



RESEARCH PRESENTATION

Building a bandicoot brigade to protect our nose neighbours

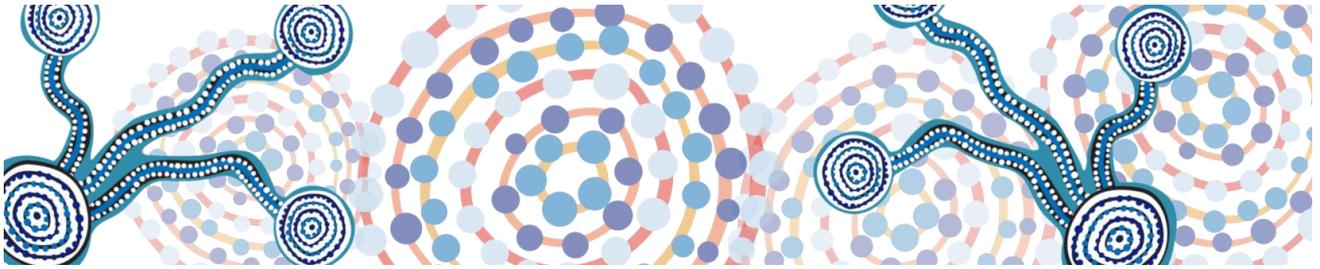
Charlotte Fletcher, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria

Abstract

Southern brown bandicoots (*Isoodon obesulus obesulus*) were once common throughout Melbourne and the Mornington Peninsula. As their heathy woodland habitat has been destroyed to make way for residential development, they have shifted further from the city, with the last suburban stronghold being the Royal Botanic Gardens at Cranbourne. These survivors, too, are being surrounded by new developments and now contend with a whole host of new neighbours. As residential expansion in South East Melbourne continues apace, we have an opportunity to try to build bandicoot friendly suburbs.

Our socio-ecological system has recently focused on minimizing contact between human residences and wildlife. Building designs feature six foot steel fences, and discussion forums feature threads on pest management, extermination, and low-maintenance fire-proof living. The dream of a patch of land with some grass to kick a ball means the pressure on cities like Melbourne to expand are significant. Simultaneously, many threatened species remain within city boundaries. Can we reorganize our approach to new suburbs to ensure growth doesn't wipe out the endangered species that live among us?

Previous research in the region shows bandicoots frequently use modified habitats, linear remnants and residential properties, and that residents of South-East Melbourne are tentatively optimistic about their nose neighbours, with a few recurring concerns. The Victorian Government-funded Southern brown bandicoot outreach program brings together community members, schools, developers and local council initiatives to further positive interactions between bandicoots and their new neighbours, and make the suburb a friendly place for everyone to live – not just humans. Two years into our program, we will discuss the core role values-based communication has played in being able to get the community on board the Bandi-wagon.



Speaker Profile

As Southern Brown Bandicoot Outreach Officer at Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, Charlotte Fletcher is working to raise the profile of the southern brown bandicoot in South-East Melbourne and encourage conservation action for these charismatic and nationally endangered ecosystem engineers. With Honours in behavioural ecology from the University of Sydney, and a Masters in science communication (Outreach) from the Australian National University, she aims to run initiatives based on sound ecological and social science to achieve both conservation and human wellbeing outcomes.

Website links

