

Members' Page

LOOKING THROUGH THE PHONE BOOK

Jessie MacIver

It was a warm and sunny autumn Sunday in Denmark so I thought I'd have my morning tea out on the front verandah. As I was about to step outside I noticed the old king skink with a shortened tail and holes in its back where the kookaburras had been pecking at him lying on the mat, so, to leave him in peace, I went out another door but I was too close for the skink and it sauntered off to the pergola end of the house, leaving me to enjoy the day.



Shortly after, it came hurtling back towards me as fast as its little legs could carry it, closely followed by a huge dugite about 2.5 metres long. I leapt up and threw my cup of coffee at them and rushed to bring my old blind and deaf collie inside. She was very comfortable thank you lying outside in the sand next to her enclosure, so I had to lift her inside, shut the enclosure and close the doggy door into the house. So then I rang a friend, as you do!

The skink had bolted back to the pergola and that's where the snake caught up with him and coiled around him to try and sink his fangs in. Now I know I shouldn't interfere with nature but I'm quite fond of that old skink and his battle for survival. So we decided I should get some small rocks from outside to throw and try and distract the snake. Well,

I was throwing through the pergola door with my wrong hand so was making a poor job of it. So ended up throwing bird books, travel books, even the LANDSCOPE, spent ink cartridges, Denmark phone books until eventually the much more substantial south-west phone book which landed face down and open. This distracted the snake at last and the skink scurried under the book, followed by the snake, but into different pages. The skink made its escape but the snake looked and looked for ages, coming up to the door where I was standing, before it went around the other side of the house towards the front door. It started climbing up the flywire door so I was banging the wooden door shut to try and dislodge it. Eventually it glided off away from the house.

I scurried around spraying Shoo Snake in my dog's enclosure and outside doors. I went into the pergola to retrieve all my bits and pieces and there was blood so I was quite despondent about the skink's chances.

About an hour later the snake was back and inside the dog's enclosure – so much for the Shoo Snake! This was getting serious, so I rang Ranger Dick and he came really promptly, although it seemed an age to me. He checked the snake wasn't outside the front door for me to come outside. Around the corner lying next to the dog's enclosure was the snake, luckily with its tail towards us. Dick was most impressed with its size and not sure whether he could manage to catch it. As it started to slither towards the shrubbery he caught it about mid body with his metal catcher and put it into the wide-opening calico bag. He

reckoned it gave him enough of an adrenalin rush to last the week! As I was heading back to the front door I noticed the skink clinging for dear life to the very top of the flywire door. He got down a couple of hours later.

So thank you Ranger Dick for your wonderful service. I feel a bit sorry for the snake because it was his home too, so I hope you found him a place full of rats and mice to eat.

My only regret was that I broke my favourite coffee cup.

Photo: P. Hussey

CREATING BUSHLAND LINKS

Do you have wandoo growing on your property?

Would you like to create patches of wandoo bushland?

The Wandoo Recovery Group (WRG) is calling for interested landowners to create corridors of wandoo bushland on their property to link areas of native vegetation.

This project to restore wandoo bushland will utilise a range of options and techniques appropriate for specific locations. Guidelines for the project can be developed to assist landowners.

If you would like to become involved or want more information, please contact Liz Manning, WRG Executive Officer, by phone on (0427 441 482) or email Elizabeth.Manning@bigpond.com.