

Rebirthing at the Flower Pit Healing Site

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The autumn winds were still and the sun was bright as my grand children and I headed out to see how the flower pits were since the bushfire in January. At the time of the fire we were amazed to see how the ring of trees and plants within the circle of the pits were not harmed by the fire, yet all around was decimated. The fire had started with a lightning strike during one of the best light shows I had ever seen. The lightning of that storm came down like giant pipes into the earth, whizzing through the air as if it was right next to your ear, not in the sky above. The fire it made was dealt with by the fire brigade the next day, but the embers had hugged the roots of the grasses beneath the soil and a day later a strong south westerly wind fanned the embers into flames again and the fire took off with speed towards the flower pits. From a distance it looked as if the fire had certainly gone through that grove of paperbarks, myrtles and banksias that surround the pits. Water bombs by helicopters and fixed winged aircraft and ten or more fire trucks and earthmovers engaged the fire and its possible pathways. As soon as the main body of fire had moved on we went to see what had happened there. Incredibly the tree standing in front of the back most men's pit was still in flames and it had sent ash into the pit before it. There at the outer most edge a banksias flower from the last flower pit healing ceremony was turned to ash and yet the rest of the flower pits and every other part of the pit enclosure was untouched. There were bright orange embers everywhere around the circle but within all was safe.

Vasu and I stayed around checking the embers and shoveling earth on them all the while wondering at the patch of green amidst the smouldering black. I stayed longer because I was feeling the great vulnerability of the site surrounded by the now more hidden fires deep in trees and fence posts. Suddenly with a roar a big earthmover with a giant steel "V" came lumbering to within twenty metres of the bush site on course to cut a swathe through it. I was able to stop it going further with the help of the firemen on the ground. One man, a Mr. Sean Walsh, was particularly affected when he learnt of the sites significance and made sure the site was safe, also bringing in extra water trucks to make sure no embers could start up again near or in the site. Thank you Mr. Walsh, from all of us and especially from Nundjan.

So today I went back to see more wonders. Strange white sand dunes were appearing on the blackened earth as rabbits renovated their burrows. Four hundred year old paperbark trees were half burnt with black making a perfect line against the white bark. A tree from where a bark blanket had been cut for the ceremonies stood, healthy and regenerating, as if nothing had happened. Green shoots were arising out of charcoal everywhere, and there was the men's pit, standing like a sentinel on the edge of life. Beyond it - life was reclaiming the land. "I know this place," says Jyoti my grandson excitedly, "this is where we had the party!". It is going to be here for him and all of us in the future.