

# MEPA NEWS

PROTECTING THE MT NEBO & MT GLORIOUS ENVIRONMENT - PROMOTING AWARENESS, UNDERSTANDING AND ENJOYMENT THROUGH EDUCATION, DISCUSSION, AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES.

## WELCOME NOTE

Welcome to the Spring 2023 edition of MEPA News. Since the last issue:

- Dominic Hyde has been accepted as a member of the MBRC Biodiversity Stakeholder Reference group to advocate for our biodiversity in our region on behalf of MEPA and our community.
- MEPA has teamed up with the Fire Futures group across both mountain communities in support of sharing information and organising events to connect locals interested in learning more about fire hazard reduction on private property.

## FIRE HAZARD REDUCTION ON PRIVATE PROPERTY

Hazard reduction burns (HRB) are just one important tool for managing the risk of bushfires in our community. By removing the excess fuel on the ground, hazard reduction burns can reduce the intensity and spread of future bushfires, making them easier to control and less damaging to property and lives.

MEPA members were invited to a hazard reduction burn on a private property in our area, where the owner had consulted with local fire authorities to organise a burn that would reduce their fire risk and protect the biodiversity of the area. The burn was conducted when the weather was mild and the wind was favourable. The burn was conducted carefully, with buffer zones created to avoid the base of valuable trees.

Looking at this photo of the HRB, the difference between the burnt and unburnt sections of the property are easily visible. On the right, surface level leaf litter and loose bark pile up on the ground, and the lower bushy shrubs and young trees are thick and intertwined. In the event of a bushfire in the surrounding forest, embers blowing in and landing on these layers can create spot fires, and the connection between the lower levels and tree canopies could increase the intensity of fire on this property. In this photo, we can see that on the left, these areas have been

## AGM



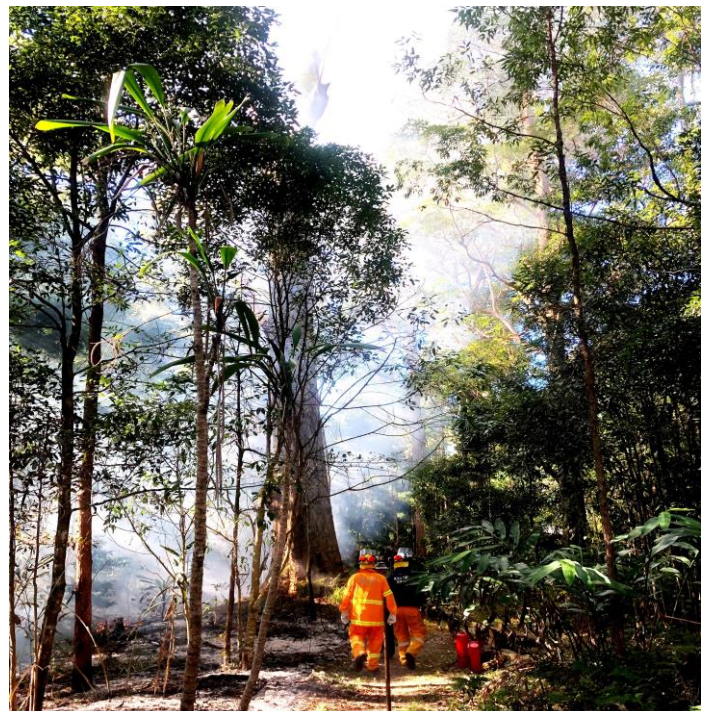
The 2023 MEPA Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> November from 2pm at the Mount Nebo Hall.

Membership is always appreciated – we will have sign up forms available on the day, or you can go to [www.mepainc.org.au/membership-info](http://www.mepainc.org.au/membership-info) anytime to keep your membership current for the year ahead.

We hope to see you there!

targeted and burnt, with a clear line of sight through the remaining trees, and a much reduced likelihood of an intense fire spreading from ground level through to the canopy.

For more information about fire hazard reduction on your property go to [Fire Wardens | Queensland Fire and Emergency Services \(qfes.qld.gov.au\)](#) to find contact details for your local fire warden.



## ORCHIDS OF THE MOUNTAINS

Inspired by this year's bumper orchids on show around the mountains, and this issue's Bush Tale below, we are highlighting two stunning local native orchids. Have you got any of these growing on your block?



The first two photos are of *Dendrobium tarberi* (King Orchid), and the third is of *Dipodium pulchellum* (Rosy Hyacinth Orchid)

## BUSH TALES

At last, a shower of rain has hit the ground as I write. It didn't do much more than keep the local orchids thriving, but thriving they are. Spring in this mild climate is the season for spectacular flowering orchids.

All around the local forests these orchids cling to trunks and branches of large trees and rocks, seeming to live off nothing but the air itself—their roots wandering through bark and into stone crevices. Now, as the temperatures rise again these plants will begin to show off their extravagant blooms.

The grandest of these are undoubtedly the King Orchids. Their huge flower spikes are as long as a forearm and twice as fat, with hundreds of white flowers hiding their colourful hearts. A huge local plant that is probably older than my grandfather had scores of spikes and soon turned on its annual display. Each year the local bees spend long periods inspecting and tasting its flowers, as if all their Christmases have come at once. Looking up high in the Brush Box tree where the plant has grown and thrived, you can see its huge display like an entire flower shop laid bare 20 meters off the ground.

On the branches below it, grow much smaller Tiger Orchids. Plants of long thin pencil-like canes can be seen dangling their yellow and brown-spotted flowers off

modest spikes. The Tiger and King Orchid are apparently promiscuous cousins, and the product of their botanical liaison can be seen growing nearby, a plant of intermediate size with long stems of yellow flowers. As with so many of our locals, the individual flowers are small but produced in such profusion as to put camellias and roses to shame.

Further down the hill in the beautiful Ironbark forest, white fluffy-looking bunches of flowers of the Ironbark Orchids contrast sharply with the black trunks of their host trees. Lining the south side of trunks, sometimes from top to bottom, the clusters of plants betray their position with an elegance that is breath-takingly beautiful. Nearby, pink and white Rock Orchids carpet the stone boulders and ledges with small flowers dazzling in the morning sunlight.

Back up on the ridge-top Orange-blossom Orchids, Pencil Orchids, Spider Orchids, Rasp-root Orchids, Tongue Orchids, Lily-of-the-Valley Orchids, Cockleshell Orchids, Tree Spider Orchids, Fairy Tree Orchids, Tangle-root Orchids and Rat's Tail Orchids will again compete to see who wins this year's prize for the most outrageously spectacular blooms. Oh to be an insect!

[bushtales@hotmail.com](mailto:bushtales@hotmail.com)

**DO YOUR BLOCK!** MEPA has a free service offering advice on managing bushland, weeds and native plants on your block. (supported by MBRC). Contact Maggie - 3289 8175 or Dominic - 3289 0093  
Or you can email a photo to be ID'd - Email: [mepa.enquiries@gmail.com](mailto:mepa.enquiries@gmail.com)