park in the post war period and for its associations with Francis Moss and the former Moss Vale Nursery. Aesthetically, Mossvale Park is distinguished by its many fine examples of mature exotic specimen trees, which together with the remnant indigenous vegetation, create an area of exceptional landscape quality that is unique within the Shire. Socially, Mossvale Park is an important part of the identity of the Berry's Creek area and is one of most well-known and best-loved parks in the South Gippsland region.

Our vision

To promote the botanic and historic characteristics of Mossvale Park and foster the interest of members of the community in the park and in plants and flora generally through education, volunteerism and fellowship.

Our history

The collection of plants that comprises Mossvale Park has great significance to the history, cultural and botanical character of South Gippsland.

Originally part of the great Gippsland Forest and home to the Gunaikurnai people our park is situated within a one kilometre meander of the Tarwin River West branch.

The park was part of the Moss Vale plant nursery where deciduous and coniferous trees were propagated and grown for sale in the late 1800's. Left over nursery stock was planted on the Tarwin River flats adjacent to the then entrance to the property. These over 100 year old trees form the framework of the park and are beloved by the community. Since Mossvale Park became a public reserve in 1946 successive committees of management have added to and maintained the European park aesthetic.

More recently the riverbanks have been restored, with the weedy deciduous tree suckers removed and replaced with natural regeneration and careful planting of endemic riparian vegetation. Not only do the endemic plants support a range species that depend on the river for habitat, they also provide weather protection and a dense green backdrop to highlight the specimen plantings.

Park management has been supported by an advisory committee from the time the park was purchased and declared. The friends of Mossvale Park group was incorporated on 27th April 2023, and the foundation members were the advisory committee members at the time.

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ABOUT US

The Friends of Mossvale Park is an incorporated association of people interested in the upkeep of Mossvale Park, in South Gippsland Shire.

The purposes of the association are

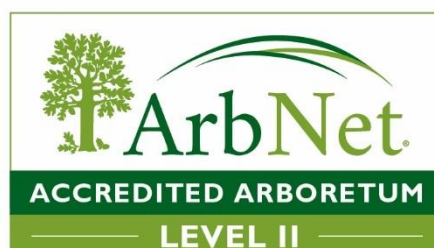
- To promote the botanic and historic characteristics of Mossvale Park (located at Mossvale Park Road in the Shire of South Gippsland) and foster the interest of members in the Park and in plants and flora generally through education, volunteerism and fellowship.
- To aid and support the maintenance of the park.
- To aid and support the documentation and dissemination of information about the collection of plants in Mossvale Park and the associated history.
- To aid and support the conservation, protection and enhancement of Mossvale Park's natural resources.
- To coordinate and support volunteer involvement in the park.
- To provide advisory committee services to South Gippsland Shire Council
- To support the ongoing development of Mossvale Park and encourage the use and enjoyment of the park by the community

The Friends group holds a working bee on the first Thursday of each month from 10.00am. Activities the friends undertake include weeding, mulching, planting and basic pruning and maintenance of the specimen plants. The working bee group under the direction of Dick Lester includes 8 regulars with others joining in from time to time.

Meetings of the group are held at 11.00am after the working bee every second month, beginning February each year. The Annual general meeting is held in July. The friends' group maintains the tree list and catalogue, a website promoting the trees and the park and a social media page. With the support of the shire we apply for grants for park upgrades and fundraise to add to the plantings in accordance with the management plan and the living collection plan.

During the year we were able to apply to become a registered arboretum with ArbNet. We achieved a level II classification. The mission of ArbNet is to foster the establishment and professionalism of arboreta; identify arboreta capable of participating or collaborating in certain scientific, collections, or conservation activity; and advance the planting and conservation of trees. To fulfil its mission, ArbNet provides:

- Helpful resources to improve operations, research, conservation, education.
- Arboretum-focused news and events.
- The opportunity to connect with other arboreta to collaborate with in scientific, collections, and conservation activities.
- A broad network to help advance the planting, care, and conservation of trees.
- An online forum for tree-focused discussions.



OUR PEOPLE

Committee of Management

| Name | Position |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| Jeremy Curtis | President |
| Jill Vella | Secretary |
| Coral Hughes | Treasurer |
| Steve Lovie | Vice President |
| Richard Lester | Working bee coordinator |

Shire of South Gippsland Staff with responsibility for the park

| Name | Position |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
| Lyndal Peterson | Manager Open Space and Environment |
| Steve Missen | Open Space & Environment Coordinator |
| Rienna Pratten | Supervisor Open Space & Environment |

Volunteers

| Names | | Associates |
|-----------|-------------|---------------|
| Suzanne W | Robert S | Jennifer RHSV |
| Leslie H | Joan M | Tannah L |
| Jean C | Jared L | Jaxon L |
| Kath D | Raeleigh P | Marg L |
| John H | Deb L | |
| Sonya T | Rohan M | |
| Ian S | Paul M | |
| Graeme R | Ashleigh M | |
| Wayne M | Josephine W | |
| Lynda W | | |



The Dolly Horne magnolia developed by the late friends group and previously advisory committee stalwart Rodney Emmerson flowering in the magnolia garden. Rodney's decades of service to Mossvale Park are recognised in many plantings in the park.



Pictures clockwise from top left:
Dick at the Daffodil festival with our display;
the three trees accepted by the National Trust for listing this year (January 2025);
English elm, Californian plane and the variegated elm.

STRUCTURE & MANAGEMENT

The Friends of Mossvale Park group is incorporated with Consumer Affairs Victoria under the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012, No. A0119658L

Our ABN is 27350554414

The friends of Mossvale Park Incorporated, is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC).

We are a member of the Royal Horticultural Society of Victoria through which we source our volunteer insurance.

We are a member of the South Gippsland Landcare Network. This affords us networking with likeminded volunteer groups, and grants us access to tax deductible gift status through the South Gippsland Landcare Fund.

The friends group meets bimonthly, with all members contributing to the meetings.



CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

THANK YOU everyone for supporting our group for another year. The Park looks fantastic, and that doesn't happen by chance.

Firstly, the Shire and supporting arborists help keep our trees in good condition, especially our three National Trust Trees. They also keep our lawns tidy and make continued improvements to the park. Thank you Steve and your team.

The continued planting and clean-up work brigade [led by Dick Lester and Ian Starkey] has been a great success as well. Thank you all.

The Park is an icon for the region which is reflected in the number of visitors who continue to come in the cold and wet. Often, I see family gatherings around the fireplace while children play happily in their area. The road into the park is a challenge after rain, hopefully that will improve at some stage. Our other wish is to get wheelchair access to the top of the park.

Finally, I would like to thank the committee, especially our wonderful secretary Jill, without whom we couldn't survive.

Thankyou one and all,

Jeremy Curtis
President, Friends of Mossvale Park inc.

SECRETARYS REPORT

General meetings of the Friends of Mossvale Park were held in October and December 2024, and February, April and June 2025

We are required to have insurance to cover volunteer activities. We have chosen to use the Royal Horticultural Society of Victoria to provide our insurance as it is the most cost effective on offer.

The Shire of South Gippsland has developed a Mossvale Park Management plan which we have reviewed and offered our feedback to the Open Space & Environment team.

We contacted Google re Mossvale Park on Google maps, and our edit was accepted. This should make the park easier to find for visitors to the region.

We have several custom Google maps populated with various tree lists.

As of June 2025, the general tree map has had 3447 views since February 2023, with the preceding map having 34,848 views since 2022. (map was transferred to the Mossvale Park Google account in 2023) although both maps are in use. The older version is linked to the Visit South Gippsland website. <https://visitsouthgippsland.com.au/place/leongatha/mossvale-park/>

In October 2024 we applied to the Australian Charities and Not for profits commission for registration as a charity, which was accepted. I would like to thank Belinda Brennan of the South Gippsland Landcare network (SGLN) for all her help during this endeavour. As part of this we received endorsement by the tax office for income tax exemption and FBT rebate. At this time we applied to join the South Gippsland Landcare network, which was accepted. As part of our membership of the SGLN we are able to become a project of the South Gippsland Landcare fund which means we are now able to accept tax deductible donations.

As part of the friends group contribution to the management of the park a Living collection management plan was developed. This outlines the basic responsibilities managing the living collection and is a base to move forward with our further collection planning. This is a goal for the next year, and together with the Shire open space and environment team there is an opportunity to seek funding to develop a planting plan. This may be able to tie into our long-term goal to get all abilities access to all parts of the park.

As part of our ambition to become recognised as a world class arboretum we, with the agreement of the Shire applied for ARBnet accreditation as a level 2 arboretum. ARBnet is managed by the Morton Arboretum in Illinois USA. The Morton Register of Arboreta is a comprehensive list and database of arboreta and public gardens that have a substantial focus on woody plants. The purpose of the Morton Register is to identify all the organizations in the world that collect and display trees, shrubs, and other woody plants for the benefit of the public, science, and conservation. There are 95 registered arboreta in Australia of which 9 are accredited. <https://arbnet.org/morton-register/mossvale-park>

We signed a letter of understanding with the Shire of south Gippsland outlining the role of the Friends group.

We applied for and received a Landcare and Friends groups \$500 grant for group maintenance.

In 2025 we applied for a DELWP Landcare and Friends groups grant entitled 'Sparking environmental curiosity in the park'. We propose to spark curiosity in visitors to Mossvale Park by providing information to encourage them to engage and appreciate our environment. We aim to foster this appreciation and excitement of trees and the natural world to encourage

protecting biodiversity on a grander scale. By motivating people to become an informed tree and nature champions our project will enhance knowledge and understanding of our land and environment. The grant amount requested was \$2,295 for signage and tree labels and we will know if we were successful in September.

The Friends are always available to guide groups that wish to visit the park. In May we hosted the TAFE Gippsland VETDSS class assisting in identification of some of the plants and discussing weed identification and treatment with the students.

The Friends group maintains a website www.mossvalepark.com which contains general information and a full list of plants, plus a comprehensive plant catalogue. Since we began measuring web statistics in January this year, we have had 2096 sessions and 11 email enquiries using the contact form. Usage this year peaked in autumn and should upswing in spring.

Our Facebook page has 467 followers, and the page has had 3028 views from Jan 1 this year. 60% of people viewing the page are non-followers. On the 25 of March we had 673 views for a reel about our beautiful trees.

This year we created the conifer trail as one of our google mapped self-guided walks in the park. Since December 24 142 views have been recorded. The trail is downloadable as a booklet so users can do the walk without a phone connection. We also upgraded the National Trust tree trail to include the three new listed trees. This trail has had 1469 views since it was created.

Jill Vella
Honorary Secretary.



Working bee reports



4th July 2024

4 members attending

General weeding and maintenance

1st August 2024

4 members attending, 1 apology

Flood water in the park, slippery conditions

General weeding and maintenance

5th September 2024

5 members attending

General weeding and maintenance

3rd October 2024

5 members attending

General weeding and maintenance

7th November 2024

7 members attending

General weeding and maintenance



6th December 2024

Grey poplar fallen across road; Shire crew removing it.

January 2nd 2025

4 members attending

Weeding in the Glade, pruned broken *pyrus sp* and fallen elm on river.

February 6th 2025

6 members attending

Regular weeding

Fallen grey poplars

Liquid Amber damaged - reguarded

Magnolias shaped

Asimina lost

Scarlet oak damaged.

March 6th 2025

6 members attending

Plant reworking - elms & lindens
Removal of tree suckers,
back of playground & oak seedlings
on hill
Removal of guards

Pictures previous page, scarlet oak removed after large branch fell and tree was found to be rotten. Below, *Sequoiadendron giganteum* donated by TreeX to replace it.

April 3rd 2025

5 members attending

Planted soft ground fern, cut and paint grey poplar suckers near bridge and Forresters' lodge.
Tree X have removed stump and roots of felled scarlet oak which was unable to be saved.

May 1st 2025

4 members attended

Planted

- *Cercis canadensis* 'Aurelian' (Forest Pansy)
- 3 Flame trees
- *Acer palmatum* 'Lambley'
- Horse chestnut
- *Agonis flexuosa* 'Aurea' (Lemon & Lime)
- *Acacia cognata* seedling (Lime Magik)
- 3 *Callitris rhomboidia*

June 5th 2025

16 members and friends attended

Planted

- Gynea lily
- NSW Christmas tree
- 3 *Leptospermum horizontalis*
- *L. bracteatum* Gold
- *Elaeocarpus reticulatus*
- 2 *Podocarpus saligna* (Coral)
- 100 mixed indigenous tubes (Ian S)



TREASURER'S REPORT

Financial Report
Friends of Mossvale Park Incorporated No. A0119658L
Financial Year ending 30/6/2025

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| Opening balance (July 1 2024) | \$182.80 |
|-------------------------------|----------|

INCOME

| | | |
|-------------------------------|----------|-----------------|
| Memberships | \$412.05 | |
| Donations | \$ 70.00 | |
| Group Maintenance grant WGCMA | \$500.00 | |
| | | Total \$1164.85 |

EXPENDITURE

| | | |
|---|-----------|----------------|
| Membership SGLN | -\$ 65.00 | |
| Royal Horticultural Society insurance 24-25 | -\$240.00 | |
| Royal Horticultural Society insurance and membership 25-26 | -\$290.00 | |
| Bank Fees | -\$ 1.20 | |
| | | Total \$596.20 |

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------|
| Closing Balance (June 30, 2025) | \$568.65 |
|---------------------------------|----------|

Coral Hughes
Honorary Treasurer

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS & THANK YOU

Donors

We are extremely grateful to our donors for helping us keep the park looking fabulous and help the friends keep up the good work.

Grants and funding

We acknowledge and thank the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority for providing the Friends group maintenance grant

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Become a member

Membership information is on our website

<https://www.mossvalepark.com/friends/>

Volunteer your time

Working bees are held in the park on the first Thursday of each month at 10.00am. Come along and join in the fun! Email us at mossvalepark@gmail.com

Make a donation

Donations of more than \$2.00 are tax deductible

<http://www.givenow.com.au/mossvalepark>

CONTACT US

C/- of the Secretary, Jill Vella

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<https://www.facebook.com/mossvalepark>

