



AUTUM EDITION NO. 7 : 9

- **FROM THE COMMITTEE**

Because of the Xmas, school holiday break things have been quiet for AFA. The committee held its first meeting for the year in March, whilst there was not a lot on the agenda there was a lot of discussion around the outcome of the state elections and upcoming federal elections. AFA is a non political organisation however many of its members are concerned about the ramifications of both a Labour State Government & a Labour Federal Government should Labour win the next federal election. AFA members/taxpayers are urged to make their candidates more accountable for informing us on how our taxes are spent, particularly where National Parks and environmental groups through "community conservation grants and education" are concerned. Over the years AFA has applied for many grants, all have been unsuccessful except for the most recent Heritage application. AFA wonders if these grants actually fund real conservation projects or simply fund political campaigns of extremist conservation groups to redirect votes back to the government at the time. It is well known that the Wilderness Society is a large donor to the Greens. The treasurer has reported that as 31st March 2007 AFA has a total of \$6,115.44.

- **HERITAGE**

Peter Smith & Terry Hart continue to work on the research phase of mapping bridle tracks. They are presently working on the mapping of the Woola to Alpine track and are having meetings with older folk to assist them with obtaining accurate information of where and why these trails were made.

The Waddell family continue with their huge task of tracing the heritage of the Shoebridge track, although this has been documented before there were a number of inaccuracies printed in the original publication.



- **OUR WEBSITE**

Our website is powering along and continually updated thanks to the diligent work of Peter Kneen. If you have not visited it for awhile take some time to have a look the next time you are 'googling' cyberspace! Our next project is to have all AFA members, who have e-mail, entered into a group address so information, newsletters etc. can be distributed a little more quickly than through the mail. For those of you without internet access you will still receive information as usual. When updating your membership please add an e-mail address if you have one.

- **MEMBERSHIP**

Our membership remains strong (some 500 or more). Existing memberships are not due until end of financial year, around our AGM.

- **THE NPWS**

AFA continues with meetings with the NPWS. Discussions have continued to be positive and productive. Thankyou to the small committee that facilitates these meetings on behalf of AFA members; although progress is slow the outcomes of these meetings have eventually been worthwhile for our members.

The draft report on the management of our South East Escarpment National Park is still a 'draft'. According to the NPWS website, the NPWS has acquired another 121,469 hectares within NSW in the last 12 months....how are they going to manage this? AFA guess is that they will eventually turn a lot of it into wilderness or Nature Reserve as they have already done with the South East Escarpment so they won't have to manage it! Of note on NPWS website is the new Memorandum of Understanding between NPWS & 4wd NSW & ACT (Jan'07).

We all continue to read & see the outcome & cost of the recent fires across Victoria (\$9 million of out taxes was been spent on the ACT Bushfire enquiry according to Andrew Hestelov of Timber Communities Australia). Over many years it seems no matter how many colonial enquiries and experts passing on recommendations to government regarding National Park fire management, the NPWS continue with minimal so called "hazard reduction burning" as a reminder that they do have a token fire management strategy. A NSW parliamentary committee found in 1999 hazard reduction burning had decreased to 13000 hectares- less than half a percent of the 4.5 million hectares of National Parks. That was in 1999, now they have 6 million hectares and if the true results of their hazard reduction burns were accurately published the area burnt would be very little more then in 1999! It would be a worthy exercise by government if the cost to taxpayers of all bushfires over the last 10 years was calculated and consider how this money could have been spent by the NPWS for the benefit of National Park users. That is if one could believe they could make the NPWS accountable for what they spend....that is another storey!



- UPCOMING EVENTS

Next AFA meeting on the 24th May 2007 @ Araluen Hotel 7pm. On the agenda will be preparation for AFA Annual General meeting in July, membership fees, ratification of AFA Objectives & Aims. All members welcome to attend.



- COMMITTEE CONTACTS

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