

Report on Nerriga Road Trip 4.12.19

Five dedicated Wednesday Walkers met at Bungendore Railway Station for the journey to Nerriga Road in Moreton NP. When we pass Tarago, I always check the *Jacksonia* that grow in a precarious position on the roadside next to a grass paddock. To our horror, they were all dead due to what appeared to be a recent herbicide application, plus scraping back the roadside nearly to the fence line. I get quite despondent over the future of our roadside vegetation when you have councils patently ignoring advice regarding saving rare and threatened species along the roadsides and in cemeteries.

The main objective of the trip was to check the pylon walk at Bullee Pass for a rare orchid *Prasophyllum flavum*, originally mistakenly identified as *P. elatum*. This orchid is mostly coastal and is at the edge of its range here. However extremely dry conditions prevailed and even the tea tree flowers were shrivelling up. In flower were *Leptospermum squarrosum*, *L. rotundifolium*, *L. polygalifolium* and *Kunzea ambigua* but no orchids. After this disappointing foray, we decided to push on to another orchid site on some rock platforms just beyond Sassafras.

The gas pipeline follows the road to Sassafras and the vegetation along the route was slashed the previous year but showed a remarkable recovery with large areas of *Leptospermum squarrosum* regrowth in flower. We stopped to admire this community and were rewarded by seeing large numbers of the spectacular jewel beetle that features on the cover on my book, *Stigmodera macularia*, feeding on the nectar in the tea tree flowers. The beetles were also mating.

We checked the orchid site at Sassafras but it was also dry and unrewarding although a couple of duck orchids were seen.

On our return, we decided to stop at the (catholic) cemetery at Nerriga. Although mowed it proved to be a little gem of native vegetation with flower displays from *Gompholobium minus*, *Coronidium leucopsidium*, *Haemadorum planifolium*, among others, while outside the fence was *Astrotricha ?ledifolia* and *Philothea salsolifolia*. A place to check out in spring.

Roger Farrow



Leptospermum squarrosum Bullee Pass



Leptospermum squarrosum above pipeline



Stigmodera macularia jewel beetle



Haemadorum planifolium Nerriga Cemetery



Nerriga Catholic Cemetery

Images by Roger Farrow from top left to bottom right:

Leptospermum squarrosus Bullee Pass

Leptospermum squarrosus above pipeline

Nerriga Catholic Cemetery

Stigmodera macularia jewel beetle

Haemadorum planifolium Nerriga Cemetery