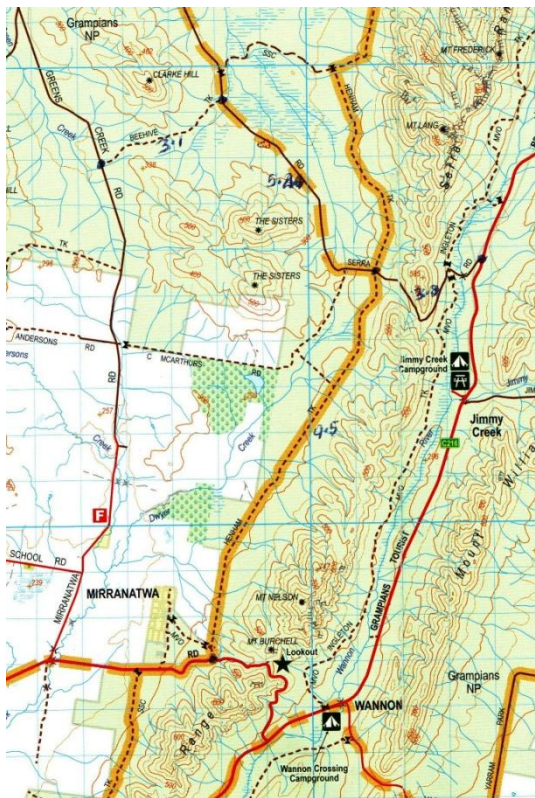


# HFNC Excursion to Henham Track, Gariwerd/Grampians National Park with Friends of Grampians/Gariwerd on 11 October 2025

Rod Bird & Diane Luhrs

**Participants:** HFNC members: D Luhrs, R Bird, , P Lehmann, V Keiller, J Logan, J Mitchell, M Hannan, Y Ingeme, R Zollinger, R Simpson, J Samuel and Friends of Grampians-Gariwerd (FOGG): C Pye, A Bedggood, W Bedggood, B Gunn, L Douglas, G Stratford, J King, N Macumber, C Thompson, J Thompson, R Thompson and H Mlikota.

HFNC members left Hamilton at 9.0 am, travelling to Mirranatwa Gap Rd via Dunkeld and meeting members of FOGG from the Halls Gap area at the start of the Henham Tk at 10 am.



Our purpose was to look at the display of orchids and the recovery of other flora species from the devastating 2024/25 fire that left only a few tiny spots unburned along this landform (and much of the rest of the Grampians that was burned by wildfire and back-burns). This track runs along the lower part of the Serra Range; the vegetation could be described as Dry Forest/Heath Woodland. The tall trees are *Eucalyptus baxteri* Brown Stringybark and *E. obliqua* Messmate Stringybark. The 4WD track crosses several waterways and there is a variation in the soil from sand, sandy loam, clay-loam and gravelly clay.

We started the day with an inspection of flora at the south end of the Henham Tk, off Mirranatwa Gap Rd. We found such a rich lode of orchids that we were there for almost an hour. Notable species were *Caladenia grampiana* Grampians Spider Orchid, *C. parva* Brown-clubbed Spider Orchid, *C. ampla* Dainty Spider Orchid, *Pterostylis extensa* Woodland Plumbed Greenhood and leaves/buds of *Thelymitra benthamiana* Blotched Sun-orchid. *Diuris leopardina* Yellow Leopard Orchid and *Pyrorchis nigricans* Red Beaks were present in hundreds.

Next stops were at 0.3 km, 0.6 km and 2.7 km where *Diuris orientis* Eastern Donkey Orchid was seen in large numbers. Time passed quickly – so much so that it was 12.30 pm when we arrived at our 4.3 km stop – we had lunch there. Some of us sat near the road's edge – others found a log to sit on amongst the orchids. Keen eyes spotted two different orchids: *Caladenia transitoria* Little Bronze Caps and an albino version of the *Caladenia moschata* Scented Caps.

We continued on with two more stops: at 7.8 km and 8.7 km; the last having a mass of flowering *Thelymitra antennifera* Rabbit-ears and a patch of flowering *Leptoceras menziesii* Hare Orchid. Time was approaching 3.30 pm and some had to head home. There were options to explore the first 5-km section of the Henham track beyond the Serra Rd, or the Beehive Tk, but rain as we arrived at Serra Rd (9.5 km) persuaded everyone to depart for home along Serra Rd to the Dunkeld-Halls Gap Rd at around 4 pm.

Some shrub species that are usually very obvious (e.g. *Grevillea dimorpha* Flame Grevillea, *Dillwynia hispida* Red Parrot-pea and *Hakea rostrata* Beaked Hakea) were only seen in a couple of small spots that appeared to have escaped the worst of the fire (u).

Rabbit-ears Orchids were hard to find on the south end of the track but there were hundreds in a few patches towards the north end. There were also many hundreds of Yellow Leopard Orchids and Eastern Donkey Orchids, as well as many species of spider orchids and other *Caladenia*, all in large numbers. Excepting Rabbit Ears, it was a little early for the sun-orchids to flower. It also appeared to some observers that spring this year was at least 2 weeks later than usual – more species should flower later.

There was some germination of eucalypts – and most had sprouted from epicormic buds – but the scene still looks bleak in the areas where there is no sea of flowering spikes of grass-trees. The fact that there were no significant patches of unburned bush accounts for the scarcity of birds, mammals and reptiles. We did see 2 Shinglebacks (*Tiliqua rugosa*) but only a few birds, including one Rufous Whistler. An observation was that, even in areas not burnt, there has been a significant decrease in bird species and numbers of birds over the last 20 years or so. Another observation was the dearth of bees and other insects on the flowering spikes of the grass-trees.

While there are many small seedlings of understory species, there is still a vast amount of bare ground and it will take many years for recovery of the original flora and fauna. In order to learn from this disaster there needs to be an enquiry into the environmental impact of the extensive, severe back-burns, and the consequences of the delay in the early response to the fire, in circumstances where the bureau of meteorology had provided ample warning of the impending extreme fire weather. Our climate has changed and we need to minimise the extent of damaging fire in our parks by having a capacity to tackle wildfires soon after ignition. Prescribed burns are not of much use in extreme weather conditions.

Flora noted in the bush adjacent to the 9.5 km section of Henham Tk from Mirranatwa Rd to the Serra Rd is listed below, with an indication of their relative abundance (v low, low, mod, high, v high).

Botanical Name	Common Name	Abun
<b>ORCHIDS</b>		
<i>Caladenia ampla</i>	Dainty Spider	mod
<i>Caladenia carnea</i>	Pink Fingers	high
<i>Caladenia cuculata</i>	Hooded Caladenia	low
<i>Caladenia fuscata</i>	Dusky Fingers	low
<i>Caladenia grampiana</i>	Grampians Spider	mod
<i>Caladenia major</i>	Waxlip	mod
<i>Caladenia moschata</i>	Scented Caps	mod
<i>Caladenia ornata</i>	Ornate Fingers	low
<i>Caladenia parva</i>	Brown-clubbed Spider	low
<i>Caladenia pusilla</i>	Tiny Caladenia	mod
<i>Caladenia transitoria</i>	Little Bronze Caps	vlow
<i>Caladenia villosissima</i>	Hairy Spider Orchid	low
<i>Caleana major</i>	Large Duck-orchid	vlow
<i>Calochilus</i> sp.	Beard Orchid	vlow
<i>Diuris leopardina</i>	Yellow Leopard Orchid	vlow
<i>Diuris orientis</i>	Eastern Donkey Orchid	high
<i>Leporella fimbriata</i>	Fringed Hare-orchid	mod l
<i>Leptoceras menziesii</i>	Hare Orchid	low
<i>Pterostylis nana</i>	Dwarf Greenhood	low
<i>Pterostylis extensa</i>	Plumed Greenhood	low
<i>Pyrorchis nigricans</i>	Red Beaks	mod
<i>Thelymitra antennifera</i>	Rabbit Ears	low
<i>Thelymitra benthamiana</i>	Blotched Sun-orchid	low b
<i>Thelymitra matthewsii</i>	Spiral Sun-orchid	vlow b
<i>Thelymitra rubra</i>	Salmon Sun-orchid	vlow b
<i>Thelymitra</i> sp.	(Blue) Sun-orchid	vlow b
<b>OTHER SPECIES IN FLOWER</b>		
<i>Allittia uliginosa</i>	Wet-heath Daisy	mod
<i>Brunonia australis</i>	Blue Pincushion	low

<i>Burchardia umbellata</i>	Milk Maid	low
<i>Centrolepis strigosa</i>	Hairy Centrolepis	mod
<i>Chaemiscilla corymbosa</i>	Blue Stars	mod
<i>Craspedia variabilis</i>	Common Billy-buttons	mod
<i>Cynoglossum australe</i>	Aust. Hound's-tongue	low
<i>Dillwynia hispida</i>	Red Parrot-pea	vlow u
<i>Drosera macrantha</i>	Climbing Sundew	vhigh
<i>Geranium</i> sp.?		vlow
<i>Goodenia geniculata</i>	Bent Goodenia	high
<i>Grevillea dimorpha</i>	Flame Grevillea	vlow u
<i>Hakea rostrata</i>	Beaked Hakea	vlow u
<i>Hydrocotyle callicarpa</i>	Tiny Pennywort	mod
<i>Kennedia prostrata</i>	Running Postman	mod
<i>Lagenophora stipitata</i>	Common Lagenophora	mod
<i>Lobelia gibbosa</i>	Tall Lobelia	vlow
<i>Lobelia beaugleholei</i>	Showy Lobelia	low
<i>Lomandra filiformis</i>	Wattle Mat-rush	mod
<i>Lomandra sororia</i>	Small Mat-rush	low
<i>Microseris</i> sp.	Yam Daisy	mod
<i>Neurachne allopecuroidea</i>	Fox-tail Mulga-grass	low
<i>Pimelea glauca</i>	Smooth Rice-flower	low
<i>Pimelia humilis</i>	Common Rice-flower	high
<i>Platylobium obtusangulum</i>	Common Flat-pea	vlow u
<i>Siloxerus multiflorus</i>	Small Wrinklewort	mod
<i>Spyridium vexilliferum</i>	Winged Spyridium	low
<i>Thysanotus patersonii</i>	Twinning Fringe-lily	mod
<i>Tricoryne elatior</i>	Yellow Rush-lily	vlow
<i>Wahlenbergia gracilentia</i>	Hairy Annual Bluebell	mod
<i>Xanthorrhoea australis</i>	Austral Grass-tree	high

Flowering – species other than orchids were recorded only if some were in flower  
 u = found in one or two unburned/lightly burned spots; l = leaves/buds only

#### Birdlist for Henham Tk in Gariwerd/Grampians NP

- |                    |                      |                               |
|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Crimson Rosella | 3. Rufous Whistler   | 5. White-throated Treecreeper |
| 2. Pied Currawong  | 4. Spotted Pardalote | 6. Yellow-faced Honeyeater    |

We were blessed with another fine day – at least until we were on our various ways home in the late afternoon when there were some showers. It was also great to share the day with members of FOGG. Thanks also to those who assisted with the plant list (CP, JL) and photos (CP, JK, LD).

Some photos from the day follow on the next pages. The captions to the photos shown below bear the initials of the contributor.



*Xanthorrhoea australis* Austral Grass-tree <sup>DL</sup>



*Caladenia ampla* Dainty Spider Orchid <sup>DL</sup>



Re-sprouting eucalypts after the fire <sup>DL</sup>



*Caladenia ampla* <sup>DL</sup>



Participants on the excursion, looking for flowers <sup>DL</sup>



*Caladenia ampla* <sup>DL</sup>



*Caladenia carnea* Pink Fingers <sup>DL</sup>



*Caladenia major* Wax-lip Orchid <sup>DL</sup>



*Caladenia grampiana* Grampians Spider Orchid <sup>DL</sup>



*Caladenia major* White form <sup>DL</sup>



*Caladenia grampiana* <sup>DL</sup>



*Caladenia moschata* Scented Caps <sup>DL</sup>



*Caladenia transitoria* Little Bronze caps <sup>DL</sup>



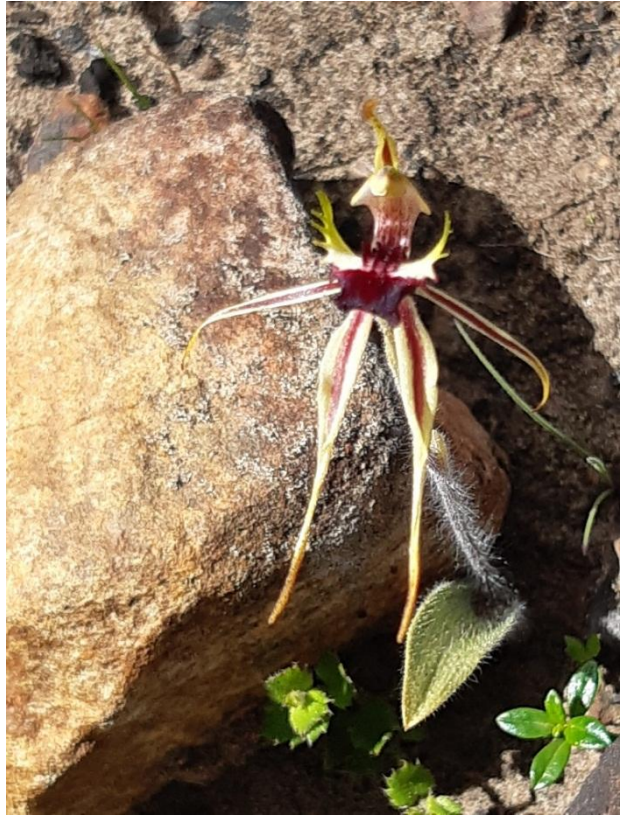
*Caladenia moschata* Form with no pink <sup>DL</sup>



*Caladenia pusilla* Tiny Fingers <sup>DL</sup>



*Caladenia tentaculata* Eastern Mantis Orchid <sup>DL</sup>



*Caladenia villosissima* Hairy Spider Orchid <sup>DL</sup>



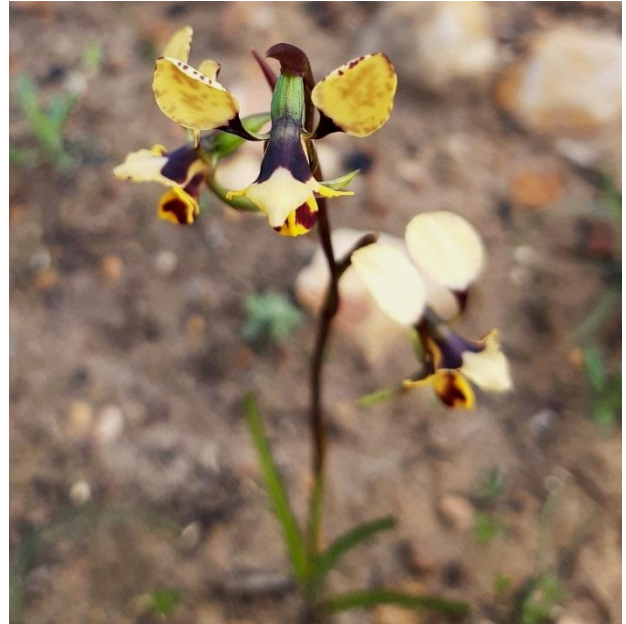
*Caladenia tentaculata* <sup>DL</sup>



*Anthrax* sp. Bee Fly on *X. australis* <sup>LD</sup>



*Diuris orientis* Eastern Donkey Orchid <sup>DL</sup>



*Diuris leopardina* Yellow Leopard Orchid <sup>DL</sup>



*Diuris leopardina* <sup>DL</sup>



*Diuris orientis* <sup>DL</sup>



*Leptoceras menziesii* Hare Orchid <sup>DL</sup>



*Thelymitra benthamiana* Blotched Sun-orchid bud <sup>DL</sup>



*Diuris leopardina* <sup>RB</sup>



*Pyrorchis nigricans* <sup>RB</sup>



*Pterostylis nana* Dwarf Greenhood <sup>DL</sup>



*Diuris orientis* <sup>RB</sup>



*Diuris leopardina* ? colour form <sup>RB</sup>



*Allittia uliginosa* Small Swamp Daisy <sup>DL</sup>



*Geranium* sp.? <sup>RB</sup>



*Daviesia brevifolia* Leafless Bitter-pea <sup>DL</sup>



*Pimelia glauca* Smooth Rice-flower <sup>DL</sup>



*Lomandra sororia* Small Mat-rush <sup>RB</sup>



*Thysanotus patersonii* Twining Fringe-lily <sup>RB</sup>



*L. filiformis* Wattle Mat-rush <sup>RB</sup>



*Grevillea dimorpha* Flame Grevillea <sup>RB</sup>



*Hakea rostrata* Beaked Hakea <sup>RB</sup>



*Brunonia australis* Blue Pincushion <sup>DL</sup>



*Stackhousia monogyna* Creamy Candles <sup>DL</sup>



*Goodenia geniculata* Bent Goodenia <sup>DL</sup>



Wasp on a *Xanthorrhoea* flower spike <sup>DL</sup>



Convoy on the Henham Track <sup>DL</sup>



Orchid spotters on the burned country <sup>JK</sup>



*Dillwynia hispida* Red Parrot-pea <sup>JK</sup>



*Thelymitra antennifera* Rabbit Ears <sup>JK</sup>



*Caladenia moschata* Scented Caps <sup>JK</sup>



Wolf Spider in its burrow <sup>JK</sup>



*Pyrorchis nigricans* Red Beaks <sup>JK</sup>



*Caladenia ornata* Ornate Fingers <sup>DL</sup>



*Caleana major* Large Duck-orchid <sup>DL</sup>



*Caladenia ornata* Ornate Fingers <sup>CP</sup>



Beetle on *Xanthorrhoea australis* <sup>CP</sup>



Jack Jumper Ant on *X. australis* <sup>CP</sup>



*Cynoglossum australe* <sup>CP</sup>



*Pterostylis extensa* Plumed Greenhood <sup>CP</sup>



*Leptoceras menziesii* <sup>CP</sup>



*Caladenia grampiana* <sup>JK</sup>



*Caladenia tentaculata* <sup>JK</sup>



*Peziza* sp. fungus? <sup>JK</sup>