



Naturally Yours

The official newsletter of Tamar NRM - AUTUMN 2017



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Cover Photo: Matt from "Greenhythe" demonstrates an innovative way of putting up electric fencing as part of the farm's rotational grazing system at the pasture management workshop in March.
Photo courtesy of Emma Egan (RMCG)

George Town Coastal Communities Action Plan Launch

The Minister for Environment, Parks and Heritage, Hon. Matthew Groom, launched an updated George Town Coastal Community Action Plan on Thursday, 16th February 2017, at the Tam O'Shanter Golf Club.

More than 50 people attended the ceremony including representatives of most of the communities involved, George Town Council staff and Councillors, Sarah Courtney MP, Eric Hutchinson representing Stephen Parry, and Parks and Wildlife staff. The day was a great success with a lot of positive feedback received. During the launch, Minister Groom commented on the action based, bottom-up nature of the plan and its value as a long running coastal management plan implementing community driven on-ground works.

Master of Ceremonies, Sue Woinarski (George Town Coastal Communities Management Group), and presentations by Cr. Tim Harris (George Town Council), Roger Tyshing, Greg Lundstrom and Gill Basnett (Tamar NRM), provided context prior to the official Launch of the Action Plan and Summary Document by the Minister. Each of the coastal communities were presented with a printed copy of the plan.

Dr. David Pemberton, from the Save the Devils Project, gave a very interesting talk over lunch followed by a coastal walk with Jason looking at local dune restoration.



Above: Minister for Environment, Parks and Heritage, Hon. Matthew Groom launching an updated George Town Coastal Community Action Plan.

Coordinator's Corner

The announcement of a new treatment for Tasmanian devil facial tumour disease is welcome news. No one measure is a solution in itself, but along with intervention and initiatives like the "Save the Devil" program things are looking up for this threatened species. The plight of Tasmania's wombat (*Vombatus ursinus tasmaniensis*) in the Tamar region is another issue, where recent state government decisions to support community groups is a wise move.

Wombats are suffering from sarcoptic mange (*Sarcoptes scabiei*) and require multiple treatments to have a hope of recovery. For those left untreated, the condition is almost always fatal.

Rescue efforts and threat abatement of our fauna and flora are to be commended. While we, as a society, have people of good will working to maximise recovery and address the threats to habitats, we will preserve our unique natural heritage.

Support and guidance from government is essential in the process and as is demonstrated time and time again, a small amount of funding to community driven projects goes a long way.

Greg & Gill

George Town Coastal Communities Action Plan Launch (cont.)



Left: Dr. David Pemberton spoke about progress with the "Save the Tasmanian Devil" Program, and provided information on local devil releases.

Below: Participating coastal communities in the George Town Council area.



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 aim of the process is to provide an ongoing avenue for people to express and discuss their concerns with their neighbours as well as the relevant state and local land managers, and build their capacity to manage some of these issues in their own communities.

The 2017 Action Plan was developed in consultation with the major stakeholders including the Parks and Wildlife Service, Crown Land Services, Tasmanian Fire Service, George Town Council and Tamar NRM. The Sea Spurge, Blackberries, Boneseed and Rice Grass weed control and Feral Cat management programs are examples of ongoing projects that stem from the plan. The next step is for the various coastal communities to start working on the priority actions they identified from their local areas.

The Action Plan and Summary Document can be accessed on the "Reports" tab of the Tamar NRM website. www.tamarnrm.com.au

Right: State government, community, agency and local council representation at the recent Coastal Communities Action Plan launch.



Backyards to Broadacres Workshops

Four down and more to come!



Funding through the National Landcare Programme – Sustainable Agriculture Small Grants Round 2015-16, has enabled Tamar NRM to begin delivering the Backyards to Broadacres series of 10 workshops/field days focused on innovation and forward-looking solutions on the issues affecting agriculture in the Tamar Valley. Best-practice and regionally relevant information is being provided 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 focused on larger landholders. We are also running field days providing advice to smaller holdings.



Below: Dr. Doris Blaesing demonstrates a test for soil respiration

The workshop roll-out started in March, with a focus on soils in broadacre situations (held at Armidale Stud, Carrick) and pasture management (held at Archer's Property, Hillwood).

Soil Health & Biology:

Dr. Doris Blaesing, who has extensive experience in research development and extension, resource management, and strategic agricultural and horticultural projects, provided technical insights and demonstrated practical applications to soil health. The session was mostly interactive, answering questions the attendees wanted to know about.

Thanks to David Wishaw for making his 1,000 acre farm available for the day.

Pasture Management - Pastures in Focus:

Lots of useful information was provided at Ed Archer's, East Arm property, 'Greenhythe', in March. A good number of landholders saw and heard about the benefits of having good pastures and how to manage them to maintain their productivity.

Rob Dent (TasGlobal Seeds/Ardent seeds), provided insight into alternative pasture species for the Tamar Valley, along with practical considerations for pasture renovation in the upcoming season.

Dr Corey Hogarth (Senior Consultant Agronomist with TP Jones) talked on pasture nutrient requirements, fertiliser budgeting, soil testing, and micronutrients.

Landholder, Ed Archer, showed us his rotational grazing system and the use of an innovative electric fence erection system (front cover). We visited the Greenhythe pasture trials where Gary Martin (Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture) spoke about pasture establishment.

Thanks to Ed Archer for making us welcome at Greenhythe.



This project is supported by funding from the
Australian Government

Backyards to Broadacres Workshops (Cont.)



Left: Farmers discussing soils characteristics as part of the in-field tests at Carrick on 15th March.

Below: Gary Martin (TIA) and senior agronomist Corey Hogarth (TP Jones) inspect the pasture trials at Greenhythe on 28th March, as part of the pasture management field day.

"I learnt so much today just by being out in the field seeing farm practices first hand" (participant comment).



Above: Ed Archer talks stock rotation and the benefits over set stocking practices at the Greenhythe pasture management field day.



Upcoming Sustainable Agriculture Workshops



Theme: Animal Health/ Livestock Production Wed 12th April 9.30 am - 3.00 pm. - Baxter's Farm, Piper's River

Paul Nilon BVSc, MVS, MACVSc (Nilon Farm Health) will be providing up-to-date information on managing drench resistance, covering both sheep and cattle parasites, along with a seasonal outlook for Tasmania.

Emma Egan (RM Consulting Group) will be discussing livestock nutrition this coming season, covering stock requirements, feed budgeting and feed testing and interpretation. She will also present findings from the TasForage project, discussing the use of forage crops in filling the winter feed gap.

Topic will cover: Parasite management, managing drench resistance in your herd/flock and parasite outlooks for the coming season, feed budgeting, feed testing, livestock nutrition and requirements, forage crops for winter feed gaps, and importantly we will hear the landholder experience from Brian and Will Baxter.

Theme: Data to Decisions Tues 23rd May - Venue TBA Speakers from Meat and Livestock Australia

This workshop is focussing on production data management and associated decision making.

Bookings: tamarnrm@launceston.tas.gov.au

Or phone Greg Lundstrom on 6323 3310, Mob 0438 642 112

Workshops are free but there is a small contribution for catering

Limited places at each workshop - book early



Ragwort Raid 2017

Asset Protection and Road Corridors



The West Tamar Ragwort Raiders display their haul at Winkleigh in January 2017. Raids were held in West Tamar, East Tamar (George Town) and Launceston municipalities

Once again this year's Ragwort Raid demonstrated the benefit of a community driven weed control program. While overall abundance of Ragwort has been reduced in the region, anecdotally the prevalence of Ragwort was up on the previous year. Therefore it was an important year to be actively targeting the weed. Three formal "Raids" were conducted, one in each of the Tamar municipalities (Saturday 21st January, East Tamar, Sunday 22nd January, West Tamar and Saturday 28th January, Launceston).

A total of 42 volunteers donated 345 hours of their time in 2017. A high level of community support has been evident since the Ragwort Raid started 18 years ago! The Raids continue to attract community groups, service clubs, landholders and the general public who join together during late January to keep Ragwort at bay. The event is supported by City of Launceston, West Tamar and George Town Councils, Landcare groups and volunteer fire brigades.

Funding over the 18 years has been underwritten by the Launceston, West Tamar and George Town Councils with vital funds provided again this year by the Royal Automobile Club of Tasmania.

The annual "Raids" are responsible for preventing the wide scale invasion of Ragwort into the Tamar Valley rural areas. Collectively, compliance measures, public education and the Ragwort Raids combine to be an effective model that other regions could easily pick up and implement.

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!".

You can access and read the full Report on the 2017 "Raids" from our website:



<http://www.tamarnrm.com.au/media/reports/>

Ragwort, (*Jacobaea vulgaris*, syn. *Senecio jacobaea*), is a serious weed in Tasmania and is poisonous to stock. It has the potential to infest at least 64,600 ha in the municipalities with potential costs to the grazing industry of over \$2M per annum in lost pasture production alone.

2017 Ragwort Raid Statistics table

Municipal Area	Patrol Base Location	Number Volunteers	Labour Hours Donated	Length of Significant Roads Patrolled	Land Under Invasion Threat (Ha)	Production Losses Prevented (\$ per year)
Georgetown (21 st January)	Pipers River Fire Station	11	96	220 km	17000	\$533,000
West Tamar (22 nd January)	Winkleigh Hall	22	162	235 km	15600	\$488,000
Launceston (28 th January)	Waverley Lakes	9	84	206 km	32000	\$1,001,900
Total for all councils		42	345	661 km	64600	\$2,022,900

Right: East Tamar Ragwort Raiders at Piper's River Fire Station in January 2017.



Left: Alderman Simon Wood participated with 8 others during the Launceston municipality raid.



Reports from the Tamar Region Councils



Nature Recreation

If you take a look around the West Tamar you will notice a deliberate effort to make open spaces reflect natural areas. Bradys Lookout wall or the entry to Tailrace Park are two great examples. They are designed for multipurpose usage with nature and amenity built and presented so as to be not in conflict with each other.

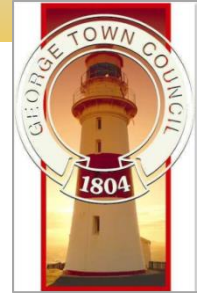
If you want to see landscaping following a nature recreation theme, then do yourself a favour and take the walking path off Windsor Drive from the Windsor Precinct and head past the community garden toward the Tamar Estuary. There you will find some well-designed nature recreation spaces. Credit goes to the West Tamar Council staff and in particular, Tony Roberts, who used his creative flair to great effect.



Renewable Energy for the City of Launceston

The City of Launceston has recently installed a 40kW solar panel system on the roof at the Remount Road Depot. The solar system consists of 122 SunPower panels and 2 Fronius inverters. The panels are one of the most efficient available and come with a 25 year warranty. The inverters are connected to the site network to enable council to log in and check the performance of the solar system. The panels have been positioned to achieve the maximum generating capacity possible during the day. The solar system will generate approximately 58,000kWh of electricity per year reducing the depot power costs by 40%. The solar system has a payback of 4 years making it a very cost effective method of reducing energy costs.

This solar system follows another recent project at the Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery Inveresk where a 50kW solar system was installed. The solar panels were installed on the saw tooth roof of the main gallery. All the electricity generated by the system will be used in the main gallery. The city of Launceston is serious about reducing the energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions from council facilities and recognises solar power presents a great opportunity to achieve this.



George Town Council continued support for Community Action

On behalf of George Town Council, the General Manager, Mr. John Martin, signed a Statement of Endorsement for the preparation, and implementation of the George Town Coastal Management Plan, marking 12 years of ongoing support.

A \$2770 grant from the council for capacity building events and printing of the summary document subsidised the process which culminated at a launch event on 16th February by the Minister for Environment, Parks and Heritage, Hon. Matthew Groom. (*See the full story on page 2-3.*)

The Council has agreed to continue supporting community driven actions and works in conjunction with the community and agencies where resources and other priorities allow.

The associated action plan gets revised every few years, and this time five major issues have been identified as common to Coastal Management Areas: Coordination of the Plan; Green and general waste disposal; Fire management; Encroachment of private yards and Control of feral animal populations.

<http://www.tamarnrm.com.au/2017/02/17/george-town-coastal-communities-action-plan-update/>

20 Million Trees - Trees Available



Tamar NRM received funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme to assist local councils and landholders increase, and connect native habitat in the Tamar region through a 20 Million Trees project.

The seedlings for 2017 from Habitat Plants are almost ready for planting, and landholders who are putting in direct seeded biodiverse shelterbelts are starting to get fences in.

Due to changes in some planting sites, we

have funding still available to landholders wanting to revegetate areas and shelterbelts with native plants. We have money for a contractor to directly seed your site or for seedlings and guards for you to plant yourself (we may have assistance from Green Army teams). Trees/seeds will need to be in by July 2018.

If you are interested in being involved contact Gill on gill.basnett@launceston.tas.gov.au.

Tamar NRM is calling for Schools to be involved with Tree Planting Projects Across the Tamar

As part of the 20 Million Trees project, Tamar NRM is keen to engage with schools to be involved with planting native plants for habitat in their local reserves. Last year, Youngtown and Launceston Steiner Primary School students helped us plant 120 seedlings in Youngtown Regional Park. This year we have 2000 seedlings to plant and we need your help!

We will be organising a School Tree Day with the City of Launceston, but are also keen to run planting workshops on other days that suit schools. Planting can be anytime between May and August 2017. If you have a class(s), students, community group or just a group of kids and adults interested in helping us restore native plants in our local reserves, please contact Gill on 0438 265 792 or gill.basnett@launceston.tas.gov.au to book a place or planting day.



Schools Clean Up Australia Day

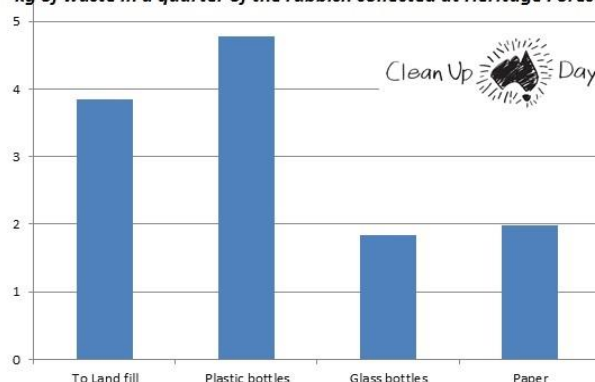


Above: Georgina and Lily from Trevallyn Primary School helping with the Schools Clean Up Australia Day at Heritage Forest.

In early March, Tamar NRM partnered with UTAS and Northern Tasmanian Waste Management Group (NTWMG) to participate in Schools Clean Up Day. Invermay and Trevallyn Primary School students had a day at Heritage Forest collecting rubbish and learning to sort it for recycling. They collected a total of 5 large bags of garbage, removing 47.5 kilograms of rubbish from the reserve.

They investigated a quarter of the rubbish and found the following:

kg of waste in a quarter of the rubbish collected at Heritage Forest



(Sample weight-12.45 kg)

Thanks to UTAS Sustainability (Kim), NTWMG recycling and waste officers (Mary and Ken) and all teachers and parents that helped.

<http://www.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au>
<http://rethinkwaste.com.au>

Community Groups Clean Up

Clean Up Australia Day 2017 in the Launceston City Council, West Tamar Council and George Town Council Areas had 12 sites registered on the national website. Some were a part of Schools Clean Up Day and others were open to the public.

Like many around the Tamar, Friends of Punch Bowl Reserve were involved in the clean up, where volunteers collected over 8 kgs of litter from the reserve. Across the Tamar Valley people could participate at Princes Square, Royal Park, Punchbowl Reserve, Western Suburbs Oval, Prospect, Levee Bank Clean Up and Churchill Park at Invermay,

Below: Volunteers collect litter at Punchbowl Reserve.



Riverside High School and Tailrace Park, Windermere Road, George Town Sports Complex, Bellingham, and Lulworth/Tam O'Shanter. This was an impressive list of participating communities.

Well done Tamar Valley!

Environmental Education

World Wetlands Day

At least 580 people attended a terrific day at the Tamar Wetlands for World Wetlands Day on the 2nd February, which has become an important iconic environmental event for the region.

Organised by Parks & Wildlife and the dedicated volunteers, the day featured water bugs by Tamar NRM, the importance of Wetlands (NRM North), the West Tamar Arts Group, raptor talks, river health, guided walks, aboriginal welcome, and a reptile presentation (QVMAG).

A couple of the "locals" (tiger snakes) manned the entrance to welcome people!



Take the Recycling Quiz!

A quiz to test your kerbside recycling bin knowledge

If you think you know your rubbish from your recycling, try the quiz on the Rethink Waste Games page and see how you score! Are you a recycling guru or do you have a little bit to learn?

Encourage the kids to play the educational games so they learn to look after our environment while they play.

<http://rethinkwaste.com.au/rethink-games>

See article on Clean Up Australia Day on Page 11



Above: Tamar NRM's Gill Basnett talks about the diversity of wetland aquatic invertebrates with Amelia and Samantha at Tamar Wetlands. Waterwatch Kit donated by AK Consulting

Below: Wetland aquatic invertebrates.



illuminate:nextgen Challenge East Launceston School

The year 5-6 students at East Launceston Primary participated in the illuminate:nextgen Challenge in March. Gill went to speak to the students about science, what the planet provides, some of the threats, and introduced a variety of sustainability ideas at the beginning of the week. She was inspired by their understanding of the topics and well thought out projects they developed during the week and showcased at an awards ceremony on Friday 24th March. Well done to all the kids!



Bushfire Biodiversity & Mitigation Project

Tamar NRM has received funding from the Australian Government to run six community workshops within the Tamar to provide information on fire including its role in ecological health and biodiversity, management across the landscape, and mitigation and planning around your own property. Two fire forums have been held so far, Lulworth (pictured left) and Greens Beach.



Participant feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with people appreciating the information provided, a chance to meet local brigade members, and the opportunity to talk to land managers of neighbouring bushland such as the Department of Defence, Parks and Wildlife and Local Councils. Participants felt that they had gained a greater understanding of what they needed to do on their own properties and were interested in further, more hands on, workshops later in the year.

Biodiversity and Fuel Load Surveys

Part of the project is also to run some biodiversity and fuel load surveys in burnt and unburnt areas. We shall be organising these shortly, with one definitely in Trevallyn Reserve and possibly Carr Villa. Keep an eye out for these in our events information on our Website or contact Gill to register your interest.



Tamar NRM is calling for Applications for the Christopher Strong Natural Resource Management 2017 Fellowship

NOW OPEN – Closes 14th April, 2017

The Fellowship is open to any individual, school or community group undertaking a project in a Rural or Urban area.

- a) Rural – Improvement of sustainable agriculture through research, trials and experiments OR improvement and/or maintenance of local ecosystem(s);
- b) Urban – Improvement of sustainable living OR improvement and/or maintenance of local ecosystem(s).

Applications will be judged on the following:

Criteria

1. Must be managed in, and relate to, the Tamar Region;
2. Must emphasize improvement in either a rural or urban area(s); and
3. Must be completed within twelve months on receipt of funds.

Funding allocated for the project is up to \$1,500.

To be used for associated project costs and expenses only

For more details and Application Form: <http://www.tamarnrm.com.au/about/nrm-fellowship/>

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

Biodiversity Page

We Need Your Help with Planning for Natural Values



Ever wondered how it is determined what species are in an area when councils assess planning applications or works programs? They use the Natural Values Atlas (NVA). The NVA is a web based tool that provides information on Tasmania's natural values including flora and fauna, threatened species and weeds. The NVA is comprised of a "database and web based application that allows observations of plants and animals from various sources to be viewed, recorded and analysed". The List, a mapping and data program used by many, also uses simplified data from the NVA. This makes the input of data into the NVA vital.

The great thing about the NVA is it allows anybody access to data and has a citizen science component to it, permitting input of sightings and surveys by a wide range of people. However, the NVA does not "talk" to all the different databases, meaning that not all the available information on species and communities is utilised when making planning decisions. Also, not everyone knows that they can add their own sightings to the database, and so information from the community is not always captured. For example, Queechy Lake in Launceston, a well-known bird spot, has one bird recorded. There are a lot of individuals and groups like Field Nats who have bird lists and surveys for Queechy Lake but that information is not captured in the NVA and therefore not used when planning applications are being assessed.

Because of this, Tamar NRM is setting up a project to capture this data and upload it to the NVA site and we are calling on you to help. We are after people's incidental sightings, species lists, and records of plants, animals and weeds. They don't need to be threatened, because sometimes it is the variety of species in an area that is important, or sometime down the track the species may become threatened, and so historical data is useful.

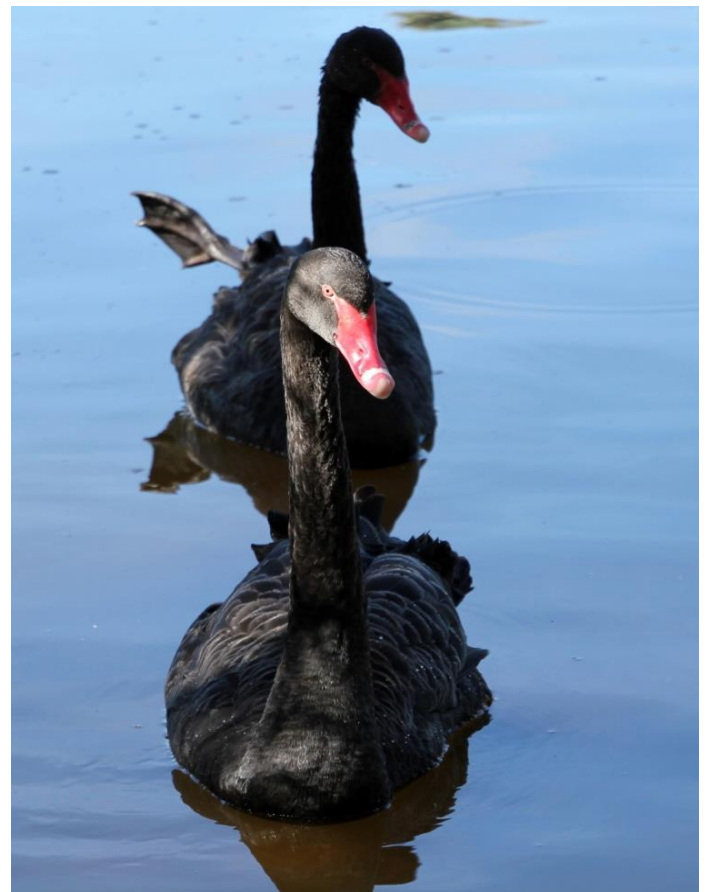
If you want to be involved please send your data to gill.basnett@launceston.tas.gov.au. It is important you are confident in your identification. If unsure, but have a photo, send that through and we can identify it for you.

What we need to know is:

- Species name (a photo to verify would be ideal).
- Coordinates - Easting and Northing or Longitude and Latitude.
- Position accuracy (in metres) - how accurate is your position? For example is it within 10, 100, 1000m of your recorded coordinate.
- Observation date.
- Observer name - include your experience/confidence in the identification.
- Observation type - seen, heard, captured, carcass, nest, print, fur, feather, scat, etc.
- Location description - where was it and what was the environment.
- Number.

Useful information:

- Adult/Juvenile, Male/Female.
- Other interesting notes.
- Incidental sighting or part of a survey.



What to do about Wombats



Have you noticed our humble Tasmanian Common Wombat (*Vombatus ursinus tasmaniensis*), found only in Tasmania (endemic), looking very sick lately? Populations have been in decline due to *Sarcoptic scabiei*, a parasitic mite that causes mange and other diseases, and eventually death.

Sarcoptic scabiei starts its life cycle with females burrowing into the skin of their host (in this case wombats), laying eggs, eating skin tissue and blood serum, and dying. Eggs hatch into larval, emerge and dig a moulting pouch where they continue to develop. Males penetrate the moulting pouch to mate and the cycle starts again. Mites can live for approximately 21 days and transfer easily between wombats through direct contact or sharing burrows.

The mite causes extreme discomfort through skin lesions, infection and emaciation. They damage hair follicles leading to hair loss, thickening of the skin and scabbing (hyperkeratosis) followed by blindness and deafness. Excess energy and time spent scratching and an inability to regulate body temperature or to see clearly, means wombats spend more time above ground, causing other issues like dehydration, sleep deprivation, flystrike, emaciation and a slow painful death.



Adapted from an article by Fiona Roark
(Wombat Warriors)

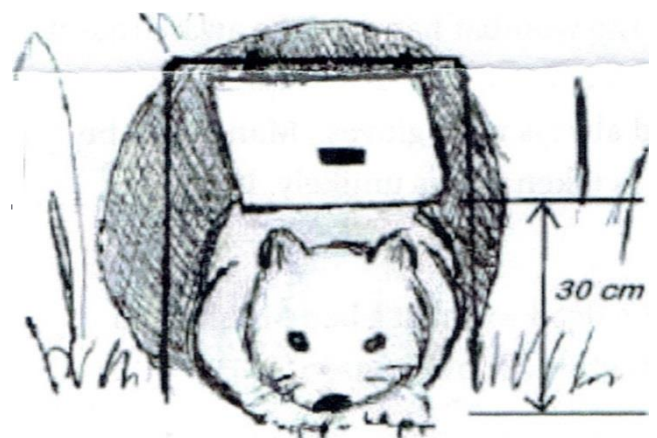
How you can help...

There are ways to help reduce and even eradicate this problem and even blind and deaf wombats can recover with the right treatment and effective management. The first thing you can do is record any sighting of wombats, dead or alive, with or without mange or active burrows. There is a simple app, WomSAT (www.womsat.org.au), that you can use on your smart phone or contact Wombat Warriors or Wombat Rescue Tasmania on Facebook.

Wombats can be treated for mange in the wild using a non-invasive treatment processes, burrow flaps and an application of Cydectin (need to go through TWRC who have a permit for use). Each burrow used by the Wombat needs to be treated many times and at least 12 applications is recommended. The more treatments the greater chance of recovery.

For more information, including the "Burrow Flap Method", visit the following sites.

- Tasmanian Wildlife Rehabilitation Council
<http://taswildlife.org/> or twrc@taswildlife.org
(TWRC can provide free treatment kits and have a permit for the use of Cydectin)
- Wombat Warriors
<https://www.facebook.com/wombatwarriors.org/?fref=ts>
- West Tamar WOMBAT RESCUE
<https://www.facebook.com/mangywombats/>
- Your local Vet may also provide assistance.



Tamar NRM's Works Teams



Above: Tamar Works Team spreading mulch at Heritage Forest in March, much easier with a wheelbarrow!



Great to receive support from the Member for Bass, Sarah Courtney MP, recently. We had two wheel barrows stolen from the works depot last year and have had to make do since then. Tamar NRM's Works Team has now added to the tools they need to do great work in the 3 councils of Launceston, West Tamar and Georgetown areas with some money from the Premier's Discretionary Fund. Thanks Sarah!

New Faces on Management Committee

Tamar NRM's 11 member Management Committee undergoes changes from time to time. Tamar NRM would like to express our appreciation to Ian Dickenson, one of our longest serving Management Committee members who retired earlier this year. His background in forestry, agriculture and Landcare as well as an open mind to new learning and other experiences has made his input into the committee invaluable. Ian continues as a reference group member. Leanne Hurst, who has been a conduit between Tamar NRM and our major supporter, City of Launceston, has also decided to step down from the committee. We would like to thank her for her support in building the council partner relationship into a strong position and her many hours of work finalising the lease arrangements for Lamont Street.

We are pleased to announce two new recruits, who bring a substantial amount of local knowledge and experience to the table. In the future, the City of Launceston will be represented by Barry Pickett. Barry's role with council is as Manager of Natural Environment and is a logical fit for linking the two organisations. Kathryn Pugh who has a strong ecology background will act as proxy for Barry on occasions. More about them both in profile next issue.

We also welcome Ben Hooper, who replaces Ian, and brings to the management committee considerable experience in agriculture. Ben is a third generation farmer and lives on a grazing property at Beaconsfield which has a focus on lamb production and aims to maximise grazing efficiency.

He holds a Masters of Business Administration - Agricultural Innovation and a Graduate Certificate in Management as well as a Graduate Certificate in Agribusiness and an Advanced Diploma of Farm Business Management. Ben is the current Chair of the Tamar Valley Branch of Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association and offers tutor support to Exeter High School.

His previous industry roles include:

- Board Selection Committee for Meat and Livestock Australia
- Member and Chair of TFGA Meat Council
- State Representative to the Sheepmeat Council of Australia

Ben enjoys spending time with his family, wife Louisa and two daughters Annabel and Madeleine exploring the local region especially, Greens Beach.

Ben says he sees Tamar NRM as a vital part of caring and enhancing the region, by providing an enabling and empowering conduit for positive change. He passionately believes in education and self-improvement for everyone in the community especially in areas of natural resource management and agriculture.

In Profile - Ben Hooper



Sustainable Living Profile



The concept to run a workshop entitled "The Blank Slate" came from an identified need for lifestylers and new property owners buying a site that they know little about. What is the state of the soil? What can we grow? Where do we start?

Our workshop hosts, Ross and Judy Flint, did a fantastic job turning a property into an amazing productive and attractive place to live. Anyone who attended the open garden last year will attest to the state of the property, which was in less than pristine condition when they bought it. As we saw on Sunday 2nd April, they had already made a great start with their new adventure in Exeter.

Tamar NRM's Sustainable Living Working Group (SLWG) and Backyards to Broadacres were pleased to have well known author on growing food in Tasmanian conditions, Steve Solomon, and soil microbiologist, Sophie Lapsley, from RM Consulting Group along for the day.



The Blank Slate participants talking about, and testing, soils and learning how to improve them for growing veggies.



Participants got hands on experience with some useful soil tests, using samples they brought from their own properties. Steve and Sophie talked about what these tests mean and remediation techniques to improve the health of soil microbes and nutrient availability and therefore plant health. The focus of the day was on growing healthy plants for personal consumption rather than production.

Seeing Ross and Judy's vision come to life was inspiring for the attendees. The day concluded around the fire-pit for a spot of biochar making demonstrated by SLWG chairman, Bruce Jackson.

NEW Sustainable North Tasmania Webpage

SLWG has set up a new website, "Sustainable Northern Tasmania", to make it easier for people to find a group or event in Northern Tasmania focused on making our footprint on the planet smaller. Whether you are interested in volunteering or getting some information about how to live more sustainably this website aims to be a link to groups in your area.

Groups included are non-partisan, not-for-profit organisations providing volunteering opportunities or information that promotes and supports sustainable communities, living, environment and agriculture. They include Landcare and 'Friends Of' groups, community gardens, harvest markets, alternative transport networks, renewable energy and waste associations, NRM organisations and more. There is a communal calendar for all the groups involved, to broaden our reach and reduce event clashes. www.sustainablenorthtas.com.au

Focus on Weeds

Weed Control for Sensitive Coastal Environments Workshop



Above: Weeds Working Group chairman John Thorp demonstrating how to use of the trailer mounted quick spray unit.

In March, Tamar NRM coordinated a workshop at Weymouth where community members interested in learning about weed treatment were given an opportunity to gain knowledge about various weed treatment methods available. Both chemical and manual removal methods were discussed, where decision making takes account of personal safety and safety to the broader community and the sensitive coastal environment.

John Thorp, who has extensive experience in the topic, covered off on the requirements for use of a quick spray unit and a knapsack, including safe handling and disposal of chemicals, selecting the

best weed management method, approvals to work on various land tenures, and working safely on roadsides. Participants received a Certificate of Attendance acknowledging the skills covered at the workshop.

Greg Lundstrom discussed the various coastal weeds which prompted a discussion on the need for plant identification days for the coastal communities.



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



Have you seen *Asparagus scandens*?

Tamar NRM has received recent reports from Hillwood, Lulworth and Weymouth.

Asparagus scandens is commonly known as Asparagus Fern, Climbing Asparagus, Climbing Fern, or Ferny Asparagus. Asparagus Fern is a plant native to South Africa in the *Asparagus* genus. It was widely used as a garden ornamental plant and has escaped cultivation and is now widely naturalised in the coastal districts of southern Australia including Tasmania. It is common in coastal areas especially King and Flinders Islands and Bridport. It is thought to have a much greater potential distribution than at present, and could seriously impact on Australia's biodiversity in the future if it is not managed correctly.

Growth Habit: It is an aggressive, perennial twining vine, producing underground tubers and forming dense impenetrable mats. It is a shade tolerant plant preferring moist sites and competes with native plants for nutrients, light and space. Asparagus Fern does not usually die back during summer and has year-round growth

It has small, white to pinkish, 6 petalled flowers, borne singly and are produced from August to October. Fleshy, globular berries, form from late October, changing from a green colour when first produced to an orange red when ripe. Stems that receive higher amounts of light tend to produce more fruit than stems in darker areas.



Ripe fruit can remain on the plant from one season to the next and so may be present at all times of the year. Leaves are deep green and scale like, are 5-15mm long and 0.5-1.5mm wide. Underground tuber roots forms a mat from the short branching rhizome. In mature plants, the roots contribute 87-92% of the total mass.

Asparagus fern is a declared weed under the Tasmanian Weed Management Act 1999. The importation, sale and distribution of asparagus fern are prohibited in Tasmania.

Early control is vital! For information on how to control Asparagus Fern visit the websites below.

Sources: DPIPWE - <http://dpipwe.tas.gov.au/invasive-species/weeds/weeds-index/weeds-index-declared-weeds/asparagus-fern>
Weeds of Australia - Biosecurity Queensland Edition
https://keyserver.lucidcentral.org/weeds/data/media/Html/asparagus_scandens.htm
Asparagus Weeds Best Practice Management Manual
<http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive/weeds/publications/guidelines/manuals/pubs/asparagus-weeds-manual-4.pdf>

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; DPIPWE; Tas TAFE; DIER (Dept. State Growth) and Parks and Wildlife.

Coming Events - Tamar NRM

Sunday 9th April, 2017 10am - 2pm

Greens Beach Community Fire Forum

Community bushfire forum focussed on Greens Beach, Clarence Point and Kelso resident's and landholder's concerns.

Greens Beach Golf Club - Forum is free, lunch included

RSVP to Gill Basnett, Tamar NRM

0438 265 792 or gill.basnett@launceston.tas.gov.au

Backyards to Broadacres

A series of 10 workshops/field days looking at innovation and forward-looking solutions on the issues affecting agriculture in the Tamar Valley

Wed 12th April, 2017 9.30 am – 3.00 pm.

Workshop 3: Animal Health/Livestock Production - Pipers River

Paul Nilon (Nilon Farm Health).

Emma Egan (RM Consulting Group).

Topics covered: parasite management, managing drench resistance in your herd/flock and parasite outlooks for the coming season, feed budgeting, feed testing, livestock nutrition and requirements, forage crops for winter feed gaps, and importantly we will hear the landholder experience from Brian and Will Baxter.

Bookings: Greg Lundstrom

Phone 6323 3310 or 0438 642 112 or

Email tamarnrm@launceston.tas.gov.au

Tues 23rd May - Venue TBA

Workshop 4 Theme: Data to Decisions

Speakers from Meat and Livestock Australia

This workshop is focussing on production data management and associated decision making.

For more information view our website:

www.tamarnrm.com.au

Christopher Strong Fellowship \$1500 Grant Closes 14th April, 2017

Applications close for the **Christopher Strong Natural Resource Management 2017 Fellowship.**

For more details and Application Form:

<http://www.tamarnrm.com.au/about/nrm-fellowship/>

Other Events

11th, 18th and 25th April

Going Native Around Launceston Trails

Be part of the team keeping Launceston's reserves and native habitat in good shape.

<http://conservationvolunteers.com.au/>

28th April, 2017

Farming & Forestry Field Day -The Perfect Fit

Roger Poltock, in partnership with Private Forests Tasmania and Australian Forest Growers, invites you to a field day on his Wilmot farm that will help you grow, manage and harvest trees on your property, enhance grazing and diversify income.

RSVP: Tracey.King@pft.tas.gov.au or 6477 7052

20th and 29th April, 2017

Smallholders Property Management Planning Workshop - (2 Parts)

This property management planning (PMP) short course is targeted toward smallholders in the Pipers River area. PMP allows you to document your property resources and goals, and identify actions to work toward these goals. The end result is a plan that can assist you in developing and managing your property sustainably.

Numbers are limited. RSVP by Monday 10th April.

For more details & RSVP contact: Megan Dykman (NRM North's Small Farm Living Coordinator) 03 6333 7775; mdykman@nrmnorth.org.au

Landcare Tasmania Events:

<http://www.landcaretas.org.au/events>

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)

Tamar NRM Contacts:

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