



Tamar NRM

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# 'Naturally Yours'

## Sustainable August 2013

Thank you to the community members who were able to attend the events throughout August 2013.

*Tamar NRM has received many positive comments and we hope to see more community members at new events in 2014.*

Thank you to all our speakers. Without you the events would not have been as much fun and very empty without your expertise and passion.

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### Staff

**Craig Williams**  
Executive Officer

**Mike Poole**  
NRM Facilitator - Tamar  
(Monday & Tuesday)  
**Denis Giasli**  
(Wednesday, Thursday & Friday)

**Grant Scurr**  
Gambusia Project Officer

**Amanda Bruce**  
Office Manager  
Newsletter Editor

### Contact Us

Telephone 6323-3310  
Facsimile 6323-3385  
Website [www.tamarnrm.com.au](http://www.tamarnrm.com.au)  
Email [tamarnrm@launceston.tas.gov.au](mailto:tamarnrm@launceston.tas.gov.au)

*Following are a few stories (with photos) from some of our events.*



*"excellence in natural resource management"*

Tamar NRM is supported by

# grow it yourself

Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2013



Productivity and efficiency are the buzz words of the moment. We would all like to achieve more with less effort, so if we all take the advice of our “Grow it Yourself” speakers, we will all be more productive, more efficient and waste less time and effort with unsuccessful ventures.

Sandy Murray shocked us with the results of her research that shows that here in Tasmania, people on low incomes cannot afford to buy sufficient nutritious food. Starting with the low skill, low cost activity of growing greens then widening the range as skills and confidence grow, we could all benefit in more ways than better nutrition.

Tony Simmonds showed us the importance of correct pruning of fruit trees. Even old trees can be kept young and vigorous and growing and cropping with a little knowledge of the correct way to prune. He also showed us that thinning a heavy crop will give larger fruit and not stress the tree.

Deborah Collings showed us that it is not necessary to have a short glut of one variety of fruit. The cropping season can be greatly extended by grafting on different varieties, within the same type of tree. Her advice – “Try it, it’s fun”.

Jackie Lockhart told us of the health giving properties of many common culinary herbs. Because they are easy to grow we often give them too little attention. But there can be situations where too much can be harmful.

Sue Woinarski showed us that although tomatoes are not a low input crop, with the right knowledge and equipment you can have a supply of these luscious fruit, in different colours and flavours from January to July.

Nick Cummings was unable to give his presentation on feral veges, but Sue talked about her feral veges using Nick’s photographs. So called “forage gardening” is not for the tidy gardener, but for those who let plants go to seed and don’t mind 2m high parsnip and silver beet plants. The real joy is seeing all the little seedlings coming up. They grow far better than anything you carefully plant because they chose their time and place of growing.

Sharon Campbell-Zeni and Brigitte Watts told us about “Urban Farming” showing people who thought they were not gardeners that anyone can grow food, even in the smallest space or in any mixture of containers. Again, the personal benefits are far greater than simply improved nutrition.

From top: Tony Simmonds, Deborah Collings, Sue Woinarski and Denis Giasli - giving our group food for thought!

Sharon Campbell-Zeni and Brigitte Watts told us about "Urban Farming" showing people who thought they were not gardeners that anyone can grow food, even in the smallest space or in any mixture of containers. Again, the personal benefits are far greater than simply improved nutrition.

Bruce showed us how to grow a "lawn" that is green all year, needs no watering, no fertilizing and no mowing. He does this with two plants of the prostrate Grevillia "Gaudi Chaudi".

David Hamilton showed us how to grow, choose, cut, transport, dry, store and split firewood and the machinery he uses to minimise the physical effort to get the best quality firewood at the best price.

Jackie Lockhart showed us how using permaculture principals and careful consideration, the maximum results can be achieved with minimum effort, so older people can keep achieving.

Denis Giasli showed us how to dress a duck, how a knowledge of internal anatomy can avoid contamination from either end of the digestive tract.

If you didn't gain a whole raft of new skills from this day, all I can say is that you aren't trying.

Sue Woinarski



# Sustainable Housing

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> August 2013

My day started out in a panic with the first 15 minutes of my setup time spent in the rain trying to figure out how to unlock the gate (I was at the wrong one). It was a nice day for an indoor forum with torrential rain outside, to the point that it looked like the adjacent oval and car park were going to flood.

Sustainable Housing is all about using simple design principles and material selection to control and harness the outdoor climate, in turn make the living conditions of the indoor environment more comfortable and limit the need for heating and cooling in the home. Many of the strategies to do this add little or no cost to building or renovating - it is just about thinking smarter and making the right choices during the planning stage. Even where there is a cost these are normally paid back in reduced electricity and heating bills over the life of the building.

The event had an interesting mix of speakers from enthusiastic amateurs through to seasoned professionals; speaking on a range of topics including how to make an existing home as thermally efficient (and mould free) as possible, how to do a sustainable renovation, right through to designing and building a sustainable house from scratch.

One of my favourite things about being involved in Tamar NRM events is that we invite the community to participate not only as an audience but as presenters as well.

Tamar NRM is the only organisation I have been a part of that takes this approach. There is such a wealth of knowledge within our community and I love that Tamar NRM can provide a medium to share that information. I think that the information coming from the 'enthusiastic amateurs' was equally relevant and helpful to much of the audience as that coming from the professionals.

The event was well patronised with the majority of the audience being made up by the Sustainable Living regulars, however, I was very pleased to be approached by two different groups of people currently in the process of planning their own sustainable house.

On the following Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> August 2013 we had our **Saving Energy Tour** and somehow managed to get the same weather as the previous Sunday. Unfortunately this was not an indoor event.

The Saving Energy Tour was all about having a look at Solar Photovoltaic panels and Solar Hot water systems. We did a driving tour in convoy from Newstead to Glengarry with a stop at Legana in between. With much of the discussion on the day centred around initial outlay vs. payback time over the life of the equipment. We found out that Solar panel systems at a 1:1 feed in rate were paying themselves off in around five years.

Ironically, while we were all standing in the rain discussing this very issue, the Tasmanian State Government was making its own announcements about solar panels and feed in tariffs. Unfortunately if you've been considering whether or not to put in Solar panels, you have now missed the opportunity to sign up for a guaranteed 1:1 feed-in tariff rate until 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019. That offer has now closed.

With the privatisation of Aurora happening in a few months it's still not certain how much energy suppliers will be willing to pay for solar power feeding into the grid. That said though, if you need a new hot water system the cost benefit of solar hot water continues to be very inviting.

If you would like to discuss Sustainable Housing or Solar energy and water you are most welcome to give me a ring.

# Sustainable Living

Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> August 2013

Saving energy in the home is a pertinent question and topic of discussion for most residents in Tasmania given the rising power prices and the changes to the solar feed in tariff. This has been made all the more prominent with the battering the State took during July and August from a barrage of storms and prolonged cold temperatures.

Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> of August dawned a cold, rainy (in fact pouring most of the time) and windy day - a perfect day to talk about how you can save energy and be energy wise without making any drastic lifestyle changes and losing the comforts of your modern life.

The session started with two informative presentations (one by Sue Woinarski and one by Nick Cummings) on how easily small changes can reap quite substantial benefits to energy savings, particularly if you combine a number of changes and see their cumulative benefits. These two talks highlighted the benefits about being informed with your own energy consumption, through use of power meters to get an accurate picture of which appliances are guzzling energy (alarming many are using tremendous amounts on standby alone). Once you have this information it is quite simple to make some minor behaviour changes that will save significant dollars (quite simply not leaving appliances on standby and turning them off at the powerpoint when not in use). Added to this when you do have to make an appliance upgrade be mindful of power usage when you are making the purchase.

Launceston Alderman Ian Norton gave an enlightening presentation on how he has lived off grid for over 30 years with a well presented video that explained the details of their power system (solar - with battery power storage and a diesel generator for backup) and how it has evolved over the years - from the early days with no fridge (just a cupboard with bottles of frozen water and of course no ice cream) to today where their system allows running luxuries such as a flatscreen 3D television. The presentation was a fantastic look at how a home system can be maintained with changing technology, some of the solar panels were quite old but the system still allowed integration of many generations of solar technology.

Adrian Luke from Dynamic Maintenance Solutions was invited to provide some professional and expert information solar water heating and photovoltaic systems available to residents and businesses at the moment. The two presentations were unbiased, extremely informative and gave the audience much of the knowledge they would need to make a decision about the systems right for their circumstances. The presentation gave excellent information about what to look for in the quality of the systems available, how to apply them to your needs and how to maintain them at peak operating performance once they are installed.



Sue Woinarski (above) chatting about 'how do you use less energy' and (below) Adrian Luke informing our group about 'the why, how, what and what not of PV'



Following the lunch break the presentations centred on saving water, although water was in excess outside as the rain continued to bucket down! Sue Woinarski and Bruce Jackson gave presentations on two different grey water waste systems. The value of saving water cannot be overestimated and is maybe something we do not consider with enough conviction in Tasmania given the luxury of readily available fresh water in excess for much of the state, which we in turn tend to use and waste in excess.

Grey water use is one way to reduce water consumption (particularly on the garden) and if you are on tap water (rather than preying to the rain gods in the middle of summer) it will also reduce your water bill. It is important to remember that there are council guidelines for grey water storage and usage and it is best to contact your local council for the guidelines in your area.

Sue Woinarski also talked about composting toilets and how they help to reduce water usage. Contrary to what many people think composting toilets if operated properly do not produce a smell and the by products are readily usable in the garden. Again it is important to be aware that there are council guidelines for installing such systems and it is wise to check before you make installation plans.

The final session of the day looked at the waste produced in the everyday home - a topic which could be very dry and while informative...quite boring. However, Mary Gill and Regan East from the Northern Tasmanian Waste Management Group gave an engaging presentation and practical demonstration about the initiatives of the Northern Tasmanian Waste Management Group to try and reduce the levels amount of waste produced by residents and businesses. Regan East talked about some of these initiatives such as battery recycling and recycling the mercury from fluoro tubes, which are aimed at reducing long term contamination as part of broader waste strategies to reduce the levels of waste produced.

Mary Gill gave an engaging practical demonstration of what should and should not be in your recycle bin with the audience actually filling a bin with items that they expect would be recycled. On the whole people were on the right track which was encouraging; however, there were the stories of people through inattention or lack of care misusing the opportunity to recycle, mainly through filling the bins with inappropriate items (even soiled babies nappies). The Northern Tasmanian Waste Management Group do have people who will audit the contents of your bin (Mary came along as one of the representatives) so if you happen to see someone looking in your recycle bin go and have a chat, Mary will be able to tell you how well you are recycling. Otherwise you may find a sticker on your bin to let you know you have been audited, green is good while a red sticker means some items were not recyclable. Recycling is an important step in reducing waste and is an activity that should be taken seriously every time you place an item in your bin. Contamination reduces the effectiveness and increases the cost of the recycling process which is contrary to its objectives.

The day was highly informative and extremely interesting and I expect that all of those who attended would be seeing some very real benefit from what was learnt during the day.

**Craig Williams**



May Gill (left) showing our group "what should be in your recycle bin" and (above) our group members having a rummage about in the bin

# Permaculture Introductory Course

Tamar NRM's Sustainable Living Working Group's first "Introduction to Permaculture" course presented by Geomorphologist, botanist and Permaculture Design teacher Dr. Frances Mowling was something of an experiment, but the participants voted it a huge success and that it should be offered again to a wider audience. They felt they gained so much knowledge useful in their daily lives, and now look at their own properties with different understanding.

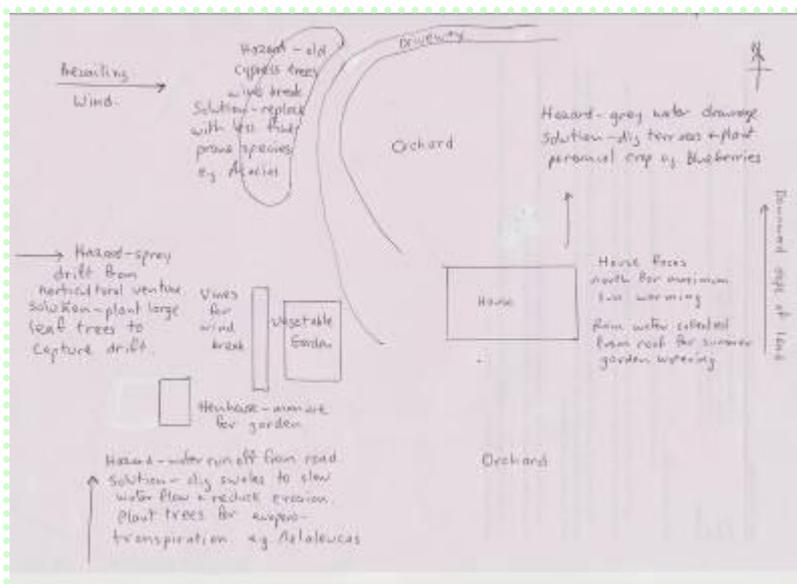
We are all conscious to some degree of the slope of our land, that the sunlight shines on different areas and from different directions at different times of year, that the winds are of different strengths and from different directions during different seasons and that not only is rainfall different at different times of year, but that water may flow onto our properties from neighbouring properties at some times of year. But have we thought to put all this information together?

Following our first 1½ hour theory session, and under Dr. Mowling's guidance we all prepared maps of our own properties. These varied in size from a large house block to a small farm. We started with a contour map then added transparent overlays. These included buildings and other utilities, fences, paths and driveways. Then we added seasonal wind roses, which showed wind direction and strength at particular times of year, noting the likely direction of fire threat. Then we added seasonal sunlight, with horizontal and vertical angles, noting seasonal shaded areas. We also looked at water, how it flowed onto and off the property, opportunities to harvest and store water and how to avoid undesirable on flows.

At the first four hour practical session we applied this theory to one of the participant's properties. This property receives storm water run-off from a major roadway, so we looked at plantings and small earthworks to disperse this water. We also looked at plantings to capture spray drift from a neighbouring horticultural operation, minimising the effects of landslip, capture of rainwater from the roof, use of grey water, provision and storage of fire fighting water, dealing with a fire hazard, plantings to maximise sunlight use, provide wind breaks and provide micro-climates and planting on a slope.

Following the second 1½ hour theory session there was a second 4 hour practical session on another participant's property. Again water was a major topic - harvesting from roofs, storage, using gravity rather than pumps to move water around, mulching to reduce evaporation and reduce run off, small earthworks below trees to hold water in the soil, development of extra water harvesting opportunities during times of low rainfall, use of grey water including avoiding undesirable chemicals, and how to calculate the volume of water harvestable from roofs and grey water production to ensure different types of plants could be provided with the amount of water they needed. We also considered house siting and design to maximise indoor comfort with minimal energy input.

This was meant to be the end of the course but participants managed to persuade Dr. Mowling to provide a third practical session at another participant's property. Again we looked at water - harvest, storage and use including grey water. One participant demonstrated a simple device involving water in a clear plastic tube to follow contour lines. We looked at weeds, determining the conditions that favour their growth and altering these conditions to discourage the weeds rather than repeat herbicide spraying. We also laid out a mandala for a herb garden.



All participants would have liked a practical session on their properties and couldn't help being a little envious of the three who had got in first. Dr. Mowling provided her expertise free for this first pilot course, but considering the amount of time spent in preparing the course notes provided before each theory session, the time spent preparing and presenting the theory sessions, the time and effort spent answering specific queries by email, all involved felt that it would not be unreasonable to charge a fee for future courses. A grant may cover this.

Sue Woinarski  
Chair, SLWG

# Tasmanian Landcare Funded Revegetation Project

**In April 2012** after gaining funds from the Tasmanian Landcare Fund, 1080 swamp paperbark trees were ordered from Habitat Plants. While these were growing, the other arrangements were made. Contractors were engaged to do some pre planting weed spraying at Tranquillity Gardens and to help out with the planting. The landowner at Tranquillity Gardens agreed to construct fencing for the planting to keep the dairy cattle out. Volunteers were given the times and dates we would be planting and some information about what we were trying to achieve. A corrective services crew was also organised to do pre planting brush cutting in the planting area at the wetlands.

In a nutshell, the project planted swamp paperbark along both sides of one narrow channel and on the northern edge of another that are currently infested by the invasive pest fish *Gambusia*. Over time this planting (of a listed poorly represented vegetation community) will create dense shade, eliminating the direct sunlight required by *Gambusia* for growth and reproduction. This will eradicate *Gambusia* from the sites, removing a significant threat to our native frogs and fish. This approach is an eradication option, rather than a control option. It won't require ongoing work or equipment and will restore the previous vegetation to the sites.

**In April 2013**, 1080 trees were planted, 400 at Tamar Island Wetlands and 680 at Tranquillity Gardens. After the brush cutting, eight volunteers helped out at Tamar Island, with laying out stakes, mats and guards for each plant, scraping away remnant vegetation, digging holes, planting, staking and guarding. Some of the planting at this site was into very swampy wet ground. But with their gumboots and waders on the volunteers were not discouraged. This planting will shade a 200 metre section of channel.

At Tranquillity Gardens, after the spray contractor had done his work, the story was repeated on a larger scale with 12 volunteers helping out including a CVA team. On the first day of planting the cattle were still in the paddock so we had them moved on by the landowner before we started planting. Then we realised one sneaky cow with a young calf had been hiding in the reeds. Once they were moved everything went smoothly.

The project was wrapped up in May when the landowner finished the fencing to exclude the stock. It was a great project. All the volunteers, contractors and staff enjoyed the work. Thanks again to all those volunteers who gave their time and thanks to the Tasmanian Landcare Fund for making the project possible.

**Grant Scurr**  
Gambusia Project Officer

Below - plants (and a volunteer) on the north side of a channel at the Tamar Island Wetlands and (right) Victory! volunteers celebrating the completion of planting at Tamar Island Wetlands



# carpooling

Tamar NRM and the Launceston City Council are examining the level of interest of regular commuters in to the Launceston CBD in a **carpooling** initiative.

The trial project is seeking to reduce the number of vehicles travelling into the Launceston CBD and to reduce the levels of greenhouse gas emissions attributed to vehicle transport in the Tamar Region.

The average Australian car travels around 15,000km per year emitting around 4 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> in to the atmosphere. Motor vehicles are significant contributors to levels of poor air quality including nitrogen oxide and hydrocarbon emissions. Approximately 8% of Australia's carbon dioxide emissions are from cars and light commercial vehicles. Carbon dioxide emissions are directly related to fuel use with every litre of petrol used producing 2.3kg of carbon dioxide emissions being released in to the atmosphere.

Carpooling is identified as one form of community led solution that will help to lower transport emissions in Tasmania. Vehicles driven at capacity (of vehicle occupancy) make each trip more fuel efficient per person and lower the share of individual pollution generated.

## How can you participate?

Tamar NRM and Launceston City Council want to trial a carpooling project to see if the initiative will work for regular commuters into Launceston.

**Project Trial: Carpooling in the Tamar Region  
Reduce Your Impact - "Take a Mate"**

## What we need?

- ✓ People to register *expressions of interest* in participating in a three month trial
- ✓ Regular travellers from Monday to Friday to the Launceston City area
- ✓ People who drive or those who do not drive but wish to be an active passenger or a combination of the two

## What you will get?

Participants will receive free parking at the Inveresk carpark (courtesy of Launceston City Council) each time they undertake a carpooling trip. This is a saving of \$30.00 in parking fees each month as well as potential savings for petrol and vehicle running costs.

You will also have access to the free Tiger Bus to bring you into the CBD!

## What are the benefits?

- ✓ More enjoyable and social commutes
- ✓ Meeting new people (or renewing old acquaintances)

**to register your interest, contact  
Tamar NRM on 6323-3310 or email:  
[tamarnrm@launceston.tas.gov.au](mailto:tamarnrm@launceston.tas.gov.au) by COB Friday 4<sup>th</sup> October**

# farewell...

Once upon a November 2006 I started at Tamar NRM as the Gambusia Project Manager. Many years and even more funding applications have passed since then, but now finally the Gambusia Project is coming to an end and I will be moving on.

I've really enjoyed the project working on all sorts of things ranging from Gambusia trap development to getting lots of volunteers involved, trapping and dip netting, revegetation of areas where shading can be used to exclude Gambusia, talking to schools and community groups.

I've really appreciated the input of the Tamar NRM staff and Management Committee, the input of the Gambusia Management Committee and especially the hard work of all the volunteers who have helped out over the years. Thank you all.

Wishing everyone all the best.

Grant Scurr

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# nearly farewell...

Ian Sauer, President of Tamar NRM for twelve years announced at the AGM this year his intention to stand down in December. A Special General Meeting is organised for Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December, 4.30pm - 7.00pm at the Tramsheds, Inveresk to outline the changes to the Constitution. At this meeting, Ian will officially tender his resignation.

With the Strategic Directions 2012-2016 document, the proposed changes to the governance structure, our dedicated Management Committee, the continued support from the three councils (Launceston City, West Tamar and George Town), our unfaltering staff and the collaborative contributions of the community Tamar NRM is in a position to continue to deliver durable results for the Tamar Region.

Ian believes the timing is right both from a personal viewpoint and for the organisation. He is ready to commence new challenges and Tamar NRM is also ready for the challenge of a new President.

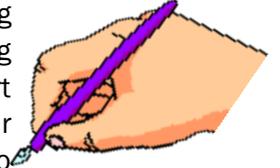
An advertisement will soon be placed in the local newspaper seeking applications for the position.

The Reference Group, Management Committee, staff and community would like to thank Ian for his unwavering dedication and very significant contribution to Tamar NRM and the region over the many years. We wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

Craig Williams

TAMAR NRM newsletters can be found on our website [www.tamarnrm.com.au](http://www.tamarnrm.com.au)

Would you like to contribute an article to our newsletters – we are always interested in receiving news of completed projects funded by Tamar NRM and how they are progressing and being maintained by the landholder or community group. If you have always wanted to write a short story, then grab pen and paper (or as we all now use a computer) and start writing about your project. Please email any article (preferably with an after photo but if you have a before photo of the site, this would be fabulous) to [amanda.bruce@launceston.tas.gov.au](mailto:amanda.bruce@launceston.tas.gov.au). It would be great to see how a project started and how it has developed over time.



Next 'Naturally Yours' edition due: November 2013

# ...snippets...

**Seawater** off Sydney's coastline is 30% more acidic than in pre-industrial times  
*SMH 080813*

**A Boeing spy drone** will be trialled by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority to spot illegal fishing

*Courier Mail 070813*

**Sharks** don't get tooth cavities because their teeth are naturally coated in fluoride

*The Innovation Catalyst 070813*

**A new study by the CSIRO** shows that the wind is now blowing away about 1.6 million tonnes of soil carbon from Australian soils every year - some ends up in the ocean and some lands as far away as New Zealand

*ABC North Coast 070813*

**Tasmania's Launceston**, on the Tamar River, has been suffering from poor water quality and excessive sedimentation in the Tamar estuary - a recent study suggests the problem could be eased by mimicking nature - environmental flows could be released from a hydroelectric dam to restore naturally cleansing wetlands and to help the tide flush away sediment

*The Conversation 080813*

**Researchers from Australia and New Zealand** have discovered a bacteria that could be used to create new bio-insecticides to protect crops – the bacteria which kills crop-eating insects creates a protein shell, described as a “protective canister”, around its toxins to protect itself

*The Conversation 050813*