

*Snape Reserve
Committee of Management
Annual Report
July 2025 - July 2026*



Eastern Grey Kangaroo with
joey at Snape Reserve dam.
Photograph by Kim Wormald.

© Kim Wormald 11



Silky Desert Mouse

Snape Reserve Committee of Management

2025-2026 Annual Report

Post Catastrophic Fire in February 2025:

On the 25 November 2025 Lynne Coughlan took photographs at Snape Reserve photo points. These photographs show clearly the destructive force of the fire and some of these are shown below.



Photo point 9a, Dec. 2003.

Photo point 9a, Nov. 2023.

Photo point 9a, Nov. 2023.



Photo point 9b, Dec. 2003

Photo point 9b, Nov. 2023

Photo point 9b, Nov. 2025



Photo point 9c, Dec. 2003

Photo point 9c, Dec. 2023

Photo point 9c, Dec. 2025



Photo point 12b Dec. 2003.

Photo point 12b, Nov. 2023.

Photo point 12b, Nov. 2025.



Photo point 20b, Dec. 2003

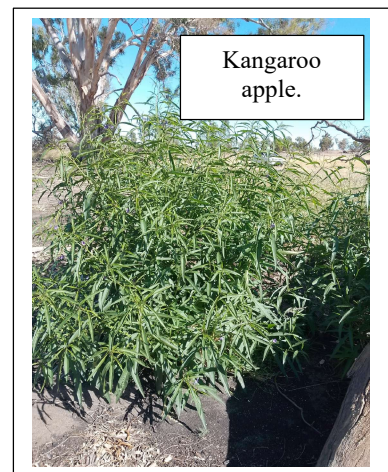
Photo point 20b, Nov. 2023.

Photo point 20b, Nov. 2025

The fire burning roughly 80% of Snape Reserve is still scarring the landscape but there are now wonderful signs of bush regeneration in mid-2026.

The fire on the Reserve has stimulated regeneration of Kangaroo apples (*Solanum simile* or Oondoroo), Banksias, wattles, Hop bush, Myoporum, Yellow gums and Desert Stringybark trees. Most of the Sweet Bursaria planted on the hill to the south of Old Racecourse swamp looked dead after the fire but now are regenerating. Similarly, *Callistemon rugulosus* and *Leptospermum myrsinoides* that showed no life signs after the fire have resprouted from the base. Prior to the fire there were one or two Kangaroo apples on the Reserve. Post fire many thousands are present.

It is very exciting to see many thousands of new *Banksia ornata* colonising large areas where Veldt grass alone once stood. Similarly, it is very exciting to see many new *Eucalyptus arenacea* (Desert stringybarks) starting life after the fire whence beforehand there was little to no regeneration of this species on Snape Reserve.



Kangaroo numbers on the Reserve have plummeted after the fire. They currently are causing minimal damage to shrubs and trees where before the fire they were causing so much damage to native species that regrettably a cull of their numbers was needed.

Dangerous trees felled:

In November 2025 Arborist Caleb Avery felled 15 hazardous trees that had suffered severe damage from the 2025 February fire. These trees had large diameters and had much of their supporting wood burnt away near

their bases. Caleb cut several of these trees in manageable sections that could be moved by the Reserves tractor away from tracks where they were felled. Caleb did this work in one day. One tree Caleb climbed to cut down trunk leaders.

A fence was placed around an unsafe tree that had a canoe bark removal because there were difficulties in getting approval for felling from Barendgi Gadjin Land Council. This tree collapsed in April.

Quadrat Surveys:

Before the survey Lindsay & Ian spent a day marking the quadrats permanently with posts at all corners. The twenty-two quadrats were positioned by Neil Marriot when the property was purchased

Mary Argall gathered and led a team of native plant enthusiasts with knowledge of local flora to do the survey (Wendy & Alan Bedggood, Maree & Graham Goods, and Fay & Clive Gordes). Greg Ogle of TfN and Ian also spent a day and a half working on the survey. Thanks to Mary Argall for all her work in assembling the botanists to do the survey work and Mary's work in data recording.

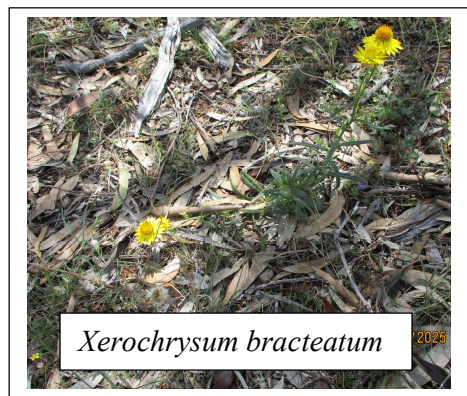
Mary has entered all the data of the Quadrat's surveys into an Excell spread sheet. There were 14 new species recorded in the surveys two of which were weed species. The 12 new native species are as follows – *Austrostipa macalpinei* (Annual Spear grass), *Austrostipa blackii* (Crested Spear grass), *Austrostipa nitida* (Flat Spear grass), *Dichelachne crinita* (Plume grass), *Eleocharis atricha* (Tuber spike-sedge), *Gyrostemon australasicus* (Wheel fruit), *Isolepsis marginata* (Little club-rush), *Langenifera gracilis* (Slender bottle-daisy), *Microlaera stipoides* (Weeping grass), *Pelargonium littorale* (Coast Stork's-bill), *Poranthera leiosperma* (Mallee poranthera), and *Scerolaena diacantha* (Grey copper burr).

New Species:

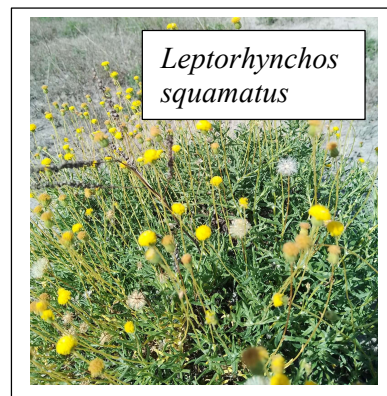
Listed above are the new species found in the quadrat surveys. A new daisy to Snape Reserve, *Xerochrysum bracteatum* was found by Lindsay near the corner of Benjamin's and Bushby's Tracks. There was only one plant. Also, found was a patch of about 20 plants of *Leptorhynchus squamatus* (Scaly buttons) found in Old Racecourse Swamp. These daisies have been added to the flora data base



One of the trees felled by Caleb Avery.



Xerochrysum bracteatum



Leptorhynchus squamatus

Weeds:

As in past years weed control work was the major activity for volunteers during the 2025-26 period. Thanks to Greg Bourke, Lindsay Smith, Sharyn Cook, Coral Schmidt and Wendy Werner for all their work in keeping weeds on the Reserve in check.

The July to November weed work in 2025 started later than usual because work on the front fence took priority. Weed numbers were extreme. Reasonable rainfall over June, July and August 2026 fuelled weed germination and growth followed by a very dry September to November. A lot of work was done to control summer weeds from November to March. Good rainfall of 65 millimetres in October 2025 kicked off the summer period. This was followed in December with 25 millimetres but just 2 millimetres in January. From March to July 2026 weed numbers were significant following a 75 millimetres rainfall event on the third of March. From March to July the rainfall started a flush of winter and spring growing weeds.

The following describes the weed work on the Reserve during this period.

- Six South African weed orchids were found in late spring, and their bulbs were dug up and removed in a sealed bag from the Reserve. These plants were found in the same spot as last year.
- Amsinkia in large numbers were hoed and pulled up at many places on the Reserve and along the eastern end of Old Racecourse Road. Weed numbers of this plant were as bad as they have ever been. Bad areas on the Reserve were Black Box Swamp, some patches close to the front fence east of the front gate, many bad patches along the edges of Dyakil Track and Nine Creek Tracks, the hill to the south of Old Racecourse Swamp, and at the east & west end of Red Gum flat, and at the west end of Red Gum Swamp. A large patch was hoed near the corner of Lehman's and Barrett's property.
- Patterson's curse numbers on the Reserve are falling but some large plants and patches of this weed are still being dealt with. A new area of concern is the western edge of Winged-peppercress Swamp.

Three Patterson's curse patches at the eastern end of Old Racecourse Road were herbicide sprayed and some missed were hoed. On the Reserve two patches near the northwest corner of Lehmann's fence were hoed plus several isolated plants.

- Malta thistles are still prolific on the Reserve and was one major focus of control work. Bad areas of Malta thistles were – Yellow Gum Swamp, amongst the Yellow gums to the west of Callitris Swamp and Callitris Swamp surrounds, the whole area south of the dam and on the west dam embankment, the area where the Barrett's property meets Lehman's property, the Red Gum Swamp area with many patches along its southern edge and northern edge, and an area near the two enclosure's on Gurra Track, and a patch near Benjamin's Track where it flattens out after coming down the hill.
- More Gazanias are being found and hoed. These are widespread single plants and are becoming a problem with their widespread germination and the problem of finding them on such a large property.
- Lindsay visited known sites of Saffron thistle and hoed the small numbers that were there. Their numbers are falling on the Reserve.
- Stemless thistles in small numbers have been hoed at Callitris Swamp and Red Gum Swamp and elsewhere. There are still considerable numbers being found at Red Gum Swamp. A lot of various thistle types were sprayed in the Red gum drainage line near Barrett's.
- Patches of Whip thistle were sprayed east of Snape Reserve on Old Racecourse Road, and many plants were hoed on Snape Reserve.
- Marshmallow numbers were up this year on the eastern side of the property. Unfortunately, a lot of Marshmallow plants had set large quantities of seed and were not found sufficiently early to be dealt with. Bad areas are Nuske's fence line and Lehman' fence line as well at the bottom of the hill to the south of Old Racecourse Swamp.
- Poppies in their thousands were hoed at the west end of Red Gum Swamp and many hoed at Willow Wattle Hill.
- Stinging nettles in small numbers were hoed on Willow Wattle Hill.

- Horehound numbers were up this year compared to recent years. The fire has stimulated their germination probably due to reduced competition. Many Horehounds were hoed at Mary's Garden and in many places on the Reserve where they once were very numerous.
- A large patch of white iron weed was sprayed near the corner where Barrett's and Lehmann's properties join. A few plants are still coming up at Red Gum Swamp.
- Wild Sage numbers have dropped a little but there are still bad areas to be found on the Reserve. These were treated by painting with glyphosate. Bad patches were found along the front fence line, some at Red Gum and Callitris Swamps. Several days' work were spent controlling this weed along Old Racecourse Road.
- Bridal creeper plants are regularly dug up in small numbers across the Reserve.
- Some Veldt grasses were sprayed around Brian's shed and Veldt grass hoed at Diana's Garden.
- Low numbers of Boxthorn plants were removed from along the front fence line.
- Four Twiggy Mullein were painted with glyphosate at Red Gum Swamp.
- Fewer Winged slender thistles are being found and hoed.
- Greater numbers of Flaxleaf fleabane have been hoed across the Reserve this year. One bad patch was found near the corner of Upper Regions and Bushby's Tracks. Mostly single plants were found.
- Five or six Caltrop (Bindii) were weeded from Walker's Rise, and several were weeded on the hill to the south of Old Racecourse Swamp. There were 5 patches removed from near the rain gauge. Two bad patches were weeded on Old Racecourse Road.
- Stinkwort in patches were hoed near Wimmera Woodruff Swamp, and at Red Gum Flat with single plants removed elsewhere.
- Black nightshades in small numbers but widespread have been hoed.
- There are more Ox-tongue thistles being found widespread across the Reserve.
- African Peppergrass have been hoed at many places mostly on the eastern side of the Reserve. Two bad patches were on Dyakil Track. First on the west side of the track about halfway on its north south section and the other halfway on the north side of the east west heading part of the track.
- Heliotrope control work has taken up most of the time in summer. It is particularly pleasing that far fewer plants were found this year at Callitris Swamp. This area once had very high numbers of this weed. Many thousands of Heliotropes have been hoed in the following areas of the Reserve – the north end of Old Racecourse Swamp, along both sides of Dyakil Track, the hill to the south of Old Racecourse Swamp, Red Gum Flat, the edges of Benjamin's Track near the dam, the hill to the south of Wimmera Woodruff Swamp. Not having the Kioti available for spray work made control of this weed difficult this year.
- Small numbers of Evening Primrose were hoed south of Red Gum and Callitris Swamps.
- Small numbers of Wild tobacco were hoed.
- A few Paddy melons have been found and removed.



Weed pile January 2026

Veldt grass was spot sprayed with Glyphosate at 170 sites where *Eucalyptus arenacea* is to be planted this year.

In May a trial spray was done using a grass specific herbicide Salvo 212 on Veldt grass at the rain gauge enclosure. The Veldt grass was sprayed using the Kioti and a six nozzle spray boom gifted to Snape Reserve

by Hindmarsh Landcare network. This trial was successful. The best time to spray Veldt Grass is during winter to early spring (June to September/October), when the plant is actively growing but before it flowers and sets seed. Early winter spraying is ideal to minimize impact on emerging native species.

Bird Hide:

The remains of the bird hide were pulled apart and the twisted burnt corrugated iron sheets from which it was constructed were transported to the local tip.

Rabbits:

More rabbits are being seen active around the Dimboola district. Several rabbit holes have been ripped on the Reserve, the first in a long while. Calicivirus is still impacting rabbit numbers but its effectiveness is waning.

Foxes:

A few foxes have been sighted on the Reserve.

Bees:

European bee numbers are lower since the February 2025 fire. Varroa mite is also very likely to have hard hit the feral bee population.

Deer:

Deer footprints have been seen on the Reserve and Lindsay Smith saw two deer on the Reserve in November 2025.

Trapping cages: Two cat trapping cages were donated to Snape Reserve.

Cultural Fuel Reduction Burns:

The need for a fuel reduction burn at Snape Reserve has been pushed back many years because of the 2025 February fire.

Fencing:

The old fire damaged fence that runs roughly 3 kilometres along the southern boundary of Snape Reserve has been removed and replaced. This was done through the efforts of BlazeAid. The old fencing wire has been collected and placed near the front of the Reserve to make it easier to get to the local tip. The old star steel posts have been stored for future use to provide stakes to secure guards preventing kangaroo grazing of regeneration.

The 3 kilometre front fence at the Reserve has also been replaced. This fence was not



Back fence
replaced by
BlazeAid



Sharyn Cook, Greg Bourke &
Ian Flux working on the front
fence.

fire damaged but had reached the end of its' useful life, Lindsay Smith spent many weeks cutting back bushes to allow access to the fence. Then with the help of Greg Bourke cut off the old wire and rolled it up. Where the wire was still in reasonable condition it was saved to make plant guards. A working bee with participants of Greg Bourke, Lindsay Smith, Sharyn Cook, Coral Schmidt, Wendy Werner and Ian Flux pulled up and removed to storage the old star steel posts. Slim Avery a fencing contractor was hired by TfN to knock new galvanized star steel posts into the ground. Another three working days was spent by the Thursday work crew running two plain high tensile wires through the star posts to complete the fence.

Lindsay Smith with the help of Greg Bourke has removed the barb wire and the ring-lock wire from a section of fence that runs along the laneway to the west of the Reserve. It now has 2 plain high tensile wires, the same as the front and back fence. This style of fence delineates the boundary but stops fatalities to emus and kangaroos that can get entangled and die in the ring-lock fences.

In November 2025 four horses from the Barrett property adjoining Snape Reserve entered the Reserve following a tree branch falling on the dividing fence. These were removed from Snape Reserve by Quinton Barrett. Lindsay Smith did temporary repairs to the fence where the Barrett horses got onto Snape Reserve.

In May and then April 2026, eleven cattle from the Barretts have pushed through a hole in the Ring-lock wire of the same fence. The fence was in poor condition following the February 2025 fire. After considerable effort the cattle were chased off the property.

The Barrett/Snape Reserve fence was replaced in June-July 2026 to make it stock proof. Slim Avery a fencing contractor replaced the old, damaged star steel posts with new galvanized posts and then replaced the old Ring-lock wire with new high tensile wire and new barb wire running along the top of the fence. Lindsay working with Slim has tied the wire to the star posts.

Kioti:

There were problems with the Kioti starting in gear and gear change difficulties. It went to Robbie's Mobile Diesel Mechanics workshop at Dimboola in September 2024. The Kioti was at Robbie's workshop for about 12 months. The Kioti came back from Robbie's workshop in early December 2025. To save cost Robbie replaced the gear box with a second-hand gearbox given to him from a wrecker which took many months to find. Kioti do not sell gearbox parts, and a new gearbox is worth over \$6,000. Robbie was paid \$714.85 for the work done. Weed control work was very much hampered whilst the Kioti was away.

A few weeks after the Kioti was returned, it would not start. Robbie ordered some shims to fix this problem. The shims were fitted on the 3/3/26 but this did not fix the problem. Greg Ogle of TfN towed the Kioti on its trailer to Ararat where there is a Kioti dealership. The dealer put in another shim which has solved the start problem if the gear stick is in neutral. However, the gear stick sometimes still gets stuck in forward or reverse gear stopping the Kioti from starting. If this happens, to free the gear stick the Kioti needs to be rocked (not always possible) or moved slightly with another vehicle (inconvenient, time wasting & frustrating).

The Kioti is essential equipment for weed control because it has a 200-litre herbicide spray tank. Moreover, it is important vehicle for transporting volunteers and equipment without relying on the use of volunteers'

cars that can suffer damage. The gear change problem must be sorted once there is a lull in herbicide control work.

A six-nozzle spray bar donated by Hindmarsh Landcare network to Snape Reserve many years ago has been fitted for use on the Kioti and refurbished to working order. This will allow spraying of larger areas of Veldt grass replacing a three-nozzle spray bar (see photograph).

Survey for the Golden-rayed blue butterfly:

On the 22/12/25 Jessie Sinclair of Zoos' Victoria with the help of Sharyn Cook did a Golden-rayed blue butterfly survey. As with the previous 3 surveys no butterflies were found at Snape Reserve.



6 nozzle spray bar fitted on the Kioti.

Revegetation:

200 plants of *Myoporum parvifolium* supplied by Zoos' Victoria were planted on the 24th of July 2025. Planting breakdown is as follows - Red Gum Swamp 41 plants, Callitris Swamp 37 plants, Wimmera Woodruff Swamp 81 plants, Lignum Swamp 25 plants, Dam 25 plants. The planting team was Greg Bourke, Coral Schmidt, Ian Flux, Sharyn Cook, and two Zoos' Victoria staffs, Sarah & Angie. The very dry summer in 2026 caused high plant mortality. Unfortunately, there was not enough time to water them. It is very encouraging that since then several self-sown *Myoporum parvifolium* have been found on the east fence line, on Bushby's Track and off Bushby's Track near Read Gum Swamp. The fire seems to have stimulated regeneration of *Myoporum* at Old Racecourse Swamp.

Five hundred *Eucalyptus arenacea* were planted by Lindsay, Wendy, Coral, Greg, Sharyn and Ian. The planting started in May following good rainfall. The trees were planted in areas that had had been cleared of *Eucalyptus arenacea* in the past. Forty trees were planted in each of the 4 exclosures. Fifty trees were planted either side of Nine Creeks Track and eighty trees were planted in areas south of Bushby's Track from Red Gum Swamp to Callitris Swamp. The remainder were planted either side of Moffat's Track and to the west of Blue Rod Swamp. All plants were watered in and guarded from being grazed by kangaroos or pulled up by emus. Two hundred *Eucalyptus arenacea* have been ordered for planting next year.



Coral Schmidt planting a *Eucalyptus arenacea* in May 2026

Track Maintenance & Signage:

The tracks on Snape Reserve were not slashed in the summer of 2025/2026 because there was very little vegetation growth on them due to the extreme dry and there was also the risk of starting a fire if the slashing went ahead.

Most of the fire damaged track signs have now been replaced and the remainder will be done over the next two months.

TfN Thankyou Lunch:

At the Dimboola Golf Club on the 12th of February 2026 a thank you lunch was provided by TfN for the volunteers at Snape Reserve. TfN also wished to acknowledge all the countless hours of work by Sue and Lindsay Smith for the betterment of Snape Reserve.

Chair of Trust for Nature, Andrew Brooks spoke at length about Sue and Lindsay's contribution to managing the Reserve. A citation was given to Lindsay, and the name of the Winter Track was changed to the Sue and Lindsay Smith Track to acknowledge their work.

Photograph (left to right): Andrew Brooks (TfN Chair, Lindsay Smith, Ian Flux, Coreen Proske (TfN CEO), Greg Ogle (TfN Mallee area Manager).



Tree Guards:

Lindsay Smith with the help of Greg Bourke removed the tree guards that were damaged in the fire and were no longer protecting plants.

Bird drinker/bath:

The bird drinker/bath at Brian's shed was emptied on the 21/6/2026. This was done to reduce the risk of H5 M1 bird influenza from being spread at some time in the future if the water becomes contaminated by an infected bird.

Research on the Wimmera River:

For her PhD, Victoria Schwarz of Monash University is undertaking research on the change in the course of the Wimmera River over time. On the 16th of June, and the 25 of June 2026, Victoria took GPS measurements and ground penetrating radar readings at Old Racecourse Swamp and near Black Box Swamp to determine if this was once the path of the Wimmera River. Previously she had taken some core samples of the soil to determine the ages of layers of sediments.

Walking Access:

Snape Reserve was closed to visitors for much of 2025 following the destructive fire in February. From November 2025 to July 2026 there were 15 groups of walk-in visitors that accessed the Reserve. This contributed \$ for the management of the Reserve.

Visitors: Snape Reserve hosted a visit from the Biodiversity Seminar held on the 4th of December 2025, titled "Creatures of the Night".

Voluntary Hours:

The 2024 to 2025 voluntary hours worked at the reserve are set out in the table below.

Total volunteer hours worked since Snape Reserve was purchased are listed in the table below.

ACTIVITY	HOURS
Rubbish	1.0
Fencing	618.42
Maintenance & Improvements	64.17
Management	179.26
Revegetation	492.70
Surveys	159.68
Weeds	812.43
Educational Visits	15.55
Vermin	29.92
Track maintenance	25.00
Total Hours	2398.13
Week equivalent (38Hr)	63 weeks
Dollar Equivalent (\$43/hr)	103,119

Year	Hours Worked	Value
2003 to 2023	56,074	\$1,249,141
2023 to 2024	2,910	\$ 125,130
2024 to 2025	1,770	\$ 76,110
2025 to 2026	2,398	\$ 103,119
TOTAL	63,152	\$ 1,553,500

The hours worked up to and including 2013 were valued at \$20 / hour. The hours from 2013 to 2023 were valued at \$25 / hour. The volunteer hourly rate of \$43 (value from the Centre for Volunteering Victoria) was used from 2023.

Thanks:

Thanks to all the committee members who have contributed to the running of Snape Reserve.

With special thanks to the regulars contributing on Thursdays.