



**2021 State and Territory Landcare Awards (2021)**

ACM Landcare Community Group Award (State: Australian Capital Territory)

# Friends of Mount Majura



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## Account details

Nominee's state or territory | ACT

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## Nomination details

Nominee's first name (or name of the group) | Friends of Mount Majura

Nominee's last name (for a group nomination, please type "group") | Friends of Mount Majura GROUP

Nominee's email address | convenor@majura.org

Nominee's postal address | Friends of Mt Majura 9 Selwyn St Hackett ACT 2602

Nominee's phone | +61262477515

Nominee's suburb | Hackett

Nominee's post code | 2602

Nominee's website link | <https://majura.org/>

Is the nominee aware of this nomination? | Yes

Are you nominating yourself? | No

Nominator's salutation title | Ms

Nominator's first name | Linda

Nominator's last name | Beveridge

Nominator's job title / role | Board Member

Nominator's organisation | Molonglo Conservation Group

Describe nominee

- 1) The Friends of Mount Majura (FoMM) is a ParkCare group working in the Mount Majura section of Canberra Nature Park in the ACT. Motivated by the loss of biodiversity and by a concern for common goods, FoMM formed in 2003 and is run by volunteers with an interest in improving Mt Majura's ecological communities, particularly the critically endangered grassy woodlands of the mountain's foot-slopes.
- 2) Many of the natural resource management issues that FoMM tackle stem from past management and activities such as cattle and sheep grazing and pasture improvement, horse holding, cross country riding, car racing, and collection of firewood which resulted in tree clearing, introduction of weeds, soil erosion and compaction, loss of native groundcover diversity, modification of plant species composition, inappropriate planting including of species listed Weeds of National Significance, and the introduction of pest animals. Ongoing issues are large herbivore overgrazing, the impact of suburban encroachment, and the increase of recreational use including inappropriate use of the nature reserve
- 3) The group's current focus is the improvement of a degraded approximately 8.5 ha grassy woodland area and its immediate surrounds abutting The Fair residential estate in North Watson. The Fair residential estate is adjacent to the Mount Majura Nature Reserve, Federal Highway and Antill Street. Click on this map to view the location
- 4) The Fair: On March 9, 2010, The North Canberra Community Council, Watson Community Association, Friends of Mount Majura, The Conservation Council ACT Region and the Village Building Company signed a Deed of Agreement to mitigate environmental and traffic impacts associated with The Fair residential development in North Watson.
- 5) FoMM had been the lead negotiator of this agreement. The development site is situated on the northwest corner of Mt Majura abutting nature reserve in the west. The development application had been approved unconditionally by ACTPLA on March 2, 2010, with conditions that failed to address any of the substantive environmental concerns of community groups. Rather than going directly to appeal, the NCCC and its co-joined parties took the decision to negotiate with the Village Building Company in an attempt to ameliorate these concerns.
- 6) The Deed of Agreement included a call for cat containment and for Village Building Company to provide funds for community engagement and for on-ground rehabilitation work to mitigate the impacts of urban-edge developments on the conservation values of Mount Majura Nature Reserve.
- 7) Much of FoMM's subsequent on-ground activities have revolved around this project, with the need for cleaning up the heavily degraded and compacted site abutting The Fair Development, organizing several National Tree Day plantings of trees, shrubs and ground cover plants, followed by mulching and watering, and ongoing herbaceous and woody weed control. FoMM was also heavily involved in designing access points from The Fair into the Nature Reserve and walking tracks (Clancy's Track) linking to the trail network of Mt Majura Nature Reserve.

Describe the natural resource management issue responded to by the group

- 1) Over the last 18 years, FoMM volunteers have improved and rehabilitated several degraded areas in Mt Majura Nature Reserve, including two sheep-camps, a former horse-paddock, dams in addition to The Fair project (see [https://majura.org/About Mt Majura/Projects](https://majura.org/About%20Mt%20Majura/Projects)). Main activities continue to involve large-scale tree & shrub plantings during several large National Tree Day events, woody and herbaceous weed control, erosion control measures, direct seeding and soil improvement using woodchip mulch and coarse woody debris. All these activities have been conducted in close consultation and coordination with ACT Parks & Conservation Service (PCS) and have involved many volunteers and groups.
- 2) FoMM's The Fair project demonstrates that even heavily misused, degraded and compacted areas can be rehabilitated provided persistent conservation volunteer engagement, involving schools, scouts, soldiers, prisoners, rugby players, university students, corporate sponsors and stamina over many years. (see <https://majura.org/category/the-fair/> , and <https://majura.org/progress-the-fair/>)
- 3) The Fair project strategy
  - a) 2010 Planning and initial monitoring and scoping of project;
  - b) 2012 start of on-ground work with the first of 6 National Tree Day community mass plantings
- 4) Objectives
  - a) to improve degraded grassy woodland and endangered species habitat
  - b) to maintain and improve habitat of native wildlife in particular declining woodland bird species
  - c) to demonstrate feasibility of improving modified degraded grassy woodland.

## Describe nominee's repairs to land or assets

1) Work, initiatives and innovations carried out to fulfil the strategies and objectives

- a) Negotiation with Village Building Company to secure funding for community education, ongoing conservation work, implementing of infrastructure (Clancy's track, interpretative signs) and to implement cat containment, fencing along the border of The Fair with nature reserve with defined access points.
- b) Mapping and monitoring: Vegwatch, rabbits, weeds, rare plants, using the Vegwatch kit, Canberra Nature Map, Collector, ArcView, Mapsource, Google Earth.
- c) Seeding node project: Reintroduction of forbs, funded by Federal Government grant and FoMM; see website link <https://majura.org/seeding-nodes-reintroducing-wildflowers-to-mt-majura/>. Four large kangaroo and rabbit excluding enclosures were built and planted with forbs and wild flowers in Mt Majura Nature Reserve to serve as seed-nodes for surrounding areas in the hope that consistent herbivore management will bear fruit in future.
- d) Soil improvement to address compacted and bare soil, sheet erosion and nutrient enriched soil: wood chips harvested from maintenance work in the reserve was used for large scale shallow mulching (slow-release carbon source, retains moisture, cooling effect, reduces erosion of bare soil, retains seeds, creates microhabitat); deep mulching to ameliorate compacted soil; deep soil ripping using yeoman plough; loosening compacted soil manually.
- e) Planting and seeding: Six National Tree Day community plantings to mass-plant local trees, shrubs and herbs, participation rate 100 to over 200, including ACT Politicians ;see for instance website link <https://majura.org/national-tree-day-planting-on-mount-majura-28-07-2013/> ; smaller planting activities involving scouts and FoMM volunteers; collection and broadcasting of native grass and forbs seeds.
- f) Addition of coarse debris (large tree logs) to provide habitat with PCS.
- g) Control of weeds including *Weeds of National Significance: (Grass species) Serrated Tussock, Chilean Needlegrass, African Lovegrass; (Woody species) African Boxthorn, Gorse, Blackberry, English Elm, Hawthorn, Sweet Briar, Firethorn, Cootamundra Wattle, Monterey Pine, Blue Gum; (Herbaceous species other than grass) St John's Wort, Paterson's Curse, Buchan Weed, various species of thistles (including Saffron Thistle), Horehound, Cleavers, Capeweed.*
- h) Erosion control work to mitigate gully erosion using weir construction and brushwood packaging technique.
- i) FoMM holds weekly working sessions in the nature reserve east of The Fair ([https://majura.org/event/fridays-the-fair/?instance\\_id=1141](https://majura.org/event/fridays-the-fair/?instance_id=1141) )
- j) FoMM has conducted working bees involving schools (Blue Gum School Hackett), the Majura Mountain Scouts, the Gungahlin Eagle's Rugby Club, ADFA Cadets, Prisoner Rehabilitation Crews, ANU students and corporate conservation volunteers.

2) Partners, supporters and helpers

Molonglo Conservation Group, North Canberra Community Council, Hackett Community Council, Watson Woodland Working Group, Conservation Council Canberra Region, Majura Mountain Scouts, Green Army, Conservation Volunteers Australia, Landlease (business corporation), Marist College, ANU Intrepid Landcare Group, ANU Fenner School, ACT Parks and Conservation Service, Village Building Company.

## Provide examples

- 1) FoMM has been active in education. In addition to guided walks and talks, in collaboration with the Conservation Council FoMM produced Fact Sheets on Mt Majura Nature Reserve, covering the plants, animals, bushfire preparedness, walking and cycling, and the geological and settlement history of Mt Majura (see <http://majura.org/>) and a booklet *Majura's treasures* (Conservation Council ACT Region Inc (2013) ISBN: 978-0-9874444-4-8).
- 2) FoMM has run a series of talks (Hilltop to Backfence) on conservation issues and regularly organises guided walks on Mount Majura covering Birds, Trees, Spring Wildflowers and Ants.
- 3) FoMM is also active in monitoring and documentation (maintaining a plant list, contributing to Canberra Nature Map, mapping rabbit warrens, weeds and rare plants etc), in lobbying government for adequate funding of specific programs (such as rabbit and kangaroo management, volunteer support, support for catchment groups etc) and is deeply engaged with all levels of the ACT PCS with the aim of improving coordination between volunteers and P&CS staff, including operational management plans and compliance strategies.
- 4) FoMM continues to maintain a website, including a regularly updated plant list.
- 5) Canberra Nature Map has its origin in a chance meeting between Aaron Clausen and Waltraud Pix (FoMM members) and FoMM has initiated, trained and coordinated conservation volunteers using GPS to map rabbit warrens in Mt Majura and Mt Ainslie Nature Reserves.

6) Since late 2009, with financial help from the ACT Government and the North Canberra Community Council, FoMM conducted a simple public awareness project by recording vegetation change, and demonstrating the cause. The Explaining Change project aimed to gain a better understanding of the relative influence of kangaroos, rabbits, and season on the herbaceous ground layer in the reserve. Two small grassland areas were fenced to exclude kangaroos and rabbits or kangaroos only. A control plot allowed access to both herbivores.

7) The plots were monitored with repeat photography at fixed times of the year. A time-lapse video of the 3 years repeat photography and explanatory background information is available at <http://majura.org/explaining-change/>. The results clearly show that grazing by kangaroos is both heavy and unsustainable, and that the reserve islands of Canberra Nature Park clearly have limited carrying capacity for large herbivores. The herbaceous layer, the grasses and forbs, is repeatedly reduced to a lawn or a cover of unpalatable weeds. Consequently, large unmanaged kangaroo populations defeat the purpose of protecting the grassy woodland, because they make it impossible to rehabilitate native grass, forbs and other ground cover.

8) In addition to on-ground conservation work for The Fair, FoMM has successfully lobbied the ACT Government to provide adequate funding for rabbit and kangaroo management, to provide administrative and on-ground support for ParkCare volunteers, to bring the Hackett horse paddock back into the nature reserve, to remove Monash Drive which would cut through the critically endangered grassy woodlands on the lower slopes of Mt Majura Nature Reserve from the Territory Plan, and to prevent development east of Antill Street, North Watson.

#### Summarise nomination

FoMM has contributed significantly to rehabilitating and protecting critically endangered ecological communities through persistent, inclusive and innovative on-ground activities, and political lobbying and education.

Referee 1 - First name	Karen
Referee 1 - Last name	Williams
Referee 1 - Job title	President
Referee 1 - Organisation	Molonglo Conservation Group
Referee 1 - Email	president@molonglo.org.au
Referee 1 - Mobile	+61427803896
Referee 1 - What is their relationship with the nominee?	Professional
Please confirm you have notified Referee 1	✓
Referee 2 - First name	Jochen
Referee 2 - Last name	Ziel
Referee 2 - Job title	Convenor
Referee 2 - Organisation	Friends of Mount Majura
Referee 2 - Email	convenor@majura.org
Referee 2 - Mobile	+61262477515
Referee 2 - What is their relationship with the nominee?	Professional

Please confirm you have notified Referee | ✓

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Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo & Video release form

PDF	<a href="#">FoMM photo-video-release-... (159 KiB download)</a>
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Additional Attachment 1



Additional Attachment 2

DOCX	<a href="#">Progress at The Fair 2021... (4.1 MiB download)</a>
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Photo captions / credits

Caption Photo 1 Volunteers planting forbs and wild flowers a one of the four large enclosures that exclude kangaroos and rabbits.

Credit Waltraud Pix

File reference 20200816 seeding node planting image1.jpeg

Caption Photo 2 The hard work paid off! Looking North West at The Fair May 2021

Credit Waltraud Pix

File reference Watson Fair northwest view 20210509 DSCN5529.JPG

Caption Photo 3 Looking North West to the Working Party at The Fair Jun 2015

Credit Waltraud Pix

File reference Watson Fair northwest view 20150702 DSCN2059.JPG

Please rate the clarity of the application process? | neutral

How satisfied are you with the categories? | right number of awards or good variety

How did you hear about the awards? | ✓ word of mouth

Log in to [aucklandcareawards.awardsplatform.com](http://aucklandcareawards.awardsplatform.com) to see complete nomination attachments.



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