



'Naturally Yours'

February 2011

President's Report



On behalf of the management committee, staff, and myself I hope you all had a great Christmas and a good start to 2011.

You may or may not know but Samantha Rayner has left Tamar NRM and the role of Executive officer to take a break and pursue new and different career options. Sam will be missed by Tamar NRM and the general Tamar community.

We have advertised the position and interviews will be held in coming weeks. Hopefully we can inform you through the eTamar when we appoint a new Executive Officer. With a bit of luck this will not take too long.

You may be thinking that not much happens in a time like this well I can assure you Tamar NRM is still functioning and as hectic as ever. Here are a few items of interest...projects being finalised and developed, our website being updated, review of the 2008-2013 Corporate Plan, field days, forums, planting days, community corporate governance training organised and the review of community plans.

The Management Committee would like to thank Amanda Bruce for working in the capacity of finalising current projects and keeping the office functioning, Mike Poole for continuing to liaise with community groups and Grant Scurr who has tirelessly kept the Gambusia from escaping the Tamar Island Wetlands Reserve as well as other significant places. I would also like to praise the ongoing support from our volunteers.

Many of you would have attended the signing and workshop in November 2010 where we declared the Tamar Valley to be a Serrated Tussock Weed Free Zone. The day was fantastic and went off without a hitch.

However, with all the awareness raising and publicity generated by the day a landowner found a patch of Serrated Tussock on his land along the East Tamar and reported his find. This led to the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment Weed Officer making sure it was Serrated Tussock. He put in an eradication plan using funding from NRM North. Tamar NRM with volunteers that same weekend; letter boxed all the residents in the vicinity, and checked all roadsides for more Serrated Tussock. Thankfully no more was found.

Like many other weeds, Serrated Tussock is a weed we do not want in the Tamar Region. If you see or think you have found a weed or would like more information on a particular weed, like a guest speaker to talk about weeds please contact the office. Keeping the weed invasion down is of paramount importance to all.

Before Christmas Tamar NRM hosted a Greenhouse Gas Forum in Launceston which was well attended. Participants will receive the results and actions from the forum. All outcomes will also be added on our website and we will let you know when via the eTamar. What I can tell you in advance is the most urgent issue identified by participants was the delivery of a nationally recognised and consistent on-farm greenhouse gas auditing tool with on-farm education and extension. Food for thought - we will keep you informed.

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CONTACT US

Telephone 6323-3310
 Facsimile 6323-3385
 Website www.tamar-nrm.org.au
 Email tamarnrm@launceston.tas.gov.au

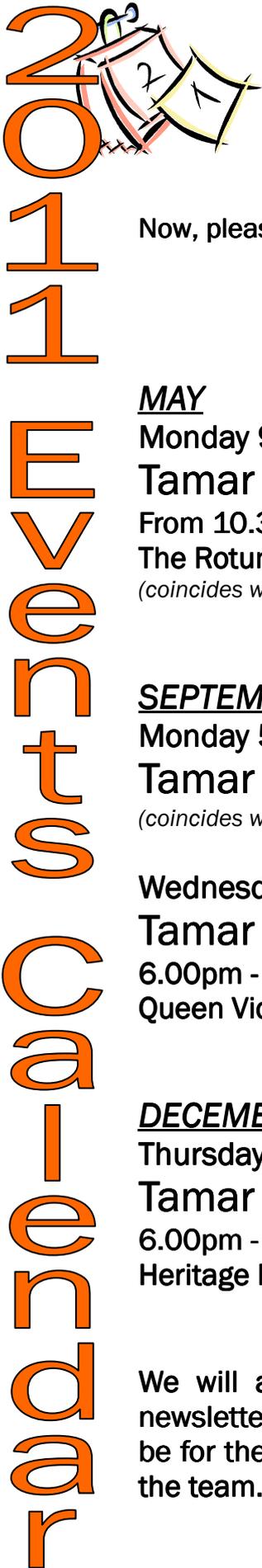
STAFF

Position Vacant
 Executive Officer

Mike Poole
 NRM Facilitator - Tamar

Grant Scurr
 Gambusia Project Manager

Amanda Bruce
 Administration Officer
 Newsletter Editor



Tamar NRM loves to see as many of the community at our events during the year...so to make it easier for your diaries and not to overbook, here are a few annual ones. The dates may change each year but the events stay the same.

Now, please open your diaries and add in the following....

Annuals

MAY

Monday 9th

Tamar NRM's Volunteer Recognition Event

From 10.30am

The Rotunda, City Park, Launceston

(coincides with National Volunteer Week - 9th to 15th: theme: 'Inspiring the Volunteer in You')

SEPTEMBER

Monday 5th to Saturday 11th

Tamar NRM's Boneseed Blitz (Calendar of Activities to be developed closer to the dates)

(coincides with Weedbuster Week - 5th to 11th)

Wednesday 14th

Tamar NRM's AGM & 'Tamar Talks'

6.00pm - 9.30pm

Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery, Inveresk

DECEMBER

Thursday 8th

Tamar NRM's Christmas Celebrations

6.00pm - 8.30pm

Heritage Forest, Invermay

We will also email an invitation by including it in one of the quarterly newsletters, e*Tamars* or just send out as a 'stand alone' flyer. The flyers will be for the above annual ones as well as other events yet to be thought of by the team.

More for your diaries...our 'One-Offs' developed from projects we are currently managing or have come up with a brilliant idea in the office. We would love to see you at one or more...

One-Offs

FEBRUARY

Friday 25th

~~Bush Foods Workshop~~

(with Kris Schaffer, Bushfoods Garden Design)

10.00am - 3.00pm

Punchbowl Reserve, Launceston

Monday 28th

~~Bush Foods Workshop~~

(with Kris Schaffer, Bushfoods Garden Design)

10.00am - 3.00pm

Tresca Community Centre, Exeter

MARCH

Tuesday 8th

Return to the River Workshop

Discussion on best practice willow removal & riparian restoration

10.00am - 3.00pm (lunch provided)

Baxter's Property, "Greenside", 181 Baxter's Road, Pipers River

APRIL

Friday 8th

Coastal Community Forum

Can we live, work and play in coastal areas?

10.00am - 2.30pm

Tamoshanter Golf Club, 19 Fairway Drive, Lulworth

MAY

Friday 13th

Perennial Pastures Trial Field Day

9.00am - 4.00pm

Visit of four properties - these will be noted on the invitation flyer

Saturday 14th

Feral Cat Management Project - Phase 2 - Community Information Session & Volunteer Training Workshop

10.00am - 3.00pm

Weymouth Hall, Weymouth



President's Report

In coming weeks the Australian Government's Caring for Our Country Business Plan will be released. If you or your group have project ideas and would like assistance with the applications or to develop your idea then that please contact the office. This year there will not be as much money as there has in previous years so the longer the lead in time to develop up project ideas the better. Don't leave it until two weeks before applications close. Now is the time to start.

Tamar NRM has organised a one day Introduction to Corporate Governance training day for community groups. These are fantastic courses and amongst other things clearly outline the roles, responsibilities and potential liabilities you or your organisation can face. There are **limited spaces** so first in best dressed for you or someone from your group. Please give Amanda B a ring in the office on 6323-3310.

During the next six months the Australian Government through a range of processes will be reviewing delivery arrangement for natural resource management funding and looking for ways to value-add the process we have now. If you or your group would like to see on-ground activities and community engagement enhanced please email your comments to tamarnrm@launceston.tas.gov.au and we will pass them onto the relevant authority. With Caring for Our Country coming to an end in 2013 now is the time for community organisations to have input into any changes, so please have your say.

Tamar NRM during the year has a number of field days and forums on different topics. Some of these activities are part of the projects we are currently managing and others are suggestions or requests from Landcare groups, community groups, schools or individuals. If we can help, please call the office.

All of our activities are advertised in many ways e.g. see Events Calendar in this newsletter. If you are interested in any of them, contact the office soon as places fill up quickly. Email the information or tell your friends about the invitations. We hope to see many new faces as well as familiar ones at our events.

On Saturday 29th and Sunday 30th January was Tamar NRM's annual Ragwort Raids funded by BHP Billiton TEMCO. We succeeded in removing over 1,100 km of roadside verge of Ragwort - a fantastic effort by the volunteer fire brigades, Landcare groups and volunteers. What is great to see, after many Raid years, is how small the amount of Ragwort is carted away compared to the first few years. The most noticeable thing is not many farms have Ragwort near the road - peer pressure is working!

One other fantastic milestone with this year's Ragwort Raids - it was our Co-ordinator, Jane Shapter's tenth year on the job. This is a magnificent effort by Jayne. Thank you to everyone involved - what an achievement.

My final note...with all this summer rain it is clear we are going to have a huge flush of weeds...now is the time to tackle them, when they are small.

I look forward to seeing many of you at Tamar NRM events and thank you for your ongoing input and support.

Ian Sauer



Jayne Shapter (centre above) with the many volunteers for the Ragwort Raids and at right, Jayne and Ian Sauer after being presented with her Certificate of Congratulations for ten years as Co-ordinator.

an international volunteer visits 'our world' to help

Imagine yourself being stuck in a swampland, pretty much exactly at the other side of the world from your home country. I experienced that while volunteering with Tamar NRM for a day in January 2011.

My name is Oliver Schwab. I am a Geoecology student at "Karlsruhe Institute of Technology", Germany. After doing an exchange semester in South Australia and travelling many places in Oceania, Tasmania was my last stay before heading back home to Germany. I got in contact with Tamar NRM in Launceston which co-ordinated a volunteering day for me, precisely in the Gambusia control program in the Tamar Island Wetland Area.

Joining Grant Scurr for one of his working days, we basically did two things, which were both putting out traps with lights to attract the introduced fish and hand netting some of the pest animals. In doing so, I understood that it is pretty much impossible to wipe out the adaptable unwanted species, but that it is indeed possible to keep the population low with some control measures, namely breaking their breeding cycle with co-ordinated netting and trapping.

Equipped with chest height waders we went out into the swamplands, bringing out a huge variety of different traps. I recognized especially the help of volunteers like Ron Briggs. The volunteers are very significant to this project as this type of complex environmental managing programs are very labour-intensive.

Heading back to town 'mud-makeuped' and tired after a day in the wetlands, I was very glad that Tamar NRM gave me the opportunity to be a small part of their important work. So, when being bored in the next school holidays or days off from work, why not spending some effort for our precious environment as a volunteer, for example with Tamar NRM?

Thanks Tamar NRM for that memorable day!

Oliver Schwab
January 2011



Oliver (Oli) Schwab (left) with Gambusia Project Manager, Grant Scurr (right) looking bright-eyed after a hard day removing Gambusia

Tamar NRM's Gambusia Project

Volunteers wanted for the Gambusia project to help with trapping and hand netting, native fish rescue, distribution survey - if interested, please contact the office on 6323-3310.

Caring for Our Country



Here ye...here ye...here ye....attention to all community groups

Caring for Our Country funding rounds will be announced soon so if you need any assistance to work on an application or further information is required, remember your friendly...slightly nuts...staff at Tamar NRM.

We will be happy to help you so contact the office on 6323-3310.

Farewell

The Management Committee would like to farewell Samantha Rayner from the position of Executive Officer of Tamar NRM. Samantha is taking a break and pursuing new career options. She will be missed by many in the Tamar Region community. Tamar NRM wishes her all the best for her future endeavours. Thank you to Samantha for her contribution from July 2009 until December 2010.

...wanted - how to make new friends & influence old ones...

Sustainable Living Working Group (SLWG)

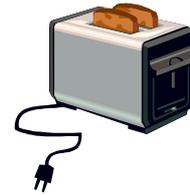
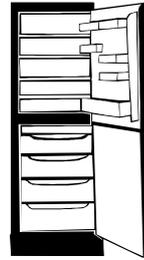
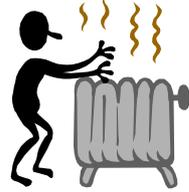
Have you ever wanted to change your environment....or show others how to change theirs?
Would you like to impact positively on your community?

Would you like to know how to save energy in the home and work environment?

Well, if so, then you have found the right working group to join. To find out more about the SLWG and when the next meeting is scheduled, please contact the office on 6323-3310 or email: amanda.bruce@launceston.tas.gov.au to add your name to the group.

We encourage all community members to become a part of the working group, maybe change our small world (it all helps!) and as always we would love to have your input.

Home Energy Audit



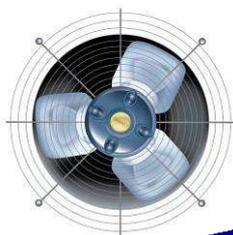
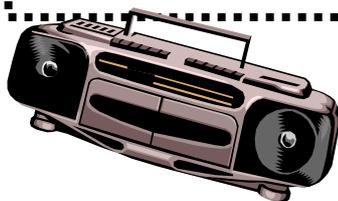
Can changing your power usage, change your life?

Tamar Natural Resource Management says, Yes...we can help. As power prices increase so does the pressure on households to economise. Tamar NRM has developed a project "Surge to Savings". This project will measure community support and action to reduce the use of residential power consumption.

Tamar NRM requests your last twelve months power bills and once our office has received them we will give you a 'Home Energy' booklet on how to reduce energy consumption. There are two booklets - one for homeowners and one for renters. An introductory letter explaining what we are trying to achieve will accompany the booklet. We will also request the energy bills for the twelve months during the project life and once ended will ask for an interview to determine how you used the advice in the booklet.

This project is an information gathering exercise and your details are kept strictly confidential. Throughout the project life, feel free to contact us and remove your name from the database - participation is voluntary.

If you would like more information about how you can help us and yourself at the same time, please contact the Tamar NRM office on 6323-3310.



A perfect storm is looming for some Australian businesses as once-loyal workers tire of pay freezes and scant appreciation for their loyalty during the Global Financial Crisis.

BRW

The Grey Nurse Shark, which is now one of the rarest sharks in the world, is also known as "the world's scariest harmless shark". It has never eaten a human but when the first baby sharks in each of its two wombs grow teeth, they eat all their brothers and sisters and so only two are born.

Underwater Sydney

In Australia irrigation water applied to cereal crops (other than rice) and pastures (for producing meat and wool) only generate 5% of economic value from 27% of the water while vegetables, fruits, nuts and dairy generate 68% of value from 31% of the water.

The Australian

...snippets...

your donation will make a difference

Tamar Region Natural Resource Fund

Would you like to make a positive contribution to the Tamar Valley's environment, perhaps you don't have the time to do on-ground works or attend meetings but are able to contribute to the Tamar Region Natural Resource Fund.

All donations to the Fund is tax deductible and are invested in practical on-ground actions which will deliver long term benefits to the environment and our community.

Your donation will make a difference.

If you would like to give a donation then contact the office on 6323-3310 or email: tamarnrm@launceston.tas.gov.au or call Ian Sauer, President - Management Committee on 6382-7179.

To support the Tamar Region Natural Resource Fund (TRNRF) with a donation, please fill out below:

Yes, I would like to support the TRNRF by making a tax deductible donation on a regular basis

\$100 \$50 \$25 Other amount \$ _____ (please specify)

How many times per year: _____ (please specify)

I would like to make a single tax deductible donation by cheque / money order (please circle one)

\$100 \$50 \$25 Other amount \$ _____ (please specify)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel: (W); _____ (H): _____

Mobile: _____

Email: _____

I would like to make a direct debit from my account tax deductible donation

\$100 \$50 \$25 Other amount \$ _____ (please specify)

Account Name: _____

Bank Name: _____

BSB: _____

Account No: _____

Please cut out this section and return to Tamar NRM, PO Box 396, Launceston TAS 7250 with your donation

Tamar NRM thanks you for the donation

drumMUSTER, ...what we are all about

One of the greatest problems facing users of crop production and animal health products is the issue of empty chemical containers.

drumMUSTER may just be the answer!

Developed with the environment in mind, the program organises and undertakes the collection and recycling of eligible, clean, non- returnable crop production and on-farm animal health chemical containers. Working hand-in-hand with local councils, dM organises collections all over Australia and since its inception in 1998 has recycled over 16 million containers!

With 30 collection sites available in Tasmania (and over 750 across Australia) it's becoming ever easier to become part of the single biggest environmental program jointly undertaken by farmers, end chemical users, local government and both the crop production and animal health industries.

drumMUSTER is funded by a levy on the purchase price of crop protection and animal health chemical products sold in eligible rigid plastic and steel containers over one kilogram or one litre in size.

Once the containers have been collected, they are recycled into re-usable products such as wheelie bins, road signs and outdoor furniture.

Want to know more?

Contact: Andrew Winkler

Mobile: 0405 633 410

Email: andrewdwinkler@gmail.com

or visit the website... www.drummuster.com.au or www.agsafe.com.au



Above - Good recycling (Example of well run dM compound (Scottsdale))



Right - Bad recycling - council using an old Sprayseed drum as a storage container

Why are some solar panels cheaper than others?

As you may have seen, there are literally hundreds of solar companies in Australia. Each has their own offer, and there is a huge gap between the cheapest and the most expensive.

Under the new Solar Credits Scheme, a 1.5kW system has been offered by some companies for as low as \$2,500 after rebates. That same 1.5kW system has also been advertised for \$10,000 after rebates.

The question is: How can one company offer 'the same thing' for a quarter of the price?

1. **Quality of solar panels**

As with any industry, there is a wide gap in the quality of solar panels. Some companies like BP Solar or Schott Solar have been around for a long time, and charge a premium price for an established brand. These companies have been around long enough to know that their panels will stand the test of time.

Unfortunately there are a lot of poor quality panels on the market, particularly in the last few years. They may have a warranty of 25 years on power output, but how do you find that company if your panel fails? And how do you trust a 25 year warranty from a 5 year old company?

2. **Quality of inverters**

This is possibly the biggest issue with cheap solar power systems. The inverter is the heart of the system, and is responsible for converting the solar electricity into household AC electricity. If you use a cheaper inverter, the efficiency is generally lower, therefore you receive less power from your system than you might expect. There are also a number of cheap inverters on the market without a proven track record, which comes back to the warranty issue again. Some of the better known brands of inverter are SMA (Sunny Boy), Xantrex, Aurora, Kaco and Latronics.

3. **Quality of workmanship - who is installing your system?**

Before the Government brought in the \$8,000 solar power rebate, there were a small number of companies installing solar power. These were almost entirely installed by a Clean Energy Council accredited installer, which is required in order to claim the rebate.

Unfortunately the rush in demand for solar power has seen the standards slip within the industry. There have been many stories of untrained installers completing the installation without the necessary training, and having an accredited installer merely sign the paperwork for the rebate. This has resulted in the system being installed on the incorrect roof orientation, installed in significantly shaded areas, and many other unsuitable jobs being carried out. Make sure your installer is Clean Energy Council accredited, because that means they have had the relevant training to complete your installation.

4. **Paying 100% deposit upfront**

This is a popular method which has recently become big business for some solar companies, but you should **NEVER** pay large amounts of money upfront before the work is carried out. Some customers have found that their system was not installed for nearly a year after they paid a deposit. Other customers have had their inverter installed on the wall within a few months, but had to wait nearly a year for their solar panels to be installed! Needless to say, when you pay large amounts of money upfront, you expose yourself to a great deal of risk. Make sure you thoroughly investigate the deal before you hand over your hard earned cash!

5. **Contracts and clauses**

There are so many things to look for it is hard to know where to begin. The most common clause in a solar power contract is the installation. The company that you purchase the system from is not always the same company that installs the system, and this provides a lot of headaches for you as the consumer. Some companies outsource the installation to a small electrical contractor (with or without the necessary training), and if your system is not installed properly, or there is any damage caused by the installers, the supplier of the system is not liable for any repairs. This means you could be chasing a small contractor that you have never dealt with, trying to get your system fixed up.

Why are some solar panels cheaper than others? ... cont'd

Another issue is the installation warranty. Sometimes the warranty is as little as **30 DAYS**, so you might not realise that you have a problem until after your warranty expires. As a comparison, other companies offer a five year workmanship warranty, and you should expect no less than that.

Finally, make sure there are no extra costs that you will be stung with on the day of installation, or after the system has been installed. Some companies offer to cover the rebate on your behalf, but if they have not received the money from the Government after a set amount of time, you are required to pay the full rebate amount to them retrospectively. There are myriad of other costs that customers have been charged on the day of installation so be sure to get something in writing so you will not have to pay any hidden costs.

6. What do you know about the company you are dealing with?

This is a critical issue, and one which is becoming more of an issue every day. As we saw with the insulation debacle, these rebates can cause a huge influx of 'fly by night' companies, who are in it to make a dollar quickly. A quick check of solar companies in Australia show that a lot of them were established in 2008 or 2009, to coincide with the popularity of the \$8,000 rebate.

This is to be expected, but be wary of companies that offer a 25 year warranty if they have only been in business a short time. This does not give you the peace of mind, as most of the components have been manufactured overseas. If your solar company closes the doors, you will have to contact the manufacturer (if you can locate them) to have your warranty work carried out.

Information from website: <http://www.envirogroup.com.au/content/solar-panels-get-what-you-pay>

Wayne Gorman

Tamar NRM Sustainable Living Working Group



...snippets...

Scientists have found a basis for why people feel so good being out in the natural environment has a link to inhaling *Mucobacterium vaccae* found in soil - it can also make us smarter and reduce depression and anxiety
Healthworks

Britain will introduce a "**happiness index**" to gauge its population's psychological and environmental wellbeing
SMH

Batteries: only 6% are recycled in Australia where we spend an average of \$50 per every man, woman and child on them each year
Planet Ark

Noise from shipping traffic, wind farms and oil exploration has been forcing whales near the UK to shout louder to make their mating calls heard
The Mercury

We went solar!

Many years ago when my wife Sylvia and I purchased our property, we were the only people living on Cherry Farm Road, Underwood. The cherry farm was occupied part of the year and there was no power running to any property at that time.

As protesters against the Franklin Dam, we had always maintained that we would not buy power from the then Hydro, believing that it would be hypocrisy to do so. The decision made all those years ago would direct us into the future as alternative power generators.

Our first dwelling was a log cabin built out of the forest and with mud and straw between the logs. Along with our two children Trish and Peter, we enjoyed an alternative lifestyle and powered our house by hooking it up to our car battery each night. The drive to the city where I worked would replenish the battery ready for the evening lighting and TV viewing.

We eventually purchased some batteries and built a small stone battery shed. We then bought a generator and battery charger and ran a cable to the cabin that was to be our power supply until we finally built a stone house on the top of our hill.

We had decided that we did not want conventional power and purchased a secondhand Lister 7.5 KVA generator and a secondhand solar panel. That was the foundation of our solar existence. Over the years we accumulated another five panels and some secondhand Telstra batteries that served us up until recently. The old Lister was a backup and was only used when necessary or when power demand exceeded the capacity of our small inverter.

In 2010 we decided that it was time to consider a major solar upgrade, and started by purchasing an 11 KVA Kubota generator. We worked out that with our existing setup we would only need to run it for an hour a day and it would cost us half what we would be paying for grid power.

I consulted experts in the field of home generation, one with experience in generators and one who excelled in solar generation. We worked out all the power requirements averaging each day's totals and found we could manage a 2000KW inverter requiring 12X120 watt solar panels and an 80 amp charger that would replenish the batteries whenever the solar panels were subject to cloud and low input.

As the system runs now we have a 12-volt battery bank and solar system with generator backup, all on the one line to the house. A relay system automatically puts the inverter on standby whenever the generator is started. The battery charger is on a separate circuit fitted to a relay that turns the charger on 30 seconds later so no spikes can affect it. The generator will then run another 30 seconds before taking over from the inverter, allowing the generator to stabilize so that no surges or spikes can effect solid-state appliances.

Both the generator and inverter have perfect sine waves. The whole investment cost around \$38,000.00. To have the power put on Aurora quoted me \$46,000.00. My justification for this stand-alone power supply was based on 34 years savings on power bills, and the privilege of being able to have a fridge with a freezer and enjoy ice cream at home for the first time in over 34 years. Although we got no government assistance, we do receive a subsidy on the purchase price of diesel.

Ian Norton
Sustainable Living Working Group Member



12X12 volt 120 watt Solar Panels (left)
and
Solar regulator & batteries (right)



have your edition of 'naturally yours' emailed

During 2005 & 2006 we asked our 'friends i.e. you, the community' to forego receiving our 'Naturally Yours' in paper form so Tamar NRM could showcase the fact we are trying to save a tree or two!

We had a wonderful response.

So here we are in 2011 and again we are asking anyone who currently receives the paper version to change and receive it electronically.

If you would like to do this, please contact me via amanda.bruce@launceston.tas.gov.au with your email address and I will add you to the other database.

I know some of you have admitted to me your need for the tactile feel of a newsletter when reading. I admit to it as well. I like to turn pages and hear the crinkly sound and of course can you sit cross legged (swami style) on the couch, coffee/tea/hot chocolate (I drink a lot) in hand with your computer (yes, I know you can if you have a laptop - let's not get nitpicky). I only have an office computer and it would break my legs so please work with my vision of computer 'sitting on the couch' mayhem!

Our database has the best people in Tassie on it, possibly even the world so how about it, would you be happier receiving the newsletter via your computer and not the post although the Postie might feel redundant!

Yes, you are still invited to the Christmas party if you would prefer the paper version so if you can, please think about it.

I look forward to hearing from you.

AB



want to track your elusive children...or

Ever wondered where the dog buried the bone!

Maybe you thought of tracking the strange animal howl you heard in the night - hoping it might be a Tasmanian Tiger!!

Well, you can keep an eye (albeit a mechanical one) on the interesting noises you hear and possibly find what native animals are roaming your garden.....

Tamar NRM has purchased an infra-red game monitoring camera (Moultrie I40). Individuals and community groups can hire it for five (5) days for a cost of \$20.00 (non refundable). Once you return the camera to the office we will download the photos, put onto a disc and post to you.

When you pick up the camera from Tamar NRM, we will give you a quick rundown on how it works but instructions are included in the camera box. I usually say....'if I can use it, anybody can!'

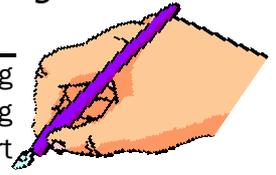
So email me to book the camera: amanda.bruce@launceston.tas.gov.au



Moultrie I40 infra-red game monitoring camera

TAMAR NRM newsletters can be found on our website www.tamar-nrm.org.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. It would be great to see how a project started and how it has developed over time.



Next 'Naturally Yours' edition due: May 2011

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Tasmania
Australia
7250