

Naturally Yours

The official newsletter of Tamar Natural Resource Management
December, 2016

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North Esk "Ribbon of Blue" River Trail 25th Anniversary

Ecology - Education- Exercise - Environment

Tamar NRM, NRM North and Riverside Lions Club partnered to stage a 25th anniversary commemoration of the Ribbon of Blue North Esk project.

The Ribbon of Blue project was highly successful and nationally recognised, both from an environmental perspective as well as a community one. It brought together a range of organisations, councils, agencies, businesses and the community to restore and rehabilitate an important stretch of the North Esk for environmental values as well as providing for recreational access to the community.

In the lead up to the commemorative event a Photographic Retrospective Touring Exhibition was held in the City of Launceston Foyer; QVMAG and Launceston Library (LINC).

The "Ribbon of Blue" River Trail celebration on the 10th December was held at the Hoblers Bridge riverbank with over 200 people enjoying the sunshine. The family activities included kids face painting, interpretive walks, reptile displays and treasure hunts. Riverside Lions club put on a sausage sizzle free for the community and helped out in many other ways over the course of the day.

A luncheon was also held for past corporate sponsors, service clubs, organisations, helpers and dignitaries at the Netball Centre. Mayor Albert Van Zetten unveiled new signage that will go on display at the Hoblers Bridge interpretive shelter. Speakers also included Tasmanian Landcare CEO Rod Knight, Roger Tyshing (Tamar NRM President), Rosanna Coombes (NRM North CEO) and Gus and Merv themselves.



Face Painting of native animals: Tassie Devil and Tassie Tigers.

Riverside Lions Club members demonstrates how to sizzle a sausage.



Cover Photo: Ribbon of Blue Founders, Gus Green and Merv Whybrow prepare to cut the 25th anniversary celebration cake.

Coordinator's Corner

The Refit that almost began

Most of our readers will know that Tamar NRM was negotiating to establish a lease over the former council Parks and Recreation building in Invermay. Early in November, we signed the lease coming to an arrangement that would be mutually beneficial to both council and ourselves. The initial five year term was developed to ensure that Tamar NRM had office and storage space, a reception area, and areas to sublet to likeminded community organisations. Most importantly, we intended to establish a community hub with an area for information brochures, resources, publicly available meeting rooms at affordable rates and an outdoor garden/workspace.

However, you may have heard that on the morning of 7th December, there was a fire at the property and the building was totally destroyed. While we are disappointed that we no longer have use of this space we feel confident that other opportunities will come our way.

We will be actively seeking new premises over the next few months, but until then we will continue our many community based programs from office space provided by City of Launceston at Remount Road. All contact details remain the same.

Wherever our new premises may be, it will be a new dynamic for Tamar NRM, and we will work to ensure that our linkage and partnerships with the three councils and the community are maintained.

May we wish you a safe and happy Christmas and new year.

Greg & Gill

North Esk "Ribbon of Blue" River Trail 25th Anniversary

How it all began

The 10th December 2016 marked 25 years of continual river restoration work along the North Esk River between Henry Street and Hoblers Bridge. This project began when, in early 1990, Launceston resident, Merv Whybrow, commented to his friend Gus Green on the appalling state of the North Esk River. As a direct result of this conversation, they decided something should be done to restore this urban waterway to its natural beauty and have it once again become a major recreation and environmental asset to the Launceston community.

The project started in a humble way with a few members of the Riverside and City of Launceston Lions Clubs. In May 1990, the North Esk Landcare Group Inc. was formed and committed itself to reclaiming the North Esk under the banner of "Ribbon of Blue" for the Decade of Landcare. Federal funding provided through the Department of Employment, Education and Training for the Jobskills Labour Market Program assisted the project immensely.

After only six months fish, birds and other animals were returning to the area. The project also helped 30 people who were unemployed gain new work skills.



Above: Early days, opening of the information display.
Below: What it looks like today.



"The 'Ribbon of Blue' proved to be the largest corporate and community urban Landcare project in Australia and after 25 years, remains a major recreation and environmental asset."



Lachlan from Reptile Rescue captures people's attention with his interesting display of snakes and lizards.

Organising Committee - Greg Lundstrom, Megan Dykman, Gus Green and Gill Basnett - with NRM North CEO Rosanna Coombes.

Over time an impressive list of corporate sponsors joined in and along with service clubs, the City of Launceston, NRM and Landcare, provided the backing needed to keep projects going. What started out as a ten year vision for the river has continued for two and a half decades. The "Ribbon of Blue" model set a precedent for other waterway projects in Launceston, Tasmania and interstate.



Ribbon of Blue - Inspiration on a national scale

by Greg Lundstrom

It's November 1993, and I'm meeting at "Signal Point", in Goolwa South Australia, with Frank Tuckwell, the director of the River Murray Interpretive Centre at the end of Australia's largest river system the Murray-Darling. We wanted to develop a community based group that could advocate for the river and highlight its importance to the lower reaches including the RAMSAR wetlands of the Lower Lakes and Coorong. But the catchment group, which became known as the Signal Point Riverine Environment Group and over time achieved great things, needed a model to follow. We wanted to include public education on water quality and quantity and riparian habitat and we wanted to be proactive with on-ground works.

"So what about the Waterwatch model" Frank said. **"That would cover off on the water quality aspects"**. There was a pause followed by **"and there is of course the Ribbon of Blue model, which is recognised as far away as Western Australia and worth considering"**.

That was the first I had heard of the Ribbon of Blue, and later learnt that it was a successful delivery model from the North Esk River system in Tasmania. We adopted aspects of the model to our local circumstance.

Through personal experience, I can say that the success of Ribbon of Blue North Esk River Restoration Project spread far and wide and was picked up nationally. That was 23 years ago and for me to now be involved in organising and celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Ribbon of Blue model is an unexpected privilege.



Early tree planting along the river.

So what will the North Esk look like in 25 years?

That will be up to you. It may deteriorate from the combined pressures of weed reinvasion, over extraction, sea level rise, increased river pollution and sedimentation. Gus and Merv showed that through "people power" this is not what it has to be!

It's your River, your Era, and your Vision that is needed now.

Lower your impact on the river by using less water; write to a politician; join a Catchment, Landcare, or Friends of group or contact Tamar NRM and tell us about your vision for the river.

Thanks to Sponsors and Supporters of the Ribbon of Blue 25th Anniversary



CPPW is supported through the Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership and managed by Philanthropy Australia in partnership with the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal.

Ribbon of Blue

Australian Forest Growers Conference



Anna Povey, "sustainability & environment" tour guide talks about the importance and value of native riparian habitat.

Tamar NRM's Link to Australian Forest Growers awardees

It was great to see Arthur Lyons and Greg Unwin on the podium at the AFG dinner receiving well-earned recognition. Both have been long standing advocates for forests in Tasmania for many years.

Congratulations to Arthur Lyons from Private Forests Tasmania for winning the AFG Founders Award and to Greg Unwin for winning the AFG President's Award.

Both these gentlemen have strong Tamar NRM affiliations, Arthur being a past management committee member and current technical reference group member and Greg a current management committee member and technical reference group member.



by Greg Lundstrom

Nearly 200 delegates from around Australia and New Zealand attended the Australian Forest Growers (AFG) Conference held in Launceston on the 23-26 October, 2016.

It was much more than just about private forestry, with an action packed agenda, balanced between 54 conference presenters, workshops and farm tours. As well, the nation's best farm foresters vied for title of the National Tree Farmer of the Year Award, and shared their stories at the conference dinner. This coveted award was won by Roger and Outhay Poltock, Wilmot, Tasmania.

Tamar NRM has an interest in demonstrating the role of trees on farms as a mix of income generating activities which build biodiversity. If done well, sustainable farming, Landcare and farm forestry can coexist and so it was no surprise that we were keen to be involved in organising a "sustainability and environment" tour jointly with NRM North.

AFG organisers are to be congratulated for including this topic and showcasing the

breadth of forestry topics relevant to delegates.

The tour travelled through West Tamar, Notley Hills, over the Batman Bridge, to Piper's River and home via Turner's Marsh.

During the bus tour there was time for delegates to talk one on one to Anna Povey (tour guide and presenter), Lawrence Archer (long time forester and representative from the organising committee), Michael Attard (estuary water quality/catchment management NRM North), Megan Dykman (NRM North) and Tamar NRM staff Greg Lundstrom and Gill Basnett.

A highlight was having the opportunity to see first-hand sustainably managed Tamar Valley properties, and discuss issues with landholders Brian Baxter, Gordon McCutcheon, Jayne Shapter and Paul Searle.

The day proved to be a great success with lots of positive comments coming from delegates.

Thanks go to NRM North for sponsoring this tour, AFG for its invaluable advice and support and landholders for giving up their time and showing us around.





AFG Sustainability and Environment Tour:

Gordon McCutcheon tells us about his native regeneration works in an area prone to slumping.

Michael Attard (NRM North) talks about the importance of good catchment management and some of the issues in the Tamar Estuary.

The importance of biosecurity.

Brian Baxter discusses his native windbreaks and the natural regeneration he has seen after removed stock from a patch of his bush.



Tamar NRM Annual General

by Debbie Tickner



Gill Basnett's Tamar Talks topic "The Fire that saved the Gouldian Finch"



Roger Tyshing and members at the AGM



Ideas from Tamar NRM Strategic Planning evening.

Tamar NRM's AGM was held at West Tamar Council meeting Hall on the 13th September 2016 with attendance of around 30 community members, Management Committee and staff.

Prior to the AGM a Special General Meeting was held to endorse changes to the Tamar NRM Constitution including changing the name of the organisation from Tamar Region Natural Resource Management Strategy Reference Group Inc. to Tamar NRM Inc.

Roger Tyshing, while presenting the presidents report, said that the directional change the organisation has taken over the past year has been all positive. "We now control our own finances and HR, and have two Program Coordinators who have instigated change. After consultation, we have identified five themes to focus on - Biodiversity, Weeds, Feral Cat, Sustainable Living and Sustainable Agriculture" Roger said.

Roger Tyshing mentioned many successful projects and thanked Gill and Greg, the Program Coordinators, for the new look "Naturally Yours" Newsletter and the dedication they have put into their work over the past year. He also thanked the Management Committee and Working Groups Chairs and a special mention of Jayne Shapter for organising the 17th Ragwort Raid. Debbie Tickner was introduced and welcomed as Tamar NRM's new project administration assistant.

Gill and Greg, the Program Coordinators, spoke about the success of the weed management programs, George Town Coastal and Sustainable Living Working Groups and current projects including Backyard to Broadacres, Master TreeGrowers and 20 Million Trees.

Roger Tyshing was unanimously re-elected as President. Anna Povey, Brian Baxter and Juanita Sands were endorsed for a further two year term on the Management Committee joining Leanne Hurst, Justine Brooks-Bedelph, James Ireland, Greg Unwin, Ian Dickenson and John Thorpe. Juanita Sands was appointed as Treasurer and Greg Lundstrom as Public Officer.

A light supper was provided giving the opportunity for members to network and relax before this year's **Tamar Talks**, where Gill Basnett gave a presentation titled "The Fire that Saved the Gouldian Finch" - managing fire in the Kimberly region of Western Australia. Greg Lundstrom's topic was on adaptation to climate change" - The S.A. Murray-Darling Basin experience in building resilience to the effects of drought at the end of Australia's largest river system.

Both presentations were well received as well as being very informative and entertaining.

Reports from the Tamar Region Councils



Electric Vehicle Charging Station for Exeter?

West Tamar Councillor Richard Ireland is advocating for an electric vehicle charging station in Exeter, the first in the north of the state. It will link with existing charging stations in the north west and south of the state to enable tourists to explore the state in an electric vehicle. More and more electric vehicles are to be seen on the streets of Melbourne, so the proposal will benefit tourism. But with an effective network in operation, there is a greater incentive for Tasmanians to drive an electric vehicle too.

Kerbside Green Waste Collection in 2017

The West Tamar Council plans to introduce kerbside green waste collection in 2017. A previous trial was well received by residents. Full implementation of the service has been waiting on a suitable composting facility being available for the collected green waste. One is in the process of being established in Launceston. On the completion of this facility, West Tamar will be in a position to utilise it and offer the service to its residents.

It is now possible to download the app 'Recycling Coach' from Council's website:

<http://www.wtc.tas.gov.au/Your-Council/Council-Services/Waste-Collection>. It provides useful information on recycling in the municipality.



Green waste kerbside collection bins to be rolled out in 2017

A voluntary kerbside food organics and garden (FOGO) collection will be introduced by the City of Launceston in 2017 after the proposal received overwhelming community support on the Council's online consultation platform, Your Voice Your Launceston, and the approval of Aldermen in 2016.

The City of Launceston aims to provide efficient, reliable and sustainable recycling and garbage services to meet the needs of the community. Household rubbish is collected weekly and recycling is collected fortnightly. Green waste bins will be collected fortnightly and the service will be rolled out according to demand.

Residents who would like to take part in the opt-in service will register their interest and pay a one-off registration fee.

Users of the service will receive a registration pack consisting of a kitchen caddy, a 240L wheelie bin, and information material.

The Council is currently finalising works on its new green waste facility at the Launceston Waste Transfer Station which will be the collection point for the green waste collected in the new kerbside bins.

For more information on how to register for this service and what you can and cannot put in the bins. (See page 16)



Devils are doing well

George Town actively promoted the release of 33 devils in August this year at Stony Head between Beechford and Lulworth.

There have been fewer deaths than from previous releases due to a range of new roadkill mitigation measures implemented by the Save the Tasmanian Devil Program. (See the full story on page 13)

George Town Coastal Community Action Plan

In 2005, George Town Council supported Tamar NRM and George Town Coastal Working Group to facilitate development of the first Coastal Community Management Plan in Tasmania. The associated action plan has been revised every few years, this time five major issues have been identified as common to Coastal Management Areas.

1. Coordination of Plan;
2. Green and general waste disposal
3. Fire management
4. Encroachment of private yards and
5. Control of feral animal populations.

The Action Plan is nearing completion due in large part to the \$2770 grant from the Council for capacity building events and printing of the summary document. The Environment Minister will launch the Plan in February 2017 after sign off by the key stakeholders. (See the full story on page 10)

Online Survey Prize Winner



Don Defenderfer, (pictured above with Gill Basnett) won "Whiskers" and a bag of Tamar NRM goodies. The purchase of Whiskers supports the 'Save the Tasmanian Devil Program Appeal'.

During October, Tamar NRM ran an online survey asking people to comment on the direction that they think Tamar NRM should be taking to gain the best outcomes for the Tamar region. We had 124 responses to the survey, tell us what is most important in making the Tamar Valley a more productive and sustainable place to live.

We offered a prize draw for 'Whiskers the Devil' to be randomly drawn at the end of the survey period.



Sustainable Agriculture Workshops in 2017

Funding through the National Landcare Programme – Sustainable Agriculture Small Grants Round 2015-16 will enable Tamar NRM to deliver the Backyards to Broadacres series of 10 workshops/field days looking at innovation and forward-looking solutions on the issues affecting agriculture in the Tamar Valley.

The workshops will show best-practice and provide regionally relevant information to as wide as possible range of producers in and around the Tamar Valley.

RM Consulting has been engaged to assist with the first three interlinked topics to be delivered in February-March 2017 at a number of farming enterprises of varying scales of operation.



Dr. Doris Blaesing from RM Consulting Group who has extensive knowledge of soils will be presenting at the workshops.

- Theme 1: Soil Biology and Health
- Theme 2: Pasture Management
- Theme 3: Animal Health/Livestock Production

Numbers will be limited and at no cost to attend except for lunch and incidentals.

REGISTER YOUR INTEREST NOW.
Greg Lundstrom - 0438 642 112.



This project is supported by funding from the Australian Government



Minister to Launch Coastal Action Plan



The Minister for Environment, Parks and Heritage, Hon. Matthew Groom, will be launching an updated George Town Coastal Community Action Plan on Thursday, 16th February 2017. The launch will start at 11.00am and include a BBQ lunch.

In 2005 the George Town Coastal Management Plan broke new ground when it was launched as the first truly community driven coastal management plan in Tasmania. The plan was developed in consultation with the major stakeholders including Parks and Wildlife Service, Tasmanian Fire Service, George Town Council and Tamar NRM. Since this time it has seen three reviews and importantly, community driven on-ground works implemented. The Sea Spurge, Blackberries, Boneseed and Rice Grass weed control programs are examples of ongoing projects that stem from the plan.

After considerable consultation and discussion the updated George Town Coastal Community Action Plan is completed. Tamar NRM has combined all feedback into one document, containing major stakeholder's agreed actions and coastal priorities drawn from workshops, regional plans and local strategies.

The current update of the action plan commenced in October 2015, driven by the George Town Coastal Management Group with support from Tamar NRM.



The action plan is an implementation schedule that takes into account concerns from the coastal communities of Low Head, Bell bouy Beach, Beechford, Lulworth / Tam O'Shanter, Weymouth, Bellingham and Hillwood.

George Town Coastal Community Management Group chairman Ian Sauer said *"For over a decade the implementation of coastal works is a demonstration of people power. It's always wise to stop periodically, take a breath and re prioritise what the community, council and agencies are doing. We now have a much more up-to-date action plan that will limit duplication of effort"*.

One of the tasks is to assist the community build their volunteer numbers and knowledge to undertake some of the works themselves. Tamar NRM will be running capacity building events in 2017 thanks to a \$2,770 contribution from the George Town Council. Part of the contribution will go to capacity building and part toward finalising the action plan.

In principle support has been received from all the main players, enabling sign off.



Fuel Reduction Unit

by David McIntee, Tasmanian Fire Service

The Fuel Reduction Unit (FRU) has been established within the Tasmania Fire Service (TFS) and coordinates the Fuel Reduction Program. The Fuel Reduction Program takes both a multi-tenure and multi-agency approach with the key partners in the program being the TFS, Parks and Wildlife Service and Forestry Tasmania. Local councils and private landowners are critical stakeholders in the implementation of the Program.

Fuel reduction burning is a recognised strategy for:

- reducing rate of spread and intensity of fires;
- minimising damage caused by fires;
- providing firefighters with safer opportunities to contain and extinguish bushfires;
- it is a cost effective mitigation activity; and
- it can reduce the fuel load and therefore the bushfire risk in large areas.

The Program also uses other methods to reduce fuel, where appropriate, including creation of fire breaks and other mechanical removal of vegetation. High risk locations are identified throughout the state by each of Tasmania's 10 Fire Management Area Committees, working under the State Fire Management Council. These risk assessments are made using a combination of local knowledge and computer modelling undertaken by the FRU.

Fuel reduction burns are currently being planned in the following areas within the Tamar region:

- Beaconsfield
- Bell Bay
- Boomer Hills
- Bridport
- Grindelwald
- Greens Beach
- Hillwood
- Lullworth
- Nunamara
- Tippogoree Hills
- Weymouth

These and a range of other burns are being planned to be conducted during spring and autumn seasons over the next two to three years.

For more information on the Fuel Reduction Program, including a map showing the location and current status of fuel reduction burns, visit the TFS website at www.fire.tas.gov.au

Bushfire Biodiversity and Mitigation Project

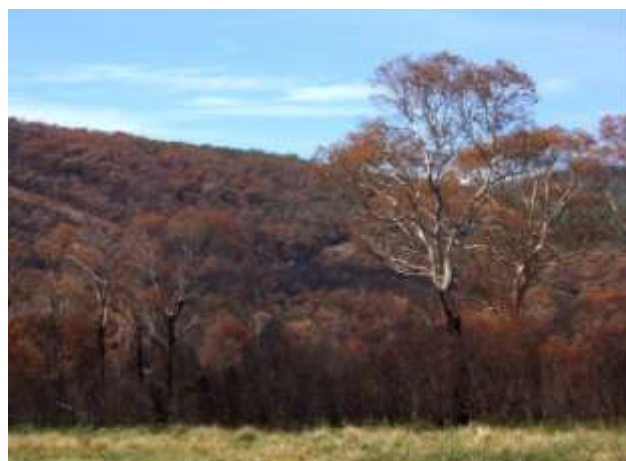
by Gill Basnett

Amazingly it is that time of year once more. The rain has stopped (almost) and the vegetation is drying out and unplanned bushfires are starting to become a reality again.

If you haven't already, now is the time to prepare a Bushfire Survival Plan. Are you going to leave early (the safest option) or are you planning on staying and defending your property. Have you prepared your house as best you can? Do you know what to take should you need to evacuate? What about your pets and livestock?

The Tasmanian Fire Service has many materials on their website to help with making a plan that suits your situation whether you live in an urban block, small holding or larger agricultural property. They even have a factsheet on fire resisting garden plants! Visit www.fire.tas.gov.au for more information.

Tamar NRM has received a grant from the Bushfire Mitigation Grant Program and is planning, in partnership with TFS, Parks and Wildlife Service as well as City of Launceston, West Tamar and George Town Councils, to facilitate 6 community focused bushfire mitigation and biodiversity workshops and run 3 citizen science biodiversity survey series before and after burns over the next 12 months.



Last year's fire near George Town.

Tamar NRM's Works Teams



Tamar Works Team helping out at a community tree planting day at Low Head.

A second works team commenced at the end of August with a goal of preserving conservation values of Holwell Gorge and along the Tamar estuary and carrying out coastal maintenance work. Tamar NRM is hosting the team of up to nine Work for the Dole participants, who will be working in the West Tamar and George Town Council areas until April next year. Project partners include the two councils, parks and wildlife and community groups.

This project has a special focus on sites with high conservation values by undertaking works that fits the larger overall plan for preserving biodiversity.

This crew joins our first Tamar Works Team who started in July 2016 and who have been working hard in reserves throughout the City of Launceston.

Activities include weed eradication of boneseed, ragwort, blackberry, track building and rejuvenation, gravelling paths, rubbish removal, pruning, tree planting, tool maintenance and cleaning tasks.

Weeds are an ongoing concern and a major effort is planned around "target weeds". Where early detection of new infestations occurs, then eradication is possible.

Tamar NRM gets its first Tools donation

After a call in a previous edition of Naturally Yours for donations of tools, Tamar NRM has received its very first donation. Amazingly they've come all the way from Hobart!

Marcus Badcock and Kate Domeney have recently downsized and no longer required a range of tools in their garden shed. Instead of taking them to the Hobart tip shop, a sharp-eyed helper suggested they be donated to an independent NRM group and what immediately came to mind, of course, was Tamar NRM.

Some of the tools will be put to immediate use by our Work for the Dole mobile crew and others will be invaluable when we move to new premises for undertaking small maintenance tasks and improvement works.

So, thank you Marcus and Kate for your generous donation, we are indeed very grateful.



Donation of Office Furniture, Pots and other things

Just over a year ago, Private Forests Tasmania had a big spring clean of their storage shed and offered Tamar NRM a large range of useful items including office furniture, pots of different sizes, a small fridge, display boards and lots of other bits and pieces. It was remiss of us not to mention the donation at the time. Most of this gear will be put to good use when we have a place to call home, so thank you, PFT and thank you Nat Tyshing-Baker for helping to load it onto a truck and unloading it at the other end.

Biodiversity Page

Lush spring and broad diet keeps release devils thriving at Stony Head

by Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment

The Tasmanian Devils released into the wild in spring are faring well, have put on weight and appear to be loving life in and around the coastal military reserve at Stony Head in the state's north. Three months of monitoring post-release has found that the devils appear healthy and many are starting to stabilise in their weight after initially putting on a few kilos.

Save the Tasmanian Devil Program manager David Pemberton said the devils are eating a variety of food, dead or alive, and have a broad niche to choose from.

"They do not have much competition in this area, with the exception of the larger birds of prey, so they have had the choice of plenty of food and that's been reflected in the monitoring results which show they are putting on weight," David explains. "We know that the devil is a scavenger and they feed on whatever is available. They have really powerful jaws and teeth and this allows them to crunch bones and consume fur and feathers. As a result, their diet is quite varied - they eat wallabies and possums, along with birds, reptiles, amphibians and insects."

David and two other members of the Program, Phil Wise and Sam Fox, recently co-authored a paper looking at the diet of the Tasmanian Devil. You can find more information about that research at <http://www.publish.csiro.au/WR/pdf/WR15221>.

The monitoring at Stony Head has shown that while most of the translocated devils are active around the release sites, tracking from GPS-linked satellite collars worn by many of the devils shows that the animals are also using the area outside of Stony Head for up to 20km from the release area.

There have been seven deaths from roadkill at Stony Head, with five occurring soon after the release in late August. This number is much lower than the roadkill deaths reported after previous Wild Devil Recovery releases at Narawntapu National Park and on the Forestier Peninsula due to a range of roadkill mitigation measures implemented by the Save the Tasmanian Devil Program for this release.



"As a result, we are constantly adapting and learning from each Wild Devil Recovery release to alleviate the roadkill toll," David says.

"Each translocation provides us with a window of insight into the behaviour of devils and this release has been enhanced by the use of the GPS collars, allowing us to keep a track of where, when and how the devils travel. This has been a very concentrated period of monitoring, with trapping teams rotated in and out of the site on a weekly basis. Our staff have all worked really hard and their enthusiasm has not waned."

Don't forget you can also follow the Program's progress on the STDP Facebook site: <https://www.facebook.com/SavetheTasmanianDevilProgram/>



Biodiversity Page - Foxes by Gill Basnett



European Fox taken in the Blue Mountains, NSW © Gill Basnett.

Foxes in Tasmania have proven to be a contentious issue. Setting aside the debate on whether some of the evidence of foxes has been faked, there seems to be enough credible sightings and evidence to suggest that foxes have come to Tasmania. Should they be allowed to establish, foxes would have a devastating impact on biodiversity, agricultural productivity and domestic animals.

Tasmania is a haven for many species (some of which are now extinct on the mainland) due to the lack of foxes. Cats have made significant inroads to populations of many of Tasmania's native animals, but the absence of foxes has, in many cases, allowed our wildlife to hang on.

As far as introduced pests are concerned, foxes are nationally recognised as having the greatest impact on native wildlife and if allowed to establish in Tasmania the consequences would be catastrophic.

"Of the 77 native vertebrate species estimated at risk from fox impact, 34 species have locally restricted ranges, 16 are suspected to be already declining in distribution and 12 species are threatened according to Commonwealth or State

legislation. This list does not include invertebrate species, many of which would also be at risk of fox predation." DPIPWE 2014.

Foxes are estimated to kill between 5% and 30% of lambs Australia-wide. Foxes can also attack younger sheep and goats, and sometimes calves. They also have a liking for fruit, chickens and other poultry.

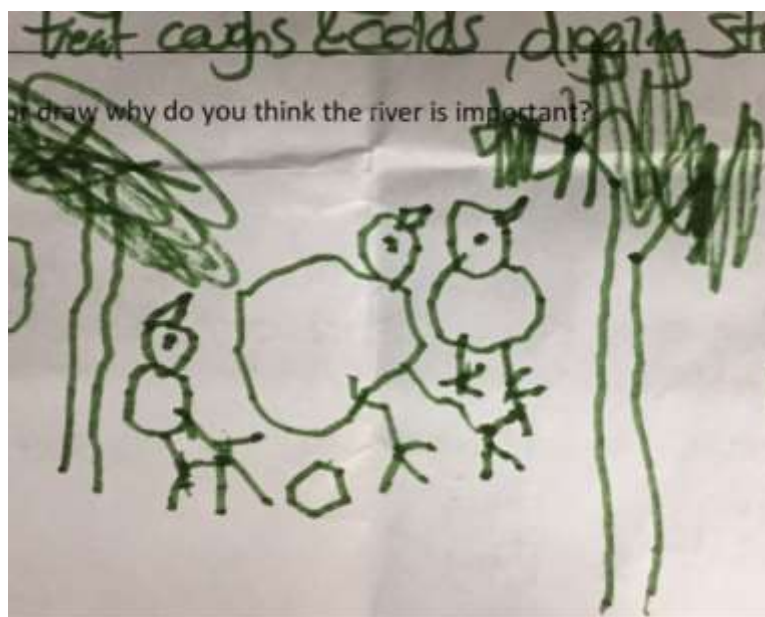
Foxes carry many diseases including hydatids, distemper, parvovirus, canine hepatitis, heartworm and sarcoptic mange.

The quick response of agencies and the community as well as the possible role Tasmanian Devils have played, has been pivotal in keeping foxes at bay. You can help keep Tasmania fox free by remaining alert for signs and reporting all fox sightings or any possible evidence of fox activity to the Invasive Species Hotline on 1300 369 688. For more information on how to identify foxes visit the Dept. of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment Invasive Species website and click on the Fox Profile link.

Environmental Education

Kids 4 Kids Conference

The annual Kids 4 Kids Conference, held at Riverside Primary this year, was another excuse for Tamar NRM Program Coordinator, Gill Basnett, to get out and play games. Students learnt about the impacts of cats, value of habitat for wildlife, risks to the bush and what activities we can do to help protect our native animals. It is amazing what a game of tips/tag/chasies can teach. After a wide range of workshops, the afternoon consisted of a question and answer panel focusing on reducing marine waste.



Above: Xabi's picture of Purple Swamphen Mother, eggs and chicks.

Left: Riverside Primary students enthralled by presentations at the Kids 4 Kids Conference.

North Esk "Ribbon of Blue" Treasure Hunt Winner

Treasure Hunt

At the Ribbon of Blue Anniversary Celebrations (see story page 2-3) Xabi Maddox (4yo) helped by his dad David (older) followed the Wetland Trail and found the clues to help them answer a series of questions about the environment and its inhabitants. The deciding factor for choosing the winner was the drawing done by Xabi of why he thinks the river is important!

Money from the purchase of the prize is donated to the 'Save the Tasmanian Devil Program Appeal'.



Xabi is pictured above with dad, David Maddox, Gill Basnett of Tamar NRM, his winning entry and his prize of a Tasmanian Devil (yet to be named).

FOGO - Green Waste Collection Coming to Launceston in 2017

The City of Launceston will be starting a voluntary kerbside food organics and garden organics (FOGO) collection in 2017 and you can be a part of the action by registering for the opt in service.

What can you put in your FOGO bin?

- meat, bones, fish, dairy, fruit
- de-packaged out of date food
- garden waste, grass clippings, branches, weeds
- hair and fur
- pizza boxes and cardboard takeaway packaging
- paper (newspapers, paper towel, junk mail etc)

What can't you put in the bin?

- green waste in bags
- plastic bags
- packaged food

For more information on bin use, registrations and rollout timeframes visit the Council's website www.launceston.tas.gov.au and Facebook at City of Launceston Official.

West Tamar Council Hotdesk

On the 10th December Gill set up a Hotdesk in West Tamar Council's Eden Street Office. The idea behind these hot desks is to allow Tamar NRM to engage more effectively with the community within the Tamar region who are outside of Launceston City where we have our main office. We value our community partnerships and want to make it as easy as possible for people to contact us regarding NRM issues, opportunities and possible cooperative partnerships.

Thanks to Judy, Neil, Paul and Danelle for braving the wet and windy weather to talk to Gill. Getting further insights into where weeds are within the region, possible projects for the West Tamar area and potential new groups we can assist really helps us help you with making our communities and the Tamar a better place to live.

Low Head Penguin Planting

September 22nd saw Tamar NRM and NRM North out at Low Head Conservation Reserve planting 300 native trees for Little Penguin nesting habitat with, George Town Council staff and volunteers. In the morning Gill Basnett (Tamar NRM) and Megan Dykman (NRM North) took Port Dalrymple and South George Town Primary students on an interpretive walk to talk about the penguins, threats to their populations and the need to plant trees to provide nesting habitat in the reserve before everyone enthusiastically got stuck into planting.



Port Dalrymple kids give a Penguin cheer.

Volunteers, along with George Town Council staff and Councillor John Glisson and the Tamar Works Team planted the remaining seedlings and installed protective tree guards around them all. Some weed management in the reserve is also planned as part of the projects. The day was organised by Tamar NRM and supported by NRM North through funding from the Australian Government.



Volunteers finish of the planting at Low Head.

Sustainable Living Profile

On Sunday 20th November, Tamar NRM's Sustainable Living Working Group (SLWG) held a field day at a sustainable food producing property in Rosevears. Photos provided by Ross and Judy Flint.

About 30 people attended on a glorious spring day, where hosts Ross and Judy Flint talked about the transition of their 10 acre property from open sheep paddocks to a bountiful edible garden with over 60 fruit trees/berry vines, veggie patches and compost heaps along with a rich array of native and other plants in the garden and arboretum.

The property tour was mainly driven by questions which the Flints willingly answered, sharing their experiences about what worked and what didn't.

When introducing Ross and Judy, SLWG's chairman Bruce Jackson thanked them for having the open day and spoke about recent initiatives of the working group including the SLWG film nights and the "Learn about Battery Storage Options Information Forum" jointly organised by Alternative Technology Association (North Tasmania) and Tamar NRM and attended by over 70 people. With such interest in growing your own food and alternative energy and storage options, SLWG is likely to hold more events along these lines in 2017.



NEW Sustainable North Tasmania Webpage

The Sustainable Living Working Group has long thought Northern Tasmania needed a website hub that encapsulated information on all the many groups undertaking sustainability work and education in the region and a communal calendar of all the events these groups are doing. We are therefore establishing a new website www.sustainablenorthtas.com.au which will be going live very soon.

The idea behind the site is to provide contact information and details for groups in Northern Tasmania focused on positive action around sustainable environments, transport, food, waste, renewable energy, climate change, homes, gardens, nature and education as well as a calendar that everyone can upload their events to. This will broaden the reach of all our work as well as give people searching for a group to join or event to go to have a useful site to help them out.

If you are a group or organisation in Northern Tasmania that is non-partisan, non-profit, does some hands-on work, education and/or advocacy that promotes and supports sustainable communities, living, agriculture or environment and are willing to accept volunteer involvement and would like to be included in this website or to add an event to the communal calendar please contact Gill Basnett on gill.basnett@launceston.tas.gov.au



Focus on Weeds

Boneseed Blitz Report 2016

The 2016 Boneseed Blitz demonstrated that this weed control program is working and worth pursuing in future years. Like the successful Ragwort Raid, mobilising the community and coordinating effort across agencies is a cost effective delivery model that gets results.

It is not possible to report the full extent of Boneseed removal over spring, or to know the numbers of landholders and community involved. Anecdotally however, we know there are a large number of residents who clean roadsides and adjoining public lands of weeds like Boneseed.

Many of these people have often started as "Boneseed Blitz" or "Ragwort Raid" participants.

They have learnt the skills and then keep their lands and other areas clear on their own initiative, even when not involved in an organised event.

In the Tamar Region, Boneseed distribution is largely concentrated along the coastal and estuarine strip and the more densely populated urban and peri-urban areas.

The largest infestations are located in Trevallyn, Riverside, Deviot, Hillwood, Swan Bay/Windermere and at Low Head. There is the potential for Boneseed to become widespread across the entire Tamar Region if left uncontrolled. The table below indicates the areas included in this year's blitz:

Punchbowl Reserve	Between Windsor Crescent and Old Vermont Road, Mowbray	Cataract Gorge Reserve
North of Punchbowl Road	Meadows Ridge Reserve, Kings Meadows	Pencost Road, Launceston
Abels Road, St Leonards	Windermere (Estuary foreshore Woodlawn Road)	Lawrence Vale Rd./Meredith Crescent, Launceston
In Parks and Along the Lagoon, Low Head	Windermere (Council reserve north of Los Angeles Road)	Carr Villa
Rosevears Drive	Gravelly Beach	West Tamar Highway
Bradys Lookout	Greens Beach	Public Reserves in Hillwood

Tools Trailer

Earlier this year, Tamar NRM received two grants that allowed us to purchase a works trailer (Tasmanian Community Fund) and tools (South 32-TEMCO). This has been invaluable to our Tamar Works Teams who have used both tools and trailer in many of their projects throughout the region (see Page 12). The tools have also allowed us to plant over 500 trees with schools and community groups and lots of other odd jobs that would have been very difficult to do with our bare hands.



RAGWORT RAID 2017

Come along and help
remove Ragwort from our region.
Ring and register now!



Volunteers are asked to contact Jayne Shapter on
6394 4376 for information and registrations.

Saturday 21st Jan 2017 East Tamar

9.00am – 12.00noon

Meet at 9am at Pipers River Fire Station

Sunday 22nd Jan 2017 West Tamar

9.00am – 12.00noon

Meet at 9am at Winkleigh Hall, Winkleigh Road

Saturday 28th Jan 2017 Launceston

9.00am – 12.00noon

Meet at 9am at Waverley Lake Carpark, Naroo Street

Free BBQ to follow each event.



Growth Habit: Ragwort in its first year appears as a flat rosette of deep green wavy leaves. The bases of these leaves are typically purplish in colour. At the flowering stage, the leaves of the rosette die off to be replaced by an upright bush with deeply lobed leaves. The bush can grow from .5m to 2m in height depending on growing conditions.

Type of Plant: Herbaceous biennial. Plants usually flower in their second year and then die. Control methods that damage the plant but do not kill it tend to encourage the plant to become a perennial which will flower in successive years.

Other Weeds to be watching out for:



St Johns Wort -
Hypericum
perforatum

Growth Habit: An erect plant which grows up to 1.2m in height, averaging 0.6 to 0.9m. The plant tends to be woody near the base. Leaves are a paler green on the underside and have visible oil glands.

Type of Plant: St Johns Wort is a perennial, which usually dies down over winter and re-emerges from underground stems in spring.



Paterson's curse
(Salvation Jane)

Echium plantagineum L.

Vipers bugloss: *Echium vulgare* L.

Growth Habit: Paterson's curse starts off as a large, flat rosette of slightly hairy leaves with well marked veins. Flowering stems can grow to be 600-900 mm tall. These uncoil with new flowers at the tip and developing seeds protected by bristly husks further down the stem.

Type of Plant: Herbaceous annual or short lived perennial.

Tamar NRM can help you with weed identification.

For more detailed descriptions of these and other weeds go to the Tamar Valley Weed Strategy Working Group website <http://www.weeds.asn.au>



Tamar NRM's Weeds Working Group comprises Tamar NRM; 3 Councils - City of Launceston, George Town and West Tamar; community and industry representatives; NRM North; DPIPW; DIER (Dept. State Growth) and Parks and Wildlife.

Coming Events

Gorgeous Walks and Talks

11th Jan 2017 The Great Bug Hunt
18th Jan 2017 The Weird and Wonderful
 Both sessions 10.00am - noon
 NRM North and the City of Launceston
 RSVP to 03 6333 0715
 email basin.cottage@launceston.tas.gov.au

Tamar NRM Reference Group meeting

The Hall, West Tamar Council, Eden St, Riverside
Thursday, 19th January, 2017 7.00-8.30pm
 Light supper provided

2017 Ragwort Raids

Saturday 21st Jan 2017 East Tamar

9.00am – 12.00noon

Meet 9am at Pipers River Fire Station

Sunday 22nd Jan 2017 West Tamar

9.00am – 12.00noon

Meet 9am at Winkleigh Hall, Winkleigh Road

Saturday 28th Jan 2017 Launceston

9.00am – 12.00noon

Meet 9am at Waverley Lake Carpark, Naroo Street.
 For registrations please contact Jayne Shapter on
 6394 4376. BBQ to follow each event.

George Town Coastal Action Plan Launch

Thursday, 16th February 2017

The Minister for Environment, Parks and Heritage,
 Hon. Matthew Groom, will launch the action plan.
 Starting at 11.00am and including a BBQ lunch.

World Wetlands Day

Thursday 2 February 2017

Tamar Island Wetlands Centre

Explore the Tamar Island Wetlands and learn
 about creatures great and small. 9.00am–1.00pm
 For enquiries phone 6327 3964

Backyards to Broadacres

February-March 2017

Series of 10 workshops/field days looking at
 innovation and forward-looking solutions on the
 issues affecting agriculture in the Tamar Valley.
 Theme 1: Soil Biology and Health
 Theme 2: Pasture Management
 Theme 3: Animal Health/Livestock Production
 Register your interest now. Ph 6323 3310
 or Greg Lundstrom - 0438 642 112.

**For more information view our website
 closer to the event: www.tamarnrm.com.au**



Control Weeds Trailer Mounted Quick Spray Unit Available for Hire

Easy to use with a 50 metre retractable hose.
 Instruction provided on safe use of unit and
 permitted herbicides.

**Landcare and community groups supported
 with discount hire rate of \$50 per day.**

This service is made possible
 by Tamar NRM with the support
 of Tamar Councils.



Bookings: Tamar NRM

Phone 6323 3310 or Email
tamarnrm@launceston.tas.gov.au

Support our Working Groups:

Weeds Working Group

Chair: John Thorp (0419 323 400)

Sustainable Living Working Group

Chair: Bruce Jackson (0407 872 520)

George Town Coastal Management Group

Chair: Ian Sauer (0407 046 346)

Christmas Break:

**Please note that Tamar NRM will be closed
 from Thursday 22nd December COB to
 Wednesday, 4th January, 2017.**

Tamar NRM Contacts:

postal: PO Box 396, Launceston TAS 7250

phone: Debbie 03 6323-3310

mobile: Gill 0438 265 792; Greg 0438 642 112

email: tamarnrm@launceston.tas.gov.au

web: www.tamarnrm.com.au

facebook: www.facebook.com/tamarNRM15