

## Wednesday Walk Wanniassa Hills 7 August 2019

Yes, it was a cold start but our group of ten WWers was in good spirits. From previous walks we know that the Wanniassa Hills area contains some of the most reliable patches of *Leucopogons* and *Cryptandras* flowering during winter.

Everybody commented on the dry conditions and the rocky ascent, but the paucity of flowers made us observe the general vegetation and particularly the large trees that seem to be holding up remarkably well. Our discussions about identifying the differences between *Eucalyptus polyanthemos*, *E melliodora*, *E bridgesiana*, *E nortonii* and others will hopefully contribute to our botanical education. Some of the bare patches surprisingly showed quite exposed colonies of *Cheilanthes austrotenuifolia* – slightly bedraggled but surviving - and we easily found the one and only *Persoonia rigida* before morning tea. *Cassinia quinquefaria* and particularly *C longifolia* were some of the other hardy shrubs that amazed us with their robust-looking greenery. Further uphill healthy looking *Stypandra glauca* contrasted with their grey-green foliage.

The large open areas occupied by masses of *Leucopogon attenuatus* were as amazing as always. On closer inspection these low shrubs, densely packed with little bunches of white hairy flowers are truly astounding. Interspersed were the *Cryptandra* sp. Floriferous, both the pure white and the pink-white forms, and equally as interesting looking. But we failed to see any *Cryptandra amara*. Maybe we didn't look hard enough?

*Acacia gunnii* and *A ulicifolia* brightened up our walk with their yellow baubles as well as a purple *Hovea heterophylla* half hidden and protected by a low *Acacia ulicifolia*. As we climbed further we came across a number of *Solanum cinereum* displaying long spiny thorns and many brown fruits that had ripened months previously. This small shrub is not to be confused with the taller *S linearifolium* which has no thorns. As we were nearing the hilltop and the trig we observed a stand of *Dodonaea viscosa* ssp *angustissima* in good shape, showing already their clusters of small round male flowers.

We also took the opportunity to have a closer look at the panorama of hills and ranges spreading out beyond the suburbs towards Tidbinbilla, the Brindabellas and and.....

In short, even though we may think it's not a good time for a WW it usually turns out that there are always interesting things to see and talk about.

**NB:** Gail's photo of the fungus on the trunk of a *Eucalyptus rossii* was confirmed as the polypore fungus *Laetiporus portentosus* by Canberra Nature Map.



The Walkers (BMW)



*Eucalyptus rossi* (GRK)



*Leucopogon attenuatus* (GRK)



*Cryptandra* sp *Floriferous* (GRK)



*Cryptandra* sp *Floriferous* (BMW)



Photographers can't resist (BMW)



*Acacia gunnii* (BMW)



*Hovea heterophylla* (BMW)



*Acacia ulicifolia* (BMW)



*Dodonaea viscosa* ssp  
*angustissima* (BMW)



Made it to the trig! (BMW)



polypore fungus *Laetiporus*  
*portentosus* (GRK)