



A self guided walking trail
in Mossvale Park
South Gippsland

Coniferous plants trail

Let's explore

the conifers of Mossvale Park



What are conifers?

Conifers are trees that bear their seeds in cones. The vast majority of conifers have needle-like or scale-like leaves. Most conifer species are evergreen, but not all. Our Metasequoia and Taxodiums are deciduous.

Conifers are an ancient group of plants, splitting off from close relatives like ginkgos and cycads more than 300 million years ago.



Conifers were dinosaur food!

Conifers flourished in the Triassic period, millions of years before some of the other plants we have in the park had evolved. The conifer species that remain today are living fossils of ancient times, having survived ice ages, meteor strikes and climate change.



Where are they found?



Today, there are about 615 conifer species. The vast northern hemisphere forests are dominated by conifers, but they can be found in all kinds of temperate, arid and tropical ecosystems, such as shrublands, savannas, and even swamps all round the world.

We have 28 conifers in the park, 27 of these are in the accessible part of the park. This self guided trail is about 1.3km long.



Difficulty: Moderate Terrain: no formed track / uneven terrain / includes some steep banks.

About the trail: The coniferous trail will take you around the long lagoon before climbing up the hill to the flat area in the northern part of the park. You will cross grassed area behind the sound shell and back to the road. Then down the slope and back across the flat behind the sound shell. Parts of this trail are not suitable for those with mobility issues.

Start the trail in the main carpark next to the playground. With the playground on your left walk approx. 50 metres up beside the long lagoon (this doesn't always have water in it). The first two specimens are on the left next to the river bank plantings. Another 50 metres north west-ish brings you to our third conifer on this walk.





Latitude	-38.4029891
Longitude	146.0527156
Date planted	2004
Photo date	2024
Catalogue specimen no.	103.01

No 1. *Picea abies* - Norway Spruce is a species of spruce native to Northern, Central and Eastern Europe. The Latin specific epithet 'abies' means 'fir-like'. Norway spruce is a large, fast-growing evergreen coniferous tree growing 35–55 m tall and with a trunk diameter of 1 to 1.5 m.



Latitude	-38.4029397
Longitude	146.0526168
Date planted	2004
Photo date	2024
Catalogue specimen no.	28.01

No 2. *Araucaria heterophylla* - Norfolk Island Pine is a slow growing tree, reaching a height of 50–65 m, with straight vertical trunks and symmetrical branches. It has gray-brown bark. The scientific name heterophylla ("different leaves") derives from the variation in the leaves between young and adult plants.



Latitude	-38.4026826
Longitude	146.052346
Date planted	2011
Photo date	2024
Catalogue specimen no.	93.00

No 3. *Metasequoia glyptostoboides* - Dawn redwood is a fast-growing, endangered deciduous conifer. It is the sole living species of the genus Metasequoia. It now survives only in wet lower slopes and montane river and stream valleys in the border region of Hubei and Hunan provinces and Chongqing municipality in south-central China. Although the shortest of the redwoods, it can grow to 40 metres in height.

Continue walking up the long lagoon for another 55 metres; past the end of the row of maples. The river here bends to the west. On the right is the first group of river casuarinas. Between them and the river are the next two specimens.





Latitude	-38.4022833
Longitude	146.0519588
Date planted	?2011
Photo date	2024
Catalogue specimen no.	173.00

No 4. *Araucaria cunninghamii* - hoop pine, which can live up to 450 years and grow to a height of 60 metres. The species is found in the dry rainforests of New South Wales and Queensland and in New Guinea. The bark is rough, splits naturally, the outer layer of which forms scale-like horizontal 'hoops'; hence it's common name. Leaves are stiff, veinless, pointy to 8mm and seed cones are about 10cm long, green to brown rounded and woody. This tree was donated by Ilsa Ardnt.



Latitude	-38.402247
Longitude	146.051845
Date planted	2011
Photo date	2024
Catalogue specimen no.	160.00

No 5. *Pinus pinea* - stone pine, is native to the Mediterranean region. It is an evergreen tree that can exceed 25 metres in height, but 12–20 m is more typical. Young tree like ours are a bushy globe, in mid-age an umbrella canopy on a thick trunk, and, in maturity, a broad and flat crown over 8 m wide. The cones are 8–15 cm long, and take 36 months to mature, longer than any other pine. The seeds (pine nuts) are large at 2cm long.

You have two choices now depending on how wet the park is. Either continue north west to the end of the long lagoon and turn right (north east) and cross at the culvert and walk up the hill. At the top of the bank the first four of the twelve conifers up here are on your right on the edge of the bank. If it is too wet go back to the car park and walk the rest of the trail backwards starting at specimen no 27.

There is a worn track from the culvert crossing up the fairly steep bank under the Algerian oak tree. Partially obscured by other trees but to the right and before the top of the slope is the black pine. Further along is a Norway spruce. The giant sequoia and the coastal redwood are higher up the bank. As you emerge from under the oak, straight ahead is the pendulous giant sequoia. We will get back to that in a few minutes. Firstly we are going to look at the conifers on the right.

Warning!

The park is located on a flood plain and can get very wet and slippery.

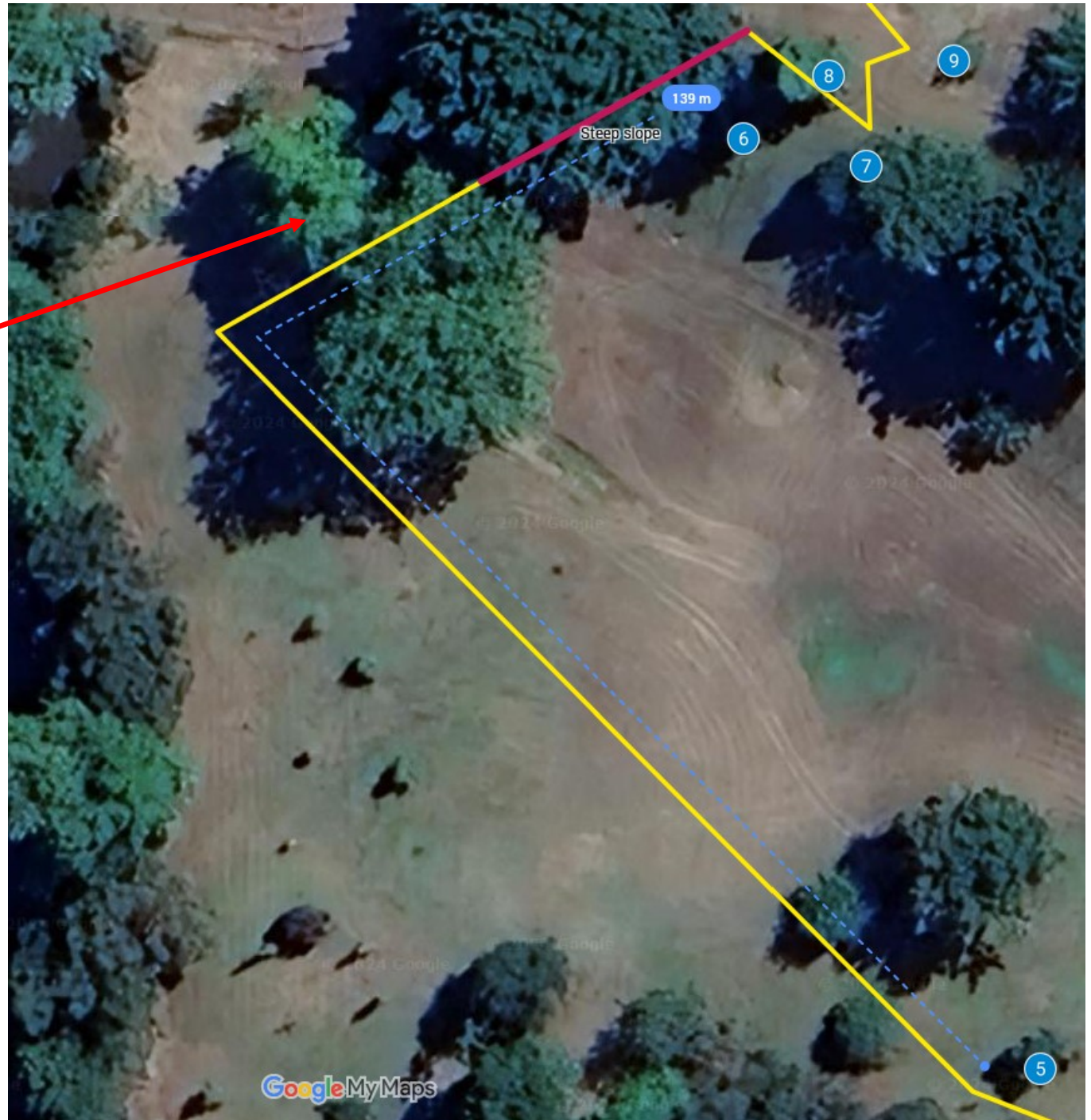
The bank under the oak trees is very steep in parts and can be very slippery due to fallen leaves, especially in winter.

Do not wade through flood water at any time.

Wear appropriate footwear and use walking poles / sticks to help you if necessary.

Always watch for snakes in warmer weather. Do not approach or try to handle snakes. Turn the other way and retreat.

Be aware of wombat diggings and other uneven ground.





Latitude	-38.4014663
Longitude	146.0515266
Date planted	1992
Photo date	2024
Catalogue specimen no.	107.00

No 6. *Pinus thunbergia* - black pine or Japanese pine, is a native to coastal areas of Japan and South Korea. Japanese black pines can reach the height of 40 m, but rarely achieves this size outside its natural range. Bark is grey on young trees and small branches, changing to black with age. Our specimen was planted in 1992 by A Ashendon and J Dowling



Latitude	-38.4014896
Longitude	146.0516586
Date planted	2004
Photo date	2024
Catalogue specimen no.	103.00

No 7. *Picea abies* - Norway Spruce is a species of spruce native to Northern, Central and Eastern Europe. The Latin specific epithet 'abies' means 'fir-like'. Norway spruce is a large, fast-growing evergreen coniferous tree growing 35–55 m tall and with a trunk diameter of 1 to 1.5 m.



Latitude	-38.4014138
Longitude	146.0516181
Date planted	1968
Photo date	2024
Catalogue specimen no.	139.00

No 8. *Sequoiadendron giganteum* - giant sequoia is the sole living species in the genus Sequoiadendron. It occurs naturally only in California. Giant sequoia grow to an average height of 50–85 m with trunk diameters ranging from 6–8 m. Record trees have been measured at 94.8 m tall. The crown is conic and monopodial when young, narrowed and somewhat rounded in age. Bark reddish brown, fibrous, ridged and furrowed. Branches generally horizontal to downward-sweeping with upturned ends.

After admiring the giant sequoia head a few metres due east. The next specimen is no nine, our coast redwood. Along with no three, our dawn redwood, Mossvale Park contains the only three species of coniferous trees known as redwoods still found in the world today. Fossil evidence suggests that redwoods descended from a group of conifers that thrived across Europe, Asia, and North America when dinosaurs roamed the Earth—in the Jurassic period more than 145 million years ago. As Earth’s climate gradually and generally became cooler and drier, redwoods became restricted to three distinct geographic regions and evolved into the three species we know today. Continue your walk by admiring conifers 10 to 17.





Latitude	-38.4014013
Longitude	146.0517521
Date planted	2013
Photo date	2024
Catalogue specimen no.	138.00

No 9. *Sequoia sempervirens* - coast redwood is the sole living species of the genus Sequoia. It is an evergreen tree living 1,200 –2,200 years or more. This species includes the tallest living trees. The coast redwood is known to have reached 115 m tall with a trunk diameter of 9 m. *Sequoia sempervirens* has a conical crown, with horizontal to slightly drooping branches. The bark can be very thick and quite soft and fibrous, and along with the wood has a bright red-brown colour when freshly exposed (hence the name redwood).



Latitude	-38.401314
Longitude	146.0515831
Date planted	2013
Photo date	2024
Catalogue specimen no.	140.00

No 10. *Sequoiadendron giganteum* 'Pendulum' - weeping giant sequoia. No two plants are alike, creating both delight and consternation. While a plant's central leader is quite dominant and strong, it tends to meander growing in all sorts of odd directions. Ours bothered quite a few people by growing sideways for several years. Branching is pendulous and foliage is grey-green in colour. After 10 years of growth, a mature specimen will measure 4 m tall with a spread that cannot be easily forecast. This cultivar originated as a seedling selected in 1863 at Lalande Nursery, Nantes France.



Latitude	-38.40129
Longitude	146.051832
Date planted	2021
Photo date	2024
Catalogue specimen no.	27.00

No 11. *Araucaria bidwillii* - bunya pine is a large evergreen coniferous tree. It is found naturally in south-east Queensland. It grows up to 50 m tall, the outline of the crown defined by dense tufts of branchlets and foliage at the branch ends. The bark is dark brown to black. Seed cones are produced between December and March about 17 months after pollination. The cones are 30 × 22 cm, weighing up to 10 kg. Don't stand under a bunya bearing ripe cones although ours will be safe for a good few years as it is still very young.



Latitude	-38.4013226
Longitude	146.051954
Date planted	2011
Photo date	2024
Catalogue specimen no.	105.00

No 12. *Pinus halepensis* - Aleppo or Lone Pine, is a pine native to the Mediterranean region. It is a small to medium-sized tree, the bark is thick and deeply fissured at the base of the trunk, and thin and flaky in the upper crown. The needles are very slender, 6–12 cm long, distinctly yellowish green, and produced in pairs. The cones ripening at about 2 years, the nuts are edible. The resin of the Aleppo pine is used to flavor the Greek wine retsina. The pine nuts are used in cooking, often desserts.



Latitude	-38.4014046
Longitude	146.0519159
Date planted	1968
Photo date	2024
Catalogue specimen no.	46.00

No 13. *Cedrus deodara* - Deodar cedar, native to the western Himalayas, is a large evergreen coniferous tree reaching 40–50 m with a trunk up to 3 m in diameter. It has drooping branchlets bearing green or greyish needle-like leaves, 2.5–5 cm long. The name 'Deodar' comes from the Sanskrit term devadāru, meaning 'wood of the gods'.



Latitude	-38.4014828
Longitude	146.0520189
Date planted	1988
Photo date	2024
Catalogue specimen no.	47.00

No 14. *Cedrus deodara* 'Aurea' - the golden Himalayan cedar is a large-growing tree with striking horizontal branches and nodding tips of soft golden foliage. Fresh spring growth is creamy yellow. Ours is a bit too shaded to be very golden, but look at the top for the best colour. Golden Himalayan cedar is a very old cultivar with 'Aurea' being Latin for 'gold or golden'.



Latitude	-38.4014159
Longitude	146.0520072
Date planted	2021
Photo date	2024
Catalogue specimen no.	46.01

No 15. is another *Cedrus deodara* - Deodar cedar or Himalayan cedar. This young tree was grown from seed collected in the Melbourne Botanic Garden.



Latitude	-38.4012911
Longitude	146.0526242
Date planted	2022
Photo date	2024
Catalogue specimen no.	112.01

No 16. *Afrocarpus falcata* - Yellow-wood is native to the montane forests of southern Africa. This tree is an evergreen conifer often growing up to about 45 meters tall, but known to reach 60 m. The trunk can be 2 to 3 m wide, and is gray-brown to reddish. It is smooth and ridged on young stems, but increasingly flaky on older trunks. The leaves are arranged in spirals on the branches. They are small and narrow, up to 4.5 cm long by about 6 mm wide. It is a dioecious species, with male and female structures on separate plants.



Latitude	-38.4016927
Longitude	146.0525499
Date planted	1890/1910
Photo date	2024
Catalogue specimen no.	28.00

No 17. *Araucaria heterophylla* - Norfolk Island Pine. This tree was planted in 1890/1910 and is an original Moss nursery planting. See the information for tree 2 for more about Norfolk Island pines.

Taking care walking down the steep slope to get to the 18th conifer on our trail. Half way down the bank between the Algerian oak and the Oriental plane tree is our mountain plum pine. Then proceed in a south westerly direction to the group of four taxodiums.





Latitude	-38.401708
Longitude	146.053026
Date planted	2021
Photo date	2024
Catalogue specimen no.	229.00

No 18. *Podocarpus lawrencei* - Errinundra plum-pine or mountain plum-pine, is native throughout the Australian high country, from southern Tasmania through to the New South Wales highlands. It grows on exposed sites to 1,800 m, often forming living carpets over rocks through wind pruning. Mountain plum-pine can live up to 600 years. The leaves are 1 cm long and 2–3 mm wide. It has small bright red berry-like cones. Whilst it is normally low growing, rarely reaching more than 1 m in the Australian Alps, on the Errinundra Plateau in eastern Victoria it reaches 15 m in height.



Latitude	-38.4021502
Longitude	146.052705
Date planted	No record
Photo date	2024
Catalogue specimen no.	88.00

No 19. *Taxodium mucronatum* - Montezuma bald cypress is native to Mexico and Guatemala. The Nahuatl (Aztec or Mexicano language) name for the tree, āhuēhuētl, means "upright drum in water" or "old man of the water." It is a large evergreen or semi-evergreen tree growing to 40 m tall and with a trunk of 1–3 m diameter. The leaves are spirally arranged but twisted at the base to lie in two horizontal ranks, 1–2 cm long and 1–2 mm wide. The cones are ovoid, 1.5–2.5 cm long and 1–2 cm wide. Trees from the Mexican highlands achieve a notable stoutness.



Latitude	-38.40227 -38.4022481 -38.4022722
Longitude	146.052951 146.0527578 146.0526657
Date planted	145.00 = 1984
Photo date	2024
Catalogue specimen no.	145.00 145.01 145.02

No 20,21 and 22. *Taxodium distichum* - bald cypress or swamp cypress, is a deciduous conifer. It is native to the southeastern United States. It grows to heights of 10–40 m and has a trunk diameter of 1-2 m. The main trunk is often surrounded by cypress 'knees' a type of pneumatophore. Although the area around our taxodiums floods regularly we have not noticed any knees. The bark is grayish brown to reddish brown, thin, and fibrous. The needle-like leaves are 1.3 to 1.9 cm long and in autumn, the leaves turn yellow or copper red.

Now walk east to the back of the sound shell. Between the National Trust London plane and the first of the tulip trees in the next conifer on the walk. Next, walk south west towards the main driveway (that leads to the car park and play ground etc). Between and Algerian oak and a pin oak you will find our oldest yellow-wood. To get to the next specimen, walk along the main driveway towards Mossvale Park Road. Just on the other side of the road and a little to the south of the 'no overtaking or passing sign' is the next conifer. To get to conifer no 26 walk along Mossvale Park Road (being aware of traffic) towards the Gould Shelter. At the end of a row of trees on your left, and just before the gate into the sound shell is the penultimate tree on our walk.





Latitude	-38.4021284
Longitude	146.0539601
Date moved	1987
Photo date	2024
Catalogue specimen no.	45.00

No 23. *Cedrus atlantica* 'Glauca' - blue atlas cedar is an evergreen conifer that can grow to 30–35 m tall. It is native to the Atlas mountains in northern Africa. The *Cedrus* genus was formerly considered to include four species, but it has been reduced to two, *C. deodara* of the Himalayas and *C. libani* (Cedar of Lebanon) of the Mediterranean. *C. atlantica* is now considered to be a subspecies of *C. libani* (i.e., *C. libani* ssp. *atlantica*) Our tree was moved from Mrs. Gina Roughead's garden and transplanted to the Park in 1987.



Latitude	-38.4024572
Longitude	146.0549469
Date planted	2004
Photo date	2024
Catalogue specimen no.	112.00

No 24. *Afrocarpus falcata* - Yellow-wood (syn. *Podocarpus falcatus*) is native to the montane forests of southern Africa. This tree is an evergreen conifer often growing up to about 45 meters tall, but known to reach 60 m. This is the second specimen of this species on our conifer walk and is the oldest and largest of the podocarps in the park, grown from plant stock from a Ballarat garden.



Latitude	-38.4022617
Longitude	146.055508
Date planted	2004
Photo date	2024
Catalogue specimen no.	111.00

No 25. *Podocarpus elatus* - Illawarra plum pine is endemic to eastern New South Wales and eastern Queensland. It is a medium to large evergreen tree growing to 30–36 m tall with a trunk up to 1.5 m diameter. The leaves are lanceolate, 5–15 cm long and 6–18 mm wide. The seed cones are dark blue-purple, berry-like, 2-2.5 cm diameter bearing a single seed 1 cm in diameter. The fleshy part of the seed cone is edible, used in condiments. The timber was prized for furniture, joinery, boat planking, lining and piles in salt water.



Latitude	-38.4018431
Longitude	146.0540503
Date planted	2003
Photo date	2024
Catalogue specimen no.	104.00

No 26. *Picea orientalis* 'Aurea'- Golden Oriental spruce or Caucasian spruce, is a variety of *Picea orientalis* which is native to the Caucasus and adjacent northeast Türkiye. *Picea orientalis* 'Aurea' is a moderately fast growing tree that creates an impressive spring show of yellow new growth that darkens to darker green over the course of the season. The plant will retain a hint of yellow in the foliage though out the year.

Our last specimen is an Australian native endemic to a very limited part of the Blue mountains. Can you guess what it is? It is one of the world's oldest and rarest trees. It was discovered just a few years ago by a bushwalker in a national park only 200km from Sydney, Australia's biggest city. This is our second attempt at growing one of these conifers. We think the first one got too wet one year. To get to the new specimen, walk north east across Mossvale Park Road and to the end of 'Goulds' Glade'.





Latitude	-38.401341
Longitude	146.05498
Date planted	unknown
Photo date	2024
Catalogue specimen no.	29.00

No 27. *Wollemia nobillis*, - Wollemi pine, is an evergreen tree reaching 25–40 m tall. The bark is very distinctive, dark brown, and knobbly. It is unusual in that nearly all the side branches do not have further branching. After a few years, each branch either terminates in a cone or ceases growth. After this, or when the cone becomes mature, the branch dies. New branches then arise from dormant buds on the main trunk. Rarely, a side branch will turn erect and develop into a secondary trunk, which then bears a new set of side branches. The leaves are flat linear, 3–8 cm long and 2–5 mm wide. They are arranged spirally on the shoot but twisted at the base to appear in two or four flattened ranks.

You have now reached the end of our conifer walk. We have one other conifer, a Queensland kauri, but it is on the other side of the river, and not in a public area. We occasionally lead walks into this area, so follow our Facebook page if you are interested. We will advertise any guided walk days on this page. Thanks for your interest and we hope you enjoyed your walk.



Three *Taxodium distichum* - bald cypress in autumn colour

Monthly Working Bee in the park



1st Thursday of the month @ 10.00am

email: mossvalepark@gmail.com for info



Contact the Friends of Mossvale Park

mossvalepark@gmail.com

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