This brochure, and the creation of dedicated Banksia 'seed orchards', are part of the current efforts of the Mt Leura & Mr Sugarloaf Management Committee (MLMSMC) and Mount Elephant Community Management (MECM). We work with like minded groups to prevent the otherwise inevitable demise of ***Banksia marginata*** on the Victorian Volcanic Plains (VVP).

FRIENDS OF THE FORGOTTEN WOODLANDS (FoFW)

By 2019 the **FoFW** group aim to create at least 30 'seed orchard' sites across the VVP from near Melbourne westward almost to Portland.

The **FoFW** group has also undertaken detailed research (2017), in partnership with Deakin University (Warrnambool), into the DNA of Banksia from over 30 sites across the VVP containing remnant trees. This information is vital in helping to establish healthy, genetically diverse 'seed orchards'. These 'seed orchards' will create the opportunity for future revegetation activities across the VVP. The ***Banksia marginata*** is the 'flagship' species of this project. The reintroduction of other significant 'forgotten woodland' species, especially Drooping She-oak (*Allocasuarina verticillata*) and Sweet Bursaria (*Bursaria spinosa*), are also included.

Mt Leura & Mt Sugarloaf Management Committee and the Mount Elephant Community Management aim to educate the local and broader community about this special tree and this important project.

Brochure produced by Mt Leura & Mt Sugarloaf Management Committee and Mount Elephant Community Management (2018).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Corangamite CMA for funding this brochure and related activities.
- Dr Steve Sinclair (Arthur Rylah Institute) for visuals and maps.
- Damian Cook for old remnant Banksia photo.
- State Library Victoria for Mount Elephant photo by Gabriel Knight, c1910.

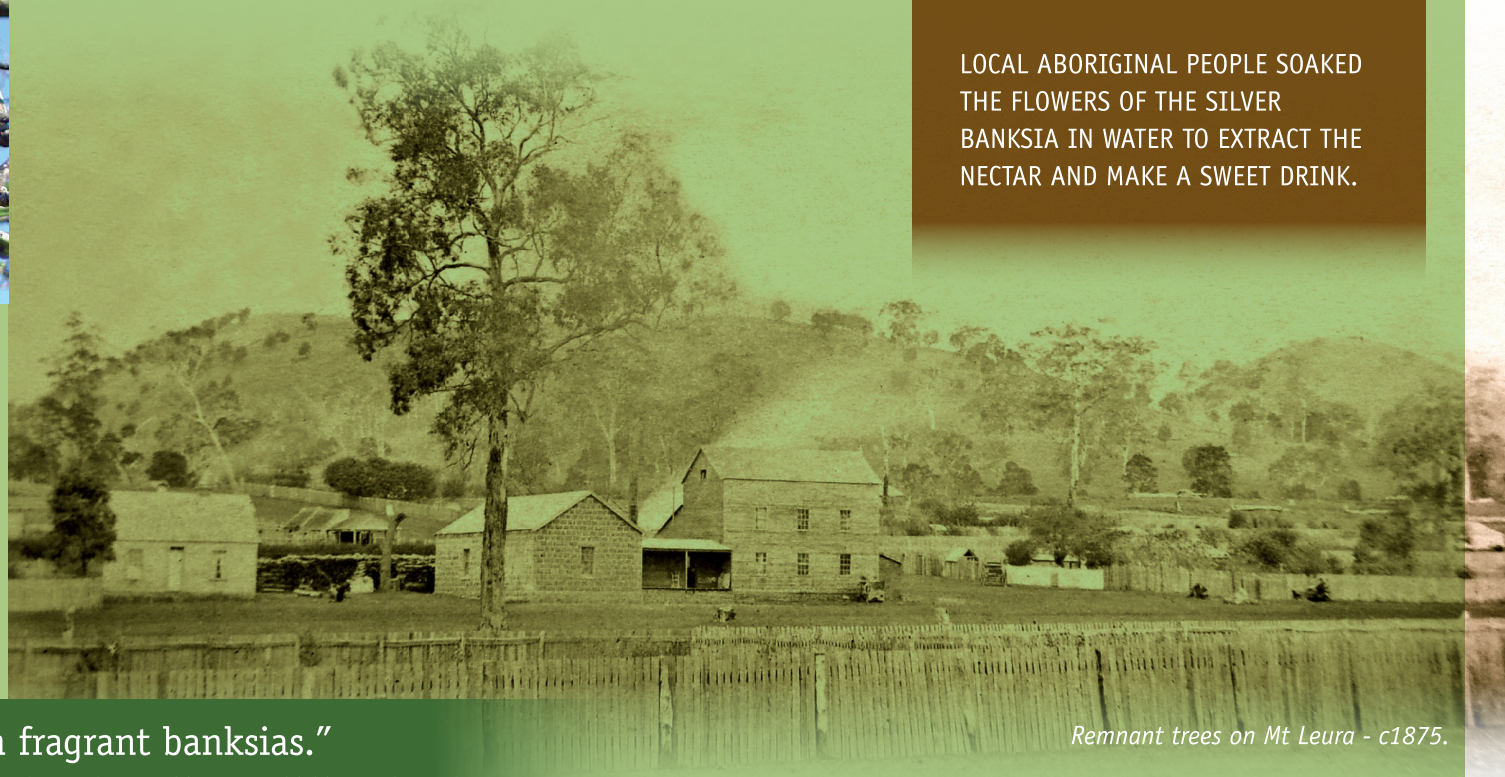
An old remnant Banksia marginata on a stony knoll near Dundonnell.

'Volcanic' Banksia

Working together to ensure the long term survival of the **Silver Banksia** on the **Victorian Volcanic Plains.**

Silver Banksia (*Banksia marginata*) was once widespread across much of the Victorian Volcanic Plain. Locally it was common to volcanic cones including Mt Leura, Mt Sugarloaf and Mount Elephant, as well as on the plain between Lismore and Derrinallum.

LOCAL ABORIGINAL PEOPLE SOAKED THE FLOWERS OF THE SILVER BANKSIA IN WATER TO EXTRACT THE NECTAR AND MAKE A SWEET DRINK.



Remnant trees on Mt Leura - c1875.

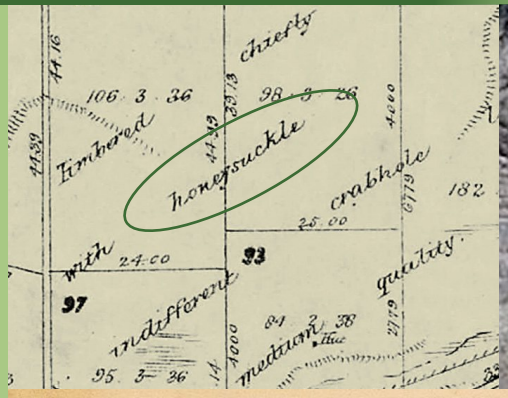
"...the sides [of Mt Leura] are clothed in fragrant banksias."

quote from 'Gum Boughs and Wattle Blooms' by Donald MacDonald (date unknown).

EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT (from 1840s)

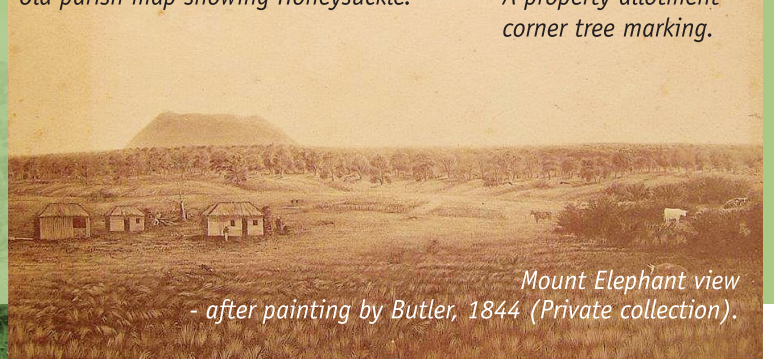
Early demand for timber, firewood and grazing land meant that by the early 1900s Mt Leura and Mt Sugarloaf were almost completely cleared of all indigenous trees and totally devoid of Banksia. Mount Elephant was in a similar situation by the mid-1900s. Harvesting and fire depleted the mature Banksias; sheep and rabbits prevented regrowth.

Mount Elephant view - c1910.



Old parish map showing Honeysuckle.

A property allotment corner tree marking.



Mount Elephant view - after painting by Butler, 1844 (Private collection).

The Mt Leura & Mt Sugarloaf Management Committee and Mount Elephant Community Management have long been aware of the fact that Silver Banksia numbers have diminished greatly across the entire Victorian Volcanic Plains.

"...a wood of Banksia trees, which, as well as shiock, particularly affect volcanic soil..."

Howitt, 1855 (volcanic plains near Melbourne).

BUT ONLY 80 YEARS LATER...

"The Proteaceae are wholly absent about Melbourne, but further away Banksia marginata occasionally occurs".

Patton, 1935 (on the volcanic plains).

You can be part of this exciting and important project that will see the reintroduction of a significant component of the VVP ecosystem that was largely removed during the late 1800's and early 1900's.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Visit Mt Leura and Mt Sugarloaf (anytime) and Mount Elephant (open to the public every Sunday afternoon and by appointment).
- Keep your eyes open for remnant Banksias.
- Report any old Banksias on your property to a contact below.
- Join a group to help save the Banksia.

Friends of Mt Leura: foml@mtleura.org.au
Mount Elephant: www.mountelephant.com.au
Friends of the Forgotten Woodland: 0427 507 553 (Bill Weatherly)

REINTRODUCTION

The Silver Banksias on Mt Leura and Mt Sugarloaf today have been grown and planted as part of a revegetation project which commenced in 1995 by the Mt Leura & Mt Sugarloaf Management Committee. Initially, all Banksias were grown from seed collected from some of the five remaining local remnant Banksias located on the Victorian Volcanic Plains.

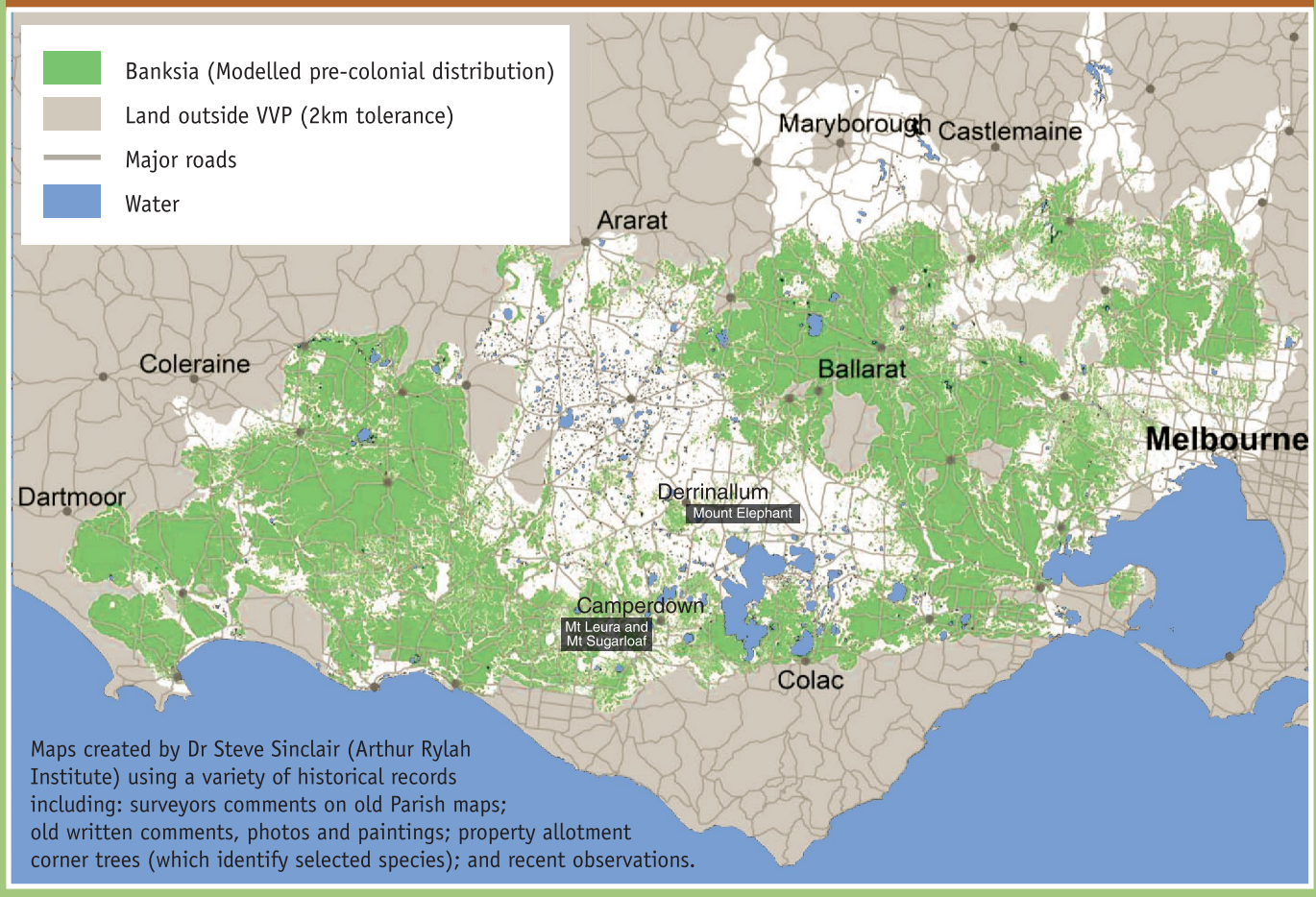
Their efforts to reintroduce this tree to the local landscape commenced in 1997 with the help of Andrew McLennan from the Colac Department of Environment and Camperdown High School students and staff.

Camperdown 'Chronicle' (Feb 1997)

Andrew McLennan initiated bringing flowering cones from a few remaining remnant Banksias and placed them in ice cream containers on some chosen remnants to successfully reactivate pollination and seed-setting.

A very healthy Mt Leura 'seed orchard' Banksia marginata, fully guarded to protect from grazing wallabies and tagged for genetic record keeping.

Pre-Colonial Distribution of *Banksia marginata* across the Victorian Volcanic Plains



Maps created by Dr Steve Sinclair (Arthur Rylah Institute) using a variety of historical records including: surveyors comments on old Parish maps; old written comments, photos and paintings; property allotment corner trees (which identify selected species); and recent observations.

The first planting of Silver Banksia on Mt Leura was on the western slopes in 1999. More Banksia were included as part of the ongoing revegetation over the following years.

A specific **'seed orchard' planting** has been established on the upper eastern slopes of Mt Leura. It currently comprises Banksias grown from seeds collected from nine different remnant sources. Commenced in 2014, it is still a work in progress. With over 60 Banksias already in the 'seed orchard' — the goal is to have more than 100.

Mount Elephant Community Management is currently working with and learning from Mt Leura & Mt Sugarloaf Management Committee to contribute to the long term survival of the ***Banksia marginata*** on the VVP. They are expanding the Banksia plantings on Mount Elephant and diversifying the genetic base with young trees of known provenance.

THESE ACTIONS WILL ENSURE ONSITE GENETIC DIVERSITY OF THE SPECIES AND A VIABLE SOURCE OF SEED FOR THE PLANTING OF ROBUST TREES ON OTHER SITES WITHIN THE VICTORIAN VOLCANIC PLAINS.

Current Distribution (2018) of *Banksia marginata* across the Victorian Volcanic Plains