

TAMAR NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT



Tamar NRM

2015-2016 Annual Report

Supported by:



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1. About Tamar Natural Resource Management

Tamar Natural Resource Management (TAMAR NRM) believes in making a positive difference to the environment and community of the Tamar Region. We do this by delivering community-based activities and projects such as grassroots workshops and field days, focussing on sustainable agriculture, sustainable living and the natural environment.

Starting in 1998 and based in the Tamar region of northern Tasmania, our community encompasses a wide range of representatives both rural and urban, with varied backgrounds in Landcare, education, business, Local and State Government. We developed the Tamar Region Natural Resource Management Strategy in 1999 updating the document in 2001, 2007 and 2012. We are currently in the process of updating it again.

With the support and encouragement of Launceston City, West Tamar and George Town municipalities, we have played a significant role in promoting and managing a wide range of activities aimed at ensuring the Tamar Region is "an attractive and prosperous place to live and work based on a healthy environment".

Since 2000 we have successfully attracted almost \$6.5M of funding through a variety of projects partnering for some with community Landcare groups and organisations within the natural resource management sector.

Our focus areas are:

- Biodiversity;
- Weeds;
- Sustainable Agriculture;
- Sustainable Living; and
- Feral Cats.

Our niche in the natural resource management sector is:

- On-ground community activities/events;
- Community project management, monitoring and evaluation;
- Sharing community know-how for the benefit of all;
- Community education, awareness and training; and
- Making community connections.

2. Management Committee

Roger Tyshing, President



Roger started his own Tree Surgery business in the Dandenong Ranges in 1984 and in 1987 bought a 240 hectare beef and sheep farm at Liena, Tasmania. Having sold the property in 2000, he moved to Exeter then Launceston. He has worked in agricultural extension, agripolitics, training and workforce development. He is currently a Director of the Migrant Resource Centre and President of Landcare Tasmania.

Ian Dickenson, Vice-President (Retiring)



Ian has been a farmer and forester for 40 years and is on many boards including the Forest Industry Advisory Council and TFGA Environment Policy Councils. Ian was the 1997 winner of Tasmanian Primary Producer Landcare Award and received the Order of Australia medal in 1990 for services to agriculture and forestry. He was recently made a life member of the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association.

Anna Povey



Anna Povey runs Bush Matters - a consultancy in botany, zoology, nature education and native vegetation management. Anna has a broad environmental knowledge, and loves to share this with others. Nature education, bush management, ecology, revegetation, native plant identification and propagation are her specialties. Anna also established and ran Bushways Environmental Services Tasmania with Helen Morgan. Anna was the first Understorey Network Co-ordinator and has been a Bushcare Support Officer with Greening Australia and currently works as a Conservation Programs Officer with Tasmanian Land Conservancy.

Brian Baxter



Brian is a 4th generation farmer on "Greenside" at Pipers River with dry land cropping, beef, fat lambs, farm forestry and extensive Landcare projects. Brian has been involved with East Tamar Landcare since its inception in 1992, was awarded the George Town Australia Day Citizen of the year in 2008 for service to the community and Landcare. Brian won the Primary Producer Landcare Award at Tasmanian Landcare Association held in November 2009 at Swansea.

Greg Unwin



Greg is a forest ecologist and Senior Lecturer in the School of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Tasmania in Launceston. His teaching subjects include Agroforestry, Forest Ecosystems and Ecology and Management. Research interests centre on the dynamics of tropical and temperate forest ecosystems and the ecophysiological processes which sustain forest diversity and productivity.

James Ireland



James is a town planner at West Tamar Council. Since completing a Bachelor of Urban Planning and Development at the University of Melbourne he has worked in local government and private consultancy in Melbourne and London and now Tasmania. James moved to the West Tamar region aged six and, after 13 years away, returned in 2012. James has also been involved in the wine industry, still occasionally helping out at Delamere Vineyards in Pipers River and with the Harvest Market, helping his sister sell lilies there.

John Thorp



John is a trained agricultural scientist and extension officer having worked at all levels from the field to highest levels of government. He is a participant in community groups and volunteers his time to local causes. His business, John Thorp Australia, undertakes resource management and agricultural projects for government and private enterprise. He has fulfilled the role of National Weeds Management Facilitator and was Project Manager for the implementation of the National Weeds Strategy and Executive Officer to Australian Weeds Committee. John is currently the Chair of Tamar NRM's Weed Working Group.

Juanita Sands



Juanita is a Client Manager for Deloitte Private Pty Ltd. Juanita has been in accounting for over 15 years and has recently completed The Tax Institute's Graduate Diploma of Applied Tax Law. Juanita moved to Deloitte in January 2014 after spending 12 years at another local accounting firm. Her current role specialises in tax advice but she also covers a very broad and diverse range of areas:

- business advisory services – working with small to medium sized businesses;
- tax calculation provision and review of large corporate clients for our audit team, some of whom are listed; and
- Her speciality is in providing taxation advice for clients, regardless of their turnover. Her taxation advice ranges in all levels of taxation, with the goal of minimising risk and current tax expense while being business driven.

Justine Brooks-Bedelph



Justine is the Manager of Development Services for the George Town Council and has a Masters Degree in Environmental Planning. Justine feels privileged to have worked and lived in the Tamar Valley for almost 9 years, believing it is one of the most beautiful and environmentally diverse areas in Tasmania and is therefore committed to assisting with, where possible, sustainable land use management within the region.

Leanne Hurst



Leanne is the Director of Development Services for the City of Launceston, with responsibility for delivering Building, Planning and Environmental services, coordination of Community, Tourism and Events activity and for oversight of strategic Economic Development projects. With more than 18 years' experience in local government, predominately in the fields of community and development services, she believes passionately that the most powerful outcomes for communities originate from the ideas that come from the people who live there.

Retired

The Tamar NRM Management Committee would like to extend a huge thank you to Hugh McKenzie, Mary Mulvaney and Michael Purves who have been an important part of the Tamar NRM Management Committee but have decided to retire since the last AGM. Their support, ideas and knowledge have been invaluable to the direction of the organisation and we greatly appreciate the time they committed to the organisation.

Table 1: Attendance at meetings during 2015-2016

Management Committee Member	Possible Meetings	Meetings Attended
Roger Tyshing	7	7
Ian Dickenson	7	4
Anna Povey	7	6
Brian Baxter	7	6
Greg Unwin	7	2
Hugh McKenzie (retired January 2016)	2	0
James Ireland(commenced October 2015)	6	5
John Thorp	7	5
Juanita Sands(commenced May 2016)	3	3
Justine Brooks-Bedelph	7	5
Leanne Hurst	7	2
Mary Mulvaney (Retired July 2016)	5	2
Michael Purves (retired December 2015)	2	1

3. Our Staff

Gill Basnett, Program Co-ordinator



Gill started with Tamar NRM in August 2015, having just moved from Western Australia. She took the long route to Tasmania from Canberra, having worked in the environmental conservation sector in ACT, NSW, WA and SA for the past 15 years. Gill has a strong ecological background, particularly in wildlife assessment, fire ecology and biodiversity conservation on private property. She enjoys sharing my knowledge and passion for the environment with others.

Gill has a Bachelor of Science (Resource and Environmental Management) Degree, Master of Environmental Science and a Master of Environmental Science - Research. Her speciality is in fire ecology with a keen interest in wildlife, particularly birds. Her Master's thesis was "developing models to predict the impacts of fuel reduction burning on habitat complexity, ground-dwelling mammals and understorey birds". She has worked for a range of both government and non-government organisations including NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, NSW Rural Fire Service, Australian Wildlife Conservancy, WA Department of Parks and Wildlife, SA Department of Environment and Natural Resources and Millennium Kids.

The last time Gill was in Tasmania she was three. Needless to say she does not remember an awful lot. Gill was therefore excited to move back across the country to start a job with Tamar NRM. What she has noticed, and appreciated, the most is the welcome and help people have given in her role here. Although fresh eyes can be useful, having local information, background and networks is invaluable, so she would like to thank everyone for being so generous with their time and knowledge.

It has been an exciting 12 months getting to know the environment, meeting a lot of interesting people and diving into making things happen with Tamar NRM with a great colleague in Greg, supportive Management Committee and enthusiastic Reference Group and community.

Apart from meeting new people and seeing the amazing projects already being undertaken in the Tamar by different community groups and individuals, highlights of the year for Gill have been the Master TreeGrowers course and establishing a group of landholders interested in how they can grow trees on their properties in different ways for both production and environmental outcomes and being so successful with our grant applications. She is also excited to be getting back into some fire management and ecology work, funded from the Tasmanian Bushfire Mitigation Grants Program. Having secured over \$280,000 in extra funds, along with the generous support from our Councils, we will be able to run some really interesting programs over the next year.

Greg Lundstrom, Program Co-ordinator



After working in natural resource management for 20 years, Greg feels that filling the position of program coordinator with Tamar NRM has been a remarkably different experience, for all the right reasons.

Greg's background is in natural resources management and conservation. He has post graduate qualifications in those areas and more recently undertook study on climate change law and policy at the University of Tasmania in 2015. From 2012-2014, his project managed a climate change regional adaptation plan and multi-sector risk assessment for the River Murray's lower reaches and the troubled lower lakes.

Community engagement remains the key to on ground action and working for Tamar NRM, for Greg, provides the right conduit for that to happen. His time with Natural Resources S.A. Murray-Darling Basin saw him working in a variety of landscapes such as coastal, wetland, riverine, drylands and urban with farmers and groups such as Landcare, Coastcare and Waterwatch.

After moving to Tasmania in March 2015, Greg has now settled in Kings Meadows, and joined the Friends of Punchbowl Reserve group. He and his partner Chris have a keen interest in nature, sustainability and growing our own food.

He thoroughly enjoys the work at Tamar NRM and working with his colleague Gill has been a delight as their skills complement each other's to the benefit of projects and grant funding applications.

Thanks to the productive working environment provided by management, with Roger Tyshing at the helm, and the supporting technical people and community volunteers, Tamar NRM has been able to consolidate its role as a key enabler looking after the Tamar Valley. Having three Working Groups focused on important issues in the Tamar, with knowledgeable and dedicated Chair's and members, has made work in the fields of Weeds, Sustainable Living and issues in George Town coastal communities much easier to undertake as a new person to the area.

This year's highlights for Greg has been helping to shape the new projects and programs to fit the dynamics of the Tamar Valley. He looks forward to the roll out of projects such as the "Tamar Valley Rural Biodiversity and Landscape Learning Project" and the "Backyards to Broadacres Project" involving the local grass-roots community groups.

Anthony Gibbons, Work for the Dole Supervisor



Anthony Gibbons has lived in the Tamar region for much of his life and started in the role of the Tamar NRM Works Team Supervisor on the 1st August, 2016. The role is an eight month position running two Work for the Dole teams to undertake land management programs in the three council areas including Holwell Gorge and Council reserves. Anthony has worked in a similar role based at George Town, employed by Mersey Natural Resource Management Group Inc., working in various sites around Northern Tasmania, from Georgetown to Bridport, to Devonport, to Cressy and a week on Flinders Island. Anthony has also held a range of roles, many managerial, for various meat processing companies such as Lenah Game Meats, Sanikleen, Tasman Meat Pty Ltd, 2000-2001 T. & R. Meats and S.B.A. Foods Pty. Ltd and Rio-Tinto.

Anthony lives with his wife on a farm in the West Tamar producing Angus cattle and cross breed sheep. He is also keen on Australian Rules football having played over 350 senior games including 10 grand finals as well as coaching at two football clubs.

Debbie Tickner, Project Administration Assistant



Debbie Tickner has worked and lived in Launceston for most of her life and comes to Tamar NRM with over 20 years' experience in administration, safety, environmental management and licensing for the forest industry. Debbie started working in the forest industry for the Tasmanian Forest Industry Training Board as Database Administrator issuing forest operator licenses and ensuring that training had been completed for environmental care, safety and skills for tasks undertaken whether on a bush coupe or in a log yard or mill.

Working next with ForestWorks Ltd, Debbie oversaw the Forest Operator Licensing System (FOLS) and spent time conducting skills audits and managing the Forest Industry Assessor network, working on training and assessment projects. Debbie has helped improve safety in the forest industry and for many years has convened the Tasmanian Forest Industry Safety Standards Committee, reviewed the Forest Safety Code, Tasmania and been a member of the National Committee to review and rewrite a number of chainsaw manuals.

With her extensive administration and auditing skills, qualifications in administration, training and Work Health and Safety, Debbie says she aims to assist Gill and Greg to support the community in achieving greater outcomes for Tamar NRM.

Debbie Started with Tamar NRM on Tuesday 30th August 2016 and is currently working Tuesday and Wednesday each week. Her contacts are: 03 6323 3310 and debbie.tickner@launceston.tas.gov.au

4. Key Numbers

Table 2: Key numbers for Tamar NRM events and other works carried out in 2015-2016.

	Number	Participants	Engagement Hours	Amount Granted	No. Trees Planted
School Events	14	582	1724		790
Workshops	14	240	1348		
Information Events	16	247	717		
Volunteer Hours	33	562	2077		320
Education Events	1 Day Events	300	75		
Tamar Representation at other Events	27	76	100		
Public comments / Submissions	6	Natural Resource Management Review , Tasmania's draft climate change action plan and Act, Tasmanian Planning Scheme (Natural Assets Code) and Draft Cat Management Plan and Coastal Inundation Report.			
Radio Interviews	5				
Grants Applied For	21			\$282,175.30	
Total Events	105	2010	6041	\$282,175.30	1110

Table 3: Grants applied for by Tamar NRM in 2015-2016. (Rows highlighted in grey were not successful.)

Grant	Amount	Success	Comments
Master TreeGrowers	23000	23,000	
Tas Community Fund	7,650.00	4,403.30	Tools trailer
Green Army		0.00	Application with George Town Council
20 Million Trees	107,800.00	107,800.00	Rural and urban biodiversity tree planting
RACT	2,000.00	700.00	Ragwort Raid funding
Tas Fire Service	28,700.00	28,700.00	Fire, Biodiversity and Mitigation workshops and surveys
DSS Volunteer Grants	1,400.00	0.00	Ragwort Raid funding for volunteer's fuel
NLP Sustainable Ag	37,590.00	37,590.00	Backyards to Broadacres workshops
NLP Sustainable Ag	55,000.00	0.00	Master TreeGrower Peer Group Mentoring
NLP Sustainable Ag	33,000.00	0.00	Master TreeGrower Northeast
ANZ Staff Foundation	3,800.00	0.00	Wicking Veggie Beds (SLWG)
TEMCO	4,830.00	4,830.00	Tools for new trailer
NRM North Community Grants	3,660.00	3,660.00	Low Head Penguin Colony revegetation
WftD	59,696.00	59,696.00	Holwell Gorge, LCC reserves
NRM North/PFT Conference	5,000.00	5,000.00	PFT Conference Field Day
NRM North Community Grants	4,796.00	4,796.00	Gabi and Jo - Healthy Soils, Healthy Plants, Healthy People workshop
Tasmanian Community Fund	81,960.00	0.00	Millennium Kids Program
SUEZ Community Grant	8,700.00	0.00	Educational products
Green Army - Multi team		0.00	Two teams over one year
Community/Philanthropy Partnership Grant	4,960.00		Ribbon of Blue 25 year commemoration
RACT	2,000.00	2,000.00	Sponsorship for Ragwort Raid 2017
Total	\$475,542.00	\$282,175.30	

5. President's Report

It genuinely gives me great pleasure to deliver the 2015-16 Tamar NRM President's Report. In the past twelve months we have undertaken a great deal of positive change in the organisation, with more to come as we progress closer to moving to the Lamont Street premises.

In April 2015, we undertook a facilitated evaluation of our strategic directions. At that meeting we reviewed the TAMAR NRM Strategic Directions 2012 – 2016 document and agreed that about half the items listed as activities had been achieved, some were totally unachievable for an organisation such as TAMAR NRM and some were still to be achieved. Importantly we identified five themes we thought would be worthwhile focussing on. The five themes identified were:

- Biodiversity;
- Weeds;
- Feral Cats;
- Sustainable Living; and
- Sustainable Agriculture.

We also identified the need to address the management of our finances, not because we were in any sort of financial difficulty, in fact if you have a look at our audited financial reports we are in a very healthy financial situation. What we did recognise however, was the need to be independent of the City of Launceston (CoL) in the recording, management and reporting of our finances which they had very generously done as in-kind support to Tamar NRM for the past 16 years. In the proposal prepared in May 2015 for the CoL, with respect to our plans for Lamont Street, we outlined our plans to become totally independent of CoL's finance department including HR, over 2 years.

In the last presentation to the CoL Strategic Planning and Policy Committee in May 2016, we were able to announce that we had achieved everything we had set out to achieve with respect to managing our own finances and Human Resources over 2 years, in less than 12 months.

Not long after the Strategic Planning review meeting, Craig Williams, TAMAR NRM's Executive Officer, decided not to seek a renewal of his contract and, after some discussion, our Management Committee agreed that we would do away with the role of Executive Officer and instead create the position of Program Coordinator, which better reflected the role we required. In June 2016, a further opportunity to flatten TAMAR NRM operating structure was presented when the Administration Officer, Amanda Bruce, resigned. It was agreed that we would now employ two Program Coordinators. These positions were created with a new Position Description to better reflect what we wanted to achieve over the next few years and the skills that we required. So this was our agreed strategic change for the organisation with a bit of a subtext of wanting to "make things happen". Prior to that we'd had quite a disappointing year as far as external project funding goes, only getting two Green Army projects, which provided work teams to complete a couple of projects for City of Launceston and West Tamar Councils and a small amount of publicity for us.

In June 2015, the Management Committee formed a Selection Committee which developed the Position Description, advertised, interviewed and eventually selected Greg and Gill as our new Program Coordinators. Greg starting in late July and Gill in mid-August. I'm sure you will all have noticed the change in Tamar NRM over the last year.

Since we ran the Feral Cat forum at the very end of June 2015, Tamar NRM has taken on a leading role in the follow through, with the formation of the State-wide Community Cat Eradication Taskforce (SCCET) consisting of a number of community groups. SCCET made a combined submission to the State Government regarding the Draft Cat Management Plan as well as providing information and support to individuals and other groups who wished to make their own submission.

This new group is in addition to the three long running Tamar NRM Working Groups, Weeds, Sustainable Living and George Town Coastal, who have continued to plan and run events and provide invaluable information to Greg and Gill and other community members within the Tamar.

Additionally we ventured into new spaces partnering with the Australian Agroforestry Network to run a Master TreeGrowers Program during September and October last year which encouraged land managers to consider multiple options when planting and managing trees and shrubs on their land and which has initiated a number of subsequent activities.

In the past 12 months we have considerably improved the way we report to councils, so, in addition to yearly presentations, we provide them with activity reports on some of our activities which have a direct bearing on cost savings for them. We have improved our relationships with all three partner Councils as well as with other players in this space.

In the last financial year we applied for almost \$500,000 in grant funding. We were successful in obtaining around \$280,000 in community engagement projects such as the 20 Million Trees project, Master TreeGrowers program a Work for the Dole project and the Ragwort Raids. In addition we have been successful in obtaining funding grants for equipment from the Tasmanian Community Fund and Temco. We have almost completed the Sea Spurge spraying along the northern beaches.

Tamar NRM also operates the Christopher Strong Fellowship, underpinned by monies left over from a Biodiversity conference organised by Christopher Strong in conjunction with Tamar NRM about 9 years ago. During the 2015-16 year for the first time ever, we awarded two small fellowships to two university students. One to investigate coastal stability of the Weymouth area and the other assessed the vulnerability of salt marshes to impacts of sea level rise in the Tamar Estuary. Both projects were completed successfully and reported on the Tamar NRM's Management Committee. In April we awarded a third fellowship to private landowners at Lilydale to assess the benefits of silver tussock grass pastures to prevent founder in horses.

Over the last year we have revamped our newsletter to reflect our new team, re-invigorated and grown our reference group, gained credibility with our stakeholders, our peers and the community and re-established our position as a community leader. Greg and Gill have had a good opportunity now to see what works, what doesn't and what we can do differently, so over the next 12 months, expect to see some old favourite activities back, plenty continued and some new ideas to be trialled.

We haven't finished the changes, there's more to come, including the move to Lamont St, and I know I've been promising that for the last two years but it is happening!

I would like to thank the Management Committee members for their time, knowledge and input into meetings, projects, events and the organisation as a whole. Without their volunteered time, the organisation would not function as well, or cover as many areas, as it does without the varied knowledge of this group. I would also like to acknowledge Ian Sauer, Bruce Jackson and John Thorp, our Working Group Chairs, for their dedication to the groups and all the volunteer hours they have put in over the last year. A special mention also needs to be made to Jayne Shaper for all the effort she put into organising yet another successful Ragwort Raid, the 17th raid in a row run by Tamar NRM.

And, as I have been saying for the last two years and I'll say it again because it is exciting. WATCH THIS SPACE!

6. Program Coordinators' Report

The 2015-2016 financial year was one where a new staff structure was put in place, with the appointment of two Program Coordinators, aimed at improving the delivery of services and with no one person holding authority over the other. So the past year has been a steep and exciting journey of learning for us as well as the organisation. Coming from Western and South Australia has meant we have needed to learn fast. What is happening in the region? What has happened in the past, both with Tamar NRM and others? What groups, communities and individuals are active in this space? What can we do to help and how can we work together? How can we engage better with others? What plant is that? Where is {insert town/suburb/street}? And so much more! But, being new to the region has also given us the opportunity to see things with fresh eyes and bring in new ideas from the NRM and conservation disciplines we learnt on the mainland. This year has therefore been about learning from each other, networking, sharing and building, and it has been very rewarding.

The past year has been a time of renewal, the roll out of new projects such as the Tamar Valley Rural Biodiversity and Landscape Learning Project (20 Million Trees), Master TreeGrowers, Backyards to Broadacres and ongoing engagement with kids (see below for further details). We have had an amazing amount of success with grant funding too. To date, over \$280,000 will be brought into the region benefitting the rural and urban stakeholders we support and help us meet our strategic targets.

Over the last year we have endeavoured to get to know the elected members and staff of our three supporting councils, City of Launceston, West Tamar and George Town Councils. Meeting with our base funding councils, both formally and informally, helps us understand how we can support and partner on projects. We also provided presentations, newsletters and reports on a regular basis, and our workshops and “NRM Matters” hot desk are a vehicle for us to spread the word and receive community feedback. We have received a diverse range of enquiries that come to us front council staff. While the majority are natural resource, sustainability or conservation related, others are out of our scope and needed to be referred elsewhere. But this is also an important role that we play, connecting people to the right place for information.

You will find a selection of projects reported in this Annual Report and others in past newsletters. But beyond those mentioned, below is a few of the activities we have implemented over the last year:

- A new look to the “Naturally Yours” quarterly newsletter;
- Beginning to shape the schools/environmental education program;
- Two Day Productive Catchments Tour of Woody Yaloak and Otways Farm Forestry, Victoria;
- Submissions to various reviews including the State Cat Management Plan, NRM review, State Climate Change Action Plan and Act, Coastal Inundation Report and the Natural Assets Code in the Tasmanian Planning Scheme;

- Assisted Working Group Chairs to re-invigorate their membership and activities;
- Updated and approached new members for the Tamar NRM reference group and bringing them together on the 8th June;
- Established a new Facebook Page - www.facebook.com/TamarNRM15; and
- Regular meetings with NRM North to maximise NRM in the Tamar Valley and minimise duplication.

2016-2017 will be another busy year with a move to Lamont Street and all that means to the way we do business. Delivering on current projects and programs will be a priority, but we will be busy collating community, reference group and council comments as we shape the next Strategic Directions.

A big thank you to all of you whether Management Committee and Reference Group members, Working Groups, community groups or council and agency staff, for making us feel welcome and being so generous in sharing your time and knowledge with us and we look forward to continuing to work with you over the coming year.

Greg and Gill

7. Overview of Tamar NRM Projects

Tamar NRM has undertaken quite a few workshops and information events as well as project planning with Working Groups, community members and groups, councils and other partners over the last year. We have continued with long term community projects such as the Ragwort Raid and partnerships such as the NRM North and Tamar NRM Volunteer Celebration lunch. Affiliations with schools and community groups were renewed or extended with the exchange of ideas and collaboration on possible future projects. As stated above, this year was about rebuilding Tamar NRM, developing ideas and generating funding opportunities to run projects relevant to community members and groups in the Tamar.

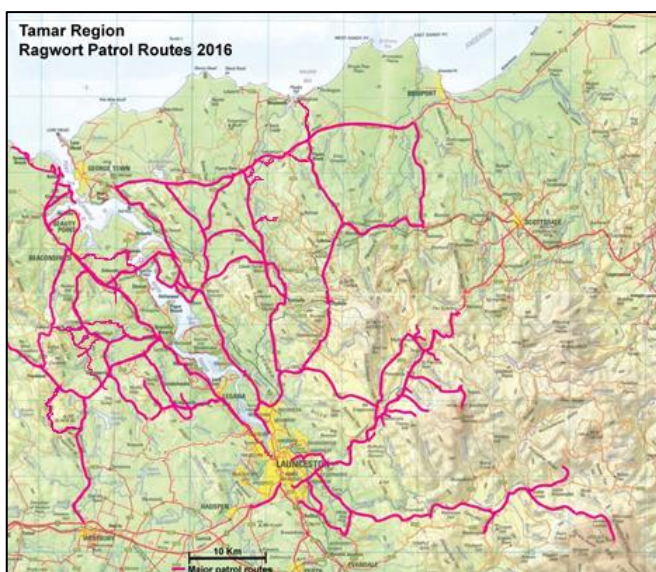
The following sections outline in more detail some of the projects that have been focused on over the last year, but some of the other events we undertook include:

- Fire Managing Fuels for Safer Communities Forum - raised public awareness of the importance of reducing bushfire fuel loads in Tasmania. Speakers at the forum discussed topics including the work of the Fuel Reduction Unit, how bushfire risk is assessed, how fuel reduction burns are undertaken and the place of fire in the Tasmanian ecology.
- Completion of the Green Army project, managed by City of Launceston, upgrading the path between Kings Bridge and Tail Race.
- Roadside Spray Forum - A partnership between NRM North and Tamar NRM to look at the issues around excessive use of herbicides and the impacts of increased roadside spraying and different management actions that can be undertaken to control weeds, protect road infrastructure, reduce risk but at the same time maintain biodiversity, reduce pollutant and silt runoff into streams and other environmental impacts.
- Low Head Working Bee - Participants helped Tamar NRM and NRM North to remove old tree guards, weed and clear a space for regenerating plants at the rehabilitation plots around the Low Head Penguin colony.
- Feral Cat Community Forum - Outline projects being undertaken in different areas and facilitate a community discussion about the issues and possible solutions to feral and stray cats.
- Bushfire Fuel Reduction Forum, Pipers River - Partnership between Tamar NRM, Landcare Tasmania and Tasmanian Fire Service to discuss new State and regional fire management planning processes, fire and biodiversity, landholder responsibility and community concerns regarding fire in the region.
- Besom Heath Workshop - Designed to increase our understanding of Besom Heath and how to control it as well as engage local landholders who have it on their properties. This has resulted in a new Landcare Group between the farmers involved.
- Developed and facilitate the field day for the National Landcare Network meeting held in Launceston - Tamar NRM organised a very successful field day to showcase some of the work being undertaken by groups and individuals in the region including West Tamar Landcare, George Town Coastal Management Group and the Baxter's at Pipers River.

7.1. Ragwort Raid

During January and February Tamar NRM conducted its yearly three Ragwort Raids, covering the three partner council areas. Funding over the 17 year project has been underwritten by the City of Launceston, West Tamar and George Town Councils, with specific funds provided this year by a \$700 grant from the Royal Automobile Club of Tasmania. As usual, Jayne Shapter smoothly coordinated the raids, working out where to send teams, booking halls, providing lunch and organising volunteers. Tamar NRM would like to thank her yet again for all her hard work. Fire and flood caused the Launceston Raid to be cancelled. Therefore, in order to maintain ongoing control of the weed within this municipality, volunteers conducted the Launceston "Raid" in their own time on different days.

Volunteers travel the vast majority of rural roads within the 3 municipalities (see map) at their own expense, pulling the plants before they seed, with all plant material collected and securely disposed of. These "Raids" (patrols) have been running for 17 years and over that time the weed prevalence has been greatly reduced, to the point where today, all material collected amounts to a small utility load for each of the 3 areas. The "Raids" suppressing this weed are responsible for preventing the wide scale invasion of all rural areas.



This year four hotspots were identified where the amount of ragwort exceeded the volunteers capacity to remove it. Consequently Land Management North was engaged to spray the infestations and remove any mature seed heads. More extensive infestations were observed on private land adjacent to the hotspots and steps are being taken to encourage land owners to control the weed.

There are a surprisingly large number of residents from our municipalities who clean roadside areas of Ragwort. These people have often started as "Ragwort Raid" participants. They have learnt the skills and then keep a roadside area clear on their own initiative, even when not involved in a "Raid". This work is a community partnership which builds capacity and awareness. It also builds community confidence that we can manage weeds, "something can be done!"

Table 4: Tamar NRM 2016 Ragwort Raid statistics.

Municipal Area	Number Volunteers	Labour Hrs Donated	Length of Roads Patrolled	Production Losses Prevented (\$ per year)
Georgetown	14	100	220 km	\$533,000
West Tamar	21	95	208 km	\$488,000
Launceston	7	110	189 km	\$1,001,900
Total	47	305	617 km	\$2,022,900

7.2. Master TreeGrower Course

Tamar NRM and Australian Agroforestry Network ran an 8 day workshop series in 2015 looking at the development of forestry and native vegetation management on farms, driven by aspirations and opportunities of farmers and underpinned by best available scientific, market and practical knowledge. It provided an opportunity to: learn forestry techniques and market opportunities; expand ideas of what uses there are for plants on farms, e.g. bush foods, specialty timbers and ecosystem services; network with other people from different backgrounds; and an interesting way forward for Tasmania where forestry and vegetation management can be a difficult topic to address. The course was run with support from an innovation grant from the Australian Government's Department of Agriculture. Participant feedback included:

- "A Master TreeGrower is not about knowing everything there is to know about tree planting, it is someone who is willing to explore better ways to grow trees and plants for whatever purpose they might have. A willingness to learn."
- "Inspired enthusiasm" - The course and discussions between participants validated and refined thoughts and ideas.
- "The middle ground. MTG has demonstrated that there is more "middle ground" than people thought. Great opportunities to explore this in Tasmania."
- "What is the value of trees to the individual?" Opens up new ideas by being in conversation with people from different viewpoints.
- "What do we have to do now, to get where we want to be in 100 or 200 years' time? Let's not look at what is now, or what was, but where we want to be."
- "Trees can be grown sustainably for production without dividing the community."
- "It provided a few months of good news stories about growing trees in Tasmania"

In July 2016, we ran an extremely informative study tour to Victoria visiting Woody Yaloak Catchment Group and Otways Agroforestry Network. The idea of the trip was to investigate different ways to work with groups, neighbours and on individual farms and provide practical examples of how trees can be grown for various outcomes.



7.3. Tamar Valley Rural Biodiversity and Landscape Learning Project

One of the first grants the Program Coordinators applied for was the Department of Environment's, 20 Million Trees Programme. Ours was the only project accepted in the Tamar region and we received \$107,800. The idea behind the project is to use the money to implement direct seeded biodiverse shelterbelts with interested landholders with them providing the fencing and to plant native seedlings in council reserves with the help of community groups, school kids, residents, Conservation Volunteers Australia and the Tamar Works Team. The first event for this project, how to collect and store native seeds, was facilitated Anna Povey. Participants felt they gained a lot of skills about finding, gathering and keeping seeds during this event, which was held on one of our participating landholder's properties at Mount Direction.

The project was launched on National School Tree Day, where 130 plants were planted by students from Youngtown and Launceston Steiner Primary Schools joined by parents, teachers, Bass MP's Sarah Courtney and Andrea Dawkins, Launceston Mayor Albert Van Zetton, West Tamar Mayor Christina Holmdahl, Tamar NRM and City of Launceston staff and volunteers. Lilydale Landcare and Conservation Volunteers Australia planted another 270 plants in Lilydale.

Don't worry if you missed out and want to be involved, we still have 27,600 to get in by July 2018! Please contact Gill or Greg for more details.



7.4. Backyards to Broadacres

Tamar NRM has initiated a new program designed to engage with a wide range of farm producers, focusing on innovating and forward looking solutions on the issues affecting agriculture in the Tamar Valley. Where possible information presented will be scalable from people's backyards to larger landholders. Tamar NRM has received \$37,590.00 through the latest round of the National Landcare Programme, Sustainable Agriculture Small Grants Round 2015-16. A series of 10 workshops are being designed with the support of a steering committee of 5 people representing landholders, TIA, NRM North and DPIWPE. These workshops will deliver best-practice and regionally relevant information and will be run in 2016-2017.

Possible workshop themes that participants would attend:

- Composting large and small
- Soil biology and health
- Soil and climate change
- Trees on farms
- Organic certification/accreditation
- Marketing in the Tamar Valley
- Productive farming coexisting with nature
- Animal Health
- Urban farming
- Property Drainage
- Biochar
- Pasture Management.

Two workshops were run in 2015/16. "Know Your Own Soils", run at Exeter in December, focused on soil characteristics and how to improve them for productive outcomes. The day was hands on and included soil testing and field sampling techniques. "Healthy Soils Healthy Plants Healthy People" was a collaboration between one of our Reference Group members, Gabi Solomon, who designed, organised and facilitated the event, Tamar NRM as sponsors and funding and assistance from NRM North. This introductory workshop combined art and science to look at what makes up soil, how it is used and its importance.



7.5. School Education Program

It is not all about being a big kid, although that is definitely one of the advantages for those involved in any of the Tamar NRM school education events. Over the last year we have been involved in the Department of Education's Kids for Kids day in November exploring the impact of feral cats on our wildlife and why different waterways have different water bugs; World Wetland Day at Tamar Wetlands; and The Big Day of Science at QVMAG, delving into our creative side by making our own bugs and talking about the health of wetland and water habitats.

Along with the bigger events, Tamar NRM's Program Coordinators have been invited by various schools to talk on topics such as: waste, macroinvertebrates, Tamar's geology, feral cats, habitat, seeds to trees and biodiversity. We have also coordinated a couple of tree planting events including our ongoing Schools Tree Day events on the 29th July 2015 with plants kindly donated by Habitat Plants (Sally and Herbert Staubmann, www.habitatplants.com.au).

- "We loved planting trees to make the environment better" Abi
- "We liked making the environment a better place for animals. We learnt that habitat trees are better for animals, and good for the environment" Griffin
- "I liked measuring the tree to see how big it was" Tibbs (This of course involved a bit of tree hugging.)
- "I liked measuring the tree, and planting trees" Edie



8. Working Groups

8.1. George Town Coastal Working Group

Chairperson – Ian Sauer

This last year can be characterised by forward planning and a continuation of on ground works, by members of the coastal community's.

We have had our meetings during the year, normally held at the Pipers Brook Fire Station, most of which, were used to plan or monitor projects the group had an investment in.

This last 12 months has been in partly devoted to reviewing and refining our strategic plan; I am pleased to report this was signed off by community members last week. You may ask why we need a strategic plan. A philosophy of the group has always been to be strategic, being guided by the George Town Coastal Management Plan, which was initially developed by the community in 2005 and has been regularly updated. The committee membership and partnerships are between the communities of Bellingham, Weymouth, Lulworth, Beechford, Bell Buoy Beach Low Head and Hillwood plus representatives from Tamar NRM, George Town Council and Parks and Wildlife. A big thank you, to all those who have been involved.

Over the last 12 months the George Town Coastal Management Committee (GTCMC) has also been involved with a number of on ground activities including organising a forum called 1) Understanding our Coastal Environment project, 2) looking at issues of climate change, 3) community mapping, 4) sea spurge, 5) feral cats, 6) boneseed, and a range of other issues that affect our coastal environs. This is a pretty impressive list!

As mentioned the project 'Understanding Coastal Environs Amidst Change to Generate Community Action', has a major focus on sea spurge looking at alternative control measures the community can undertake themselves. The project has been broken into 3 parts: firstly contractor sprayed during spring; secondly, areas have been set aside for alternative control techniques combined with photo monitoring points and lastly sea surge management plans have been developed for all the coastal community's from Greens Beach to Bellingham. A big thank you from all committee members, to TAMAR NRM for the management of this project and particularly to management committee member John Thorp who contributed a considerable amount of volunteer time.

Still on a coastal theme Dr Joanna Ellison from UTAS and her students have started a project monitoring the sand dunes at Weymouth, this has been a concern of the Weymouth residents, East Tamar Landcare, and the GTCMC members for some time. We now have a fixed points installed to monitor the movement of the dunes.

What is pleasing to me are the projects and activity's that are developed by the community through the GTCMC have practical application based on science and research, and activities are in the form of education and extension.

Unlike other funding body's or processes, it is the community who identify and take ownership and control of the activity's and works go on well after any funding period has ended.

All of this work is made possible because of Tamar NRM and its support in finding resources and funding to keep implementing our strategic plan, a big thank you to Tamar NRM. A big thank you also, to the George Town Council, and Parks and Wildlife, who are also integral to the whole process.

However the biggest thanks go to the GTCMG members and the general community, who tirelessly toil away at meetings and work on projects that deliver on-ground benefits that the whole community can enjoy, thank you.

The Next 12 months will have a strong component of reengaging with more community's and their members, as well as reviewing our strategic plan and work plan.

For those of you that live or recreate in coastal areas please feel free to join our group, where you can have a say, bring along your enthusiasm, expertise, and most importantly make a difference. Please contact Greg Lundstrom on 6323 3310.



IAN SAUER



8.2. Sustainable Living Working Group

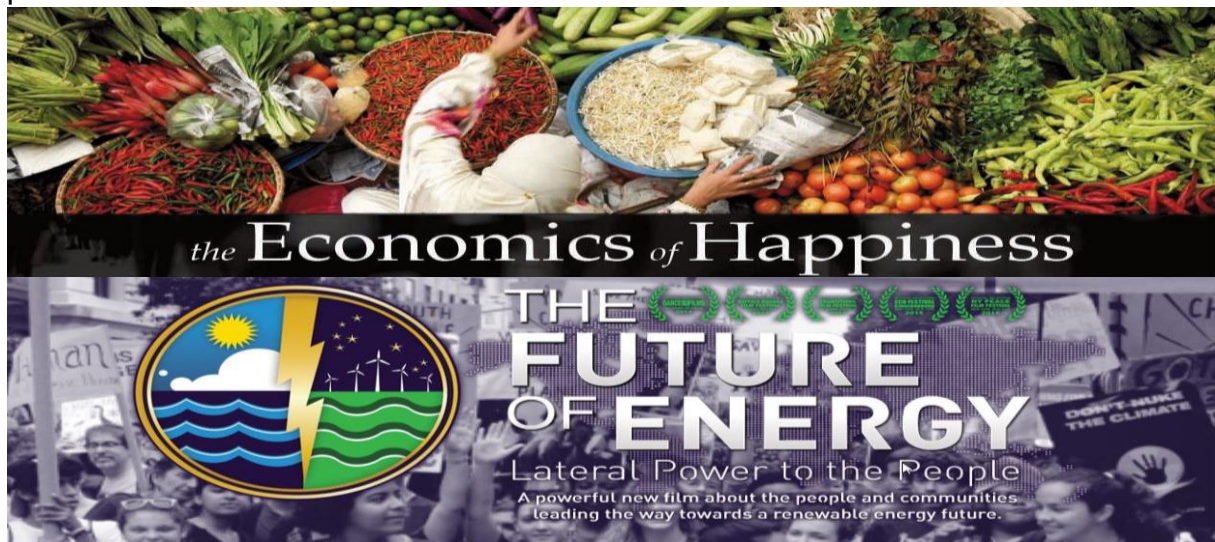
Chairperson - Bruce Jackson

The Sustainable Living Working Group (SLWG) is a sub-committee of the main Tamar NRM body, but focusses on giving you better access to information on ways to reduce our impacts through programs such as efficient energy use, reducing our carbon footprint and conserving resources. We try to work as much as we can with other groups with similar aims, and to run projects and activities that allow our members to improve their own knowledge and help extend information to as many residents of the Tamar valley as we can.

Since we were re-formed in June 2015 we have been increasing our membership, developing the groups ideas on different events we can hold as well as how to best facilitate changes towards a more sustainable lifestyle in the Tamar Valley. Over the past year we have:

- Run a number of film nights on topics such as food waste, energy use and production and whether increased consumerism really makes us happy;
- Held an information evening on heating your home efficiently and reducing energy bills by stopping drafts, solar passive design, isolating rooms and choosing the heating source right for your circumstances;
- Promoted ‘Vegesafe’ (heavy metal testing of vege garden soils);
- Invited Tamar Bicycle Users group to speak at a meeting;
- written to Councils asking for improved bicycle infrastructure;
- Supported the United Nations Regional Centre of Expertise in Education for Sustainable Development application (which was successful); and
- Made a submission on the Draft Climate Change Act Review.

This year is turning into an interesting one with planned programs such as a promoting low food mile eating and the wonderful produce available here within our own region through events such as a ‘Tamarvalleyvore’ Dinner. We are also looking at barriers to the uptake of residential solar systems, soil health in our gardens with particular focus on the potential for heavy metals, regular film nights, a Sustainability website hub, bike making and repair workshops and much more. If you would like to join our friendly group, or have some suggestions of what the group can focus on, please contact Gill Basnett on 6323 3310.



8.3. Weeds Working Group

Chairperson - John Thorp

The Weeds Working Group has coordinated another full year of community based and directed on-ground action against prominent problem weeds in the Tamar Region.

The ongoing Sea Spurge control program continued this year with community members, the George Town Council Coastal Management Group and a hired contractor controlling Sea Spurge from Greens Beach to Bellingham and down to Hillwood. The contractor will continue work throughout 2016 and into early 2017, avoiding sites likely to contain nesting Hooded Plovers and at high visitation times. Weed control follow up is being undertaken by community groups which have been equipped with signage, sprayer, herbicide and protective clothing. Approval has been obtained from Parks and Wildlife to undertake the work in this sensitive coastal ecosystem.

We continue to run our annual signature events, Boneseed Blitz in September and Ragwort Raid in January. This year's "Raid" covered 220 km or 440 km East Tamar roadsides; 208 km or 416 km West Tamar Roadsides; and 189 km or 378 km Launceston roadsides. Forty seven volunteers participated offering a total of 305 volunteer hours. We really appreciated the sponsorship provided by RACT for the raids and welcome their offer to sponsor the 2017 event. Thanks also to our local councils who have once again arranged for the disposal of the Ragwort. Volunteers attending the event included: East Tamar and West Tamar Landcare Groups, Tasmania Fire Service volunteers, community members, Councillors Tim Harris and Peter Kearney and Bass MP Sarah Courtney. The ongoing success of this activity lies with the tireless dedication and coordination by Jayne Shapter, who again took on the role to great effect.

As well as the raids and blitz, the weed focus this year has been on a number of agricultural and environmental weeds including Rice Grass (*Spartina anglica*), Paterson's Curse (*Echium plantagineum*), Spanish Heath (*Erica lucitanica*) and Besom Heath (*Erica scoparia*). Active on-ground control projects have been undertaken on three key weeds: Sea Spurge (*Euphorbia paralias*), Boneseed (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera*) and Ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*). A variety of other problem weeds such as mirror bush (Coprosma), cotoneaster, blackberries and gorse are targeted during control operations.

Project funding for weeds is difficult to obtain which, unfortunately, puts limits on what Tamar NRM is able to do. This highlights the importance of the individual weeding working bees run by Tamar NRM, Landcare, Progress Associations and Friends of groups. Quite a bit of community effort goes unnoticed, but contributes greatly to the war on weeds. Community efforts against these weeds are making significant inroads in reducing their areas of infestation.

Tamar NRM, working with Biosecurity Tasmania, jointly facilitated a Besom Heath Field Day and Workshop on the 24th June in the Bridgenorth area. Although Spanish

Heath and Besom Heath are from the same Genus and look very similar, control of the latter is proving to be much more difficult. The Besom Heath infestation is slowly but surely spreading from Bridgenorth into West Tamar Council. This emerging invasive woody weed threatens our agricultural lands and the natural environment.

A new tool in the weed treatment armoury is the Tamar NRM spray trailer. The trailer and other equipment are now available for hire, with a priority given to community groups. Proper training and induction procedures are in place to protect both the volunteers and the environment. We encourage community groups to avail themselves of the opportunity to hire the resource for a modest fee.

Community capacity building in herbicide use, and weed identification will be a focus over the rest of 2016. The opportunity of cross promoting weed treatment events with NRM North has commenced with the running of a roadside weed workshop at West Tamar Council. This approach benefits the community and both organisations by spreading the word further and minimising the use of valuable resources.

The Weeds Working Group is chaired by John Thorp and comprises: Tamar NRM; 3 Councils - Launceston City, George Town and West Tamar; Community and industry representatives; Tamar NRM; NRM North; DPIPWE; DIER (Dept. State Growth) and Parks and Wildlife. The group last met on 16th March to maximise the effectiveness of weed control programs. The group aims to coordinate the efforts of organisations and groups managing weed issues within the Tamar Region. As such, we are interested in furthering the conversation on areas of shared responsibility to maximise effort and minimise the use of resources for us all, with particular emphasis on cooperation across land tenures. The Weeds Working Group and Tamar NRM will continue to forge partnerships, seek support and source funding to support the community led action that will protect and enhance our environmental assets from invasive weed species.

