

# TAMAR NRM Inc.



**Tamar NRM**

## **2019-2020 Annual Report**

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## 1. About Tamar NRM

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, focusing 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 and Local and State Government. We developed the Tamar Region Natural Resource Management Strategy in 1999 updating the document in 2001, 2007, 2012 and 2018.

With the support and encouragement of City of Launceston, 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 over \$7M 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.

Our values are:

1. Respect and Value - We respect nature and natural processes.
2. Be Ethical - We will be fair and open in our business dealings and give fair value in order to have mutually beneficial relationships with our partners, employees and volunteers.
3. Consider the Future - We have a duty of care to those around us, as well as to future generations.
4. Be Open and Learn - Keep an open mind about new ways of thinking and doing. We listen to and learn from all.
5. Share - We seek ways for the whole community to share in the responsibility of maintaining and valuing biodiversity.

## 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 a smaller farm at Exeter then to suburban living in Launceston. He has worked in agricultural extension, agripolitics, training and workforce development. Having missed farming he spent 2.5 years working as the Farm Manager at Hagley Farm School. Roger is now back in workforce development and is currently the Chair of the Migrant Resource Centre.

### Anna Povey, Vice President



Anna Povey works for the Tasmanian Land Conservancy, supporting landowners who have conservation covenants. 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 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.

### Ben Hooper

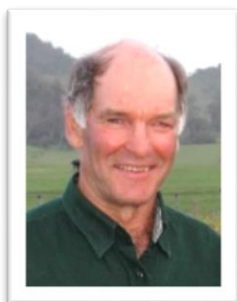


Ben is a third generation farmer on a property at Beaconsfield, focused on lamb production and maximising grazing efficiency. He holds a Masters of Business Administration - Agricultural Innovation and a Graduate Certificate in Management as well as an Agribusiness and an Advanced Diploma of Farm Business Management. Ben is the current Chair of the Tamar Valley Branch of TFGA 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 passionately believes in education and self-improvement for everyone in the community especially in areas of NRM and agriculture

### **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 as well as starting up a business as a fence contractor and vineyard construction. Brian has been involved with East Tamar Landcare since its inception in 1992, and was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia in 2017 for his service to natural resource management. This adds to his George Town Australia Day Citizen of the year award in 2008 for service to the community and Landcare and Primary Producer Landcare Award in 2009.

### **Brigid Morrison**



Brigid has undertaken roles as an: industry investigator for adaptive water resources management with Sense-T, environmental policy advisor and has four year experience as an associate Lecturer at UTAS. She holds a Bachelor of Applied Science (B.A.Sc.Hons), Plant Biology and Geography (aquaculture minor) and worked as a research assistant at the Centre for Phytophthora Science and Management at Murdoch University.

### **David Richardson**



David Richardson is the Team Leader of Works and Infrastructure at George Town Council. David is a qualified horticulturist & arborist, which supports his affiliation with NRM throughout his career. He has served as a committee member on Northern Regional Weed Management Group and represented Break O Day and West Tamar Council's as a NRM committee member. He has provided support and undertaken a number of NRM activities and initiatives, in particular in his role as Parks Supervisor at West Tamar Council. David was also involved in the implementation and review of current 'best practice for maintenance of State Roads roadside assets' including vegetation control, in his role for Dept. of State Growth. David is a true advocate for Tamar NRM particularly in their effective management of nature's resources.

### **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.

### **John Thorp**



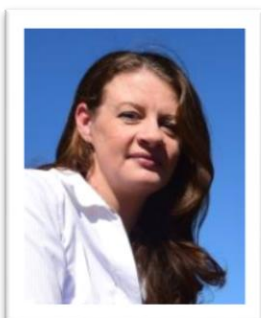
John is a trained agricultural scientist and extension officer having worked at all levels from the field to highest levels of government. He is a participant in community groups and volunteers his time to local causes. He recently retired from his business, John Thorp Australia, which undertook resource 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.

### **Raoul Harper**



Raoul Harper has been the West Tamar Council representative on the Management Committee since January 2019. Raoul is a senior local government executive having previously served as the General Manager of both George Town and Flinders Council's and is the current Infrastructure Manager at the West Tamar Council. He has a keen interest in sustainable development and engaging with communities to improve natural resource outcomes. Kristie Giblin fills the role as proxy when Raoul cannot attend.

### **Emma Williams**



City of Launceston is represented on Management Committee via Parks and Sustainability, Infrastructure & Assets Network's Emma Williams and manager Phil Bonney. Emma is the Team Leader of the Recreation and Parks area with the City of Launceston. She took up this role early in 2020 following the roll out of Council's Organisational Alignment Project, and had previously been the Sustainability Officer, developing the City of Launceston's Sustainability Strategy. Prior to working with Council, Emma has used her environmental science qualifications and experience in

NRM in Northern Tasmania for over 10 years, having worked in roles in both Tamar NRM and NRM North. She has also served as an elected representative of the City of Launceston in the previous Council term.

### **Retired Representatives:**

**Cory Robson**

**Kathryn Pugh**

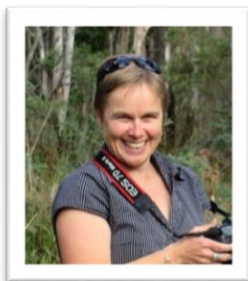
**Table 1: Attendance at meetings during 2019-2020**

<b>Management Committee Member</b>	<b>Possible Meetings</b>	<b>Meetings Attended</b>
Roger Tyshing	5	5
Anna Povey	5	5
Brian Baxter	5	4
Phil Bonney (CoL)	2	1
Kristie Giblin (WTC)	2	2
Raoul Harper (WTC)	5	2
Ben Hooper	5	5
Glen Johnston (GTC)	2	1
Brigid Morrison	5	3
Kathryn Pugh (CoL)	3	1
David Richardson (GTC)	5	3
Corey Robson (CoL)	2	1
John Thorp	5	4
Greg Unwin	5	4
Emma Williams (CoL)	2	2



### 3. Our Staff

#### Gill Basnett, Program Co-ordinator



Gill started with Tamar NRM in August 2015, having 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. Gill has a strong ecological background, particularly in wildlife assessment, fire ecology and biodiversity conservation on private property. She enjoys sharing her 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.

#### Greg Lundstrom, Program Co-ordinator



After working in conservation and natural resource management for 20 years, Greg feels that his role as Program Coordinator for Tamar NRM over the past five years 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, he 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 Green Corps and then nine years 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.

## Other Staff

### Eric Hall, MLA Pastures Project Consultant



Eric has a national reputation as a pasture expert in areas of plant collection, plant evaluation, plant breeding and pasture demonstration and extension. Eric has experience working with national research and extension programs, and has authored and co-authored numerous scientific papers, reports and fact sheets.

For 15 years, Eric worked as leader of TIA's Herbage Development Program. In this role he was instrumental in the design, establishment and running of over a dozen producer demonstration sites across Tasmania's lower rainfall region.

Despite retiring from full time employment five years ago, Eric has maintained a keen interest in pastures and continues to pursue plant breeding and pasture advisory activities.

### Kay Bailey, Project Officer (Weeds)



This year, Tamar NRM were pleased to welcome back Kay Bailey. Kay Bailey is a community volunteer with Tamar NRM and many local groups including Landcare Groups. Kay was also the executive officer of Tamar NRM from the end of 2004 until beginning of 2009. From 2009 to 2013, Kay was one of the Weeds of National Significance (WoNS) Coordinators based in Alice Springs.

Her interests and work roles have all been in the environmental / conservation areas including park and reserve planning, natural heritage, broad natural resource management and invasive species management. Since her return to Tasmania, we have engaged Kay in the position of Tamar NRM Weeds Project Coordinator. Kay has developed a "Tamar NRM Biocontrol Action Plan", for Gorse, Patterson's Curse and Ragwort.

Kay's approach to life and natural resource management has always been to "Just Do It". Find a way to make things happen and, whilst planning is imperative, spend your time achieving rather than talking!

### Jen Craigen, Project Officer



Jen Craigen has a background in hands on natural resource management, community development, community gardens and community networking. She is currently undertaking a Certificate III in Horticulture. Jen has previously been a team leader for Green Army teams in the Tamar region and undertaken project work for NRM North and Tamar NRM. In 2017 and 2020, Jen conducted producer interviews, and survey analysis as part of Tamar NRM's Pasture Improvement project. Depending on the time of year Jen can also be found picking grapes, picking and eating cherries and processing abalone for export.

### Jo Lyall, Project Officer



Long time “Ragwort Raider” and West Tamar resident, Jo Lyall became our 2020 Ragwort Raid Coordinator. Jo has prepared our Ragwort Raid report mapping for the past 2 years, so knows the roads travelled and where to look for Ragwort.

Jo has run her own NRM Consultancy for a number of years and is currently working for NRM North.

### Gabrielle Stannus, Sustainable Living Festival Coordinator



Gabrielle is an experienced environmental planner and educator and budding horticulturalist. After working on environmental policy and programs in local government for close to a decade, she decided to make a “tree change” of sorts. Gabrielle obtained a Master of Urban Horticulture from the University of Melbourne, specialising in green roof and wall design. Gabrielle writes regularly for Hort Journal Australia and the Nursery and Garden Industry Australia (NGIA). She coordinated our 2018 Tamar Sustainable Living Expo and facilitated a stakeholder meeting in March to grow the Expo into a Festival Event to be held in 2021.

## 4. Key Numbers

**Table 2: Key numbers for Tamar NRM events and other works carried out in 2019-2020.**

	No.	Participants	Engagement Hours	Amount (Granted)	No. Trees Planted
Workshops	25	787	1921		
Information Events	12	721	398		
Volunteer Events (Events and Meetings)	33	655	2005		
Plastic Free Launceston member volunteer hours at workshops	30	108	368		
School Events (School event days + Tree Planting Days)	18	830	1512		
Education Day / Conference Events	10	4835	1459		
Grants Applied For	9			\$50,623	
<b>Total Events 2019-2020</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>7936</b>	<b>7663</b>		<b>3177</b>
<b>Total Events 2018-2019</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>11425</b>	<b>12059</b>	<b>\$145,519</b>	<b>8114</b>

**Table 3: Grants applied for by Tamar NRM in 2019-2020. (Rows highlighted in grey were not successful.)**

<b>Grant</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Success</b>	<b>Comments</b>
RACT Ragwort Raids	2000	2000	2020 Ragwort Raids
Weeds Action Grants	5100	5100	Besom Heath Control Pilot
Weeds Action Grant	5,203.00	5,203.00	Monitoring for Tussocks
Community Environment Program - Bridget Archer	13,200.00	13,200.00	Trevallyn Bioblitz
Pastures Grant (TBC)	25,120.00	25,120.00	Farm Business Discussion Group
Weeds Action Grant	5,208.00		Biological Control Project
Stronger Communities Program - Bridget Archer	Various		Multiple project options
Aurora Community Grants	12,000.00		Sustainable Living Festival Website and Digital Equipment
RACT Community Grants	5,000.00		Computer Equipment for Covid-19
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$72,831</b>	<b>\$50,623</b>	

## 5. President's Report

There wouldn't be a President or Chair of any organisation, possibly in the world, reporting to their members this year, who wouldn't call the last year a challenging year. It's been challenging mainly for us as individuals and as a community. To be truthful, it hasn't been that challenging to us as an organisation. Apart from shifting to working from home during the shutdown and not being able to run our planned field days we have with only a few exceptions be able to carry on reasonably normally. I do acknowledge though that within the wider community, some people found it quite difficult.

This is my seventh report and at the risk of appearing repetitive, we keep going from strength to strength. There are, of course, a number of fundamental reasons for this, based around the long-standing community driven model adopted by Tamar NRM, early in its establishment, that with very little tweaking, has stood the test of time.

I would like to thank our three partner councils, City of Launceston, West Tamar and George Town, for their continued support. This support reflects the councils' commitment to community-based NRM and the work Tamar NRM does in the region to benefit the environment and the community.

Our working groups have, as usual been active throughout the year. Jason Orr had his first full year as Chair of the George Town Coastal Community Management Group. He has brought new energy to the role and the group was quite active until the shutdown. Community members right along the northern coast do a tremendous job volunteering their time to manage weeds, clean up around the foreshore, reduce fire hazards and work on tracks.

Our weeds working group, chaired by John Thorp was successful in gaining grants from the State Government for a number of small pilot weed management projects. That task was made a great deal easier with the help of Kay Bailey who many of you may remember as the Executive Officer for Tamar NRM from the end of 2004 until beginning of 2009. Welcome back Kay and it's great to have your experience and expertise. Our annual Ragwort raids in January and early February were organised by Jo Lyall. This year we had improved numbers of volunteers for the second year in a row in the Launceston municipality. Our Boneseed Blitz in October last year, although low key, is an ongoing and essential community event. New opportunities, will be opening up for Tamar NRM in weed management as the Weeds Action Fund gets started, and based on the success of our pilot projects over the last year, our ability to engage both the community and stakeholders we should be in a good position to undertake effective on-ground weeds management work in the coming year.

Our feral cat working group has again, been quiet during the year. We have been able to provide advice to the West Tamar Landcare group who have been active in the West Tamar region with their own feral cat management project.

Plastic Free Launceston, another of our working groups, had an amazing start to the year but COVID-19 restrictions put their activities on ice until late June. The good news is that they have been ramping up activities again slowly and we expect that this year they'll be out there again having a positive influence on people's behaviour. This group is ably chaired by Trish Haeusler, supported by an energetic and passionate committee and team of volunteers.

One of the highlights of the year for us was winning the Australian Government Partnerships for Landcare Award at the Landcare Tasmania Conference. This is a well-deserved recognition of the effort Gill and Greg have put into building and maintaining quality partnerships during the five years they've been with Tamar NRM.

Our Reference Group remains a tremendous resource for Tamar NRM's Program Coordinators and Management Committee. Many of our Reference Group members joined us in February to celebrate the Australian Government, Partnerships for Landcare Award at the Landcare Tasmania awards dinner late last year. Of course, Tamar NRM does not achieve the successes it does without the valuable

partnerships we have developed over the years with various local, statewide and national organisations as well as individuals and community groups and our three funding Councils.

Our project work this year has mostly been in the agricultural sector, focussed on improving soil health and pasture management in a sustainable way to improve productivity in the region. We continue to be successful in attracting funding from Meat and Livestock Australia as well as funding from the National Landcare Program.

On behalf of the Management Committee, I would like to thank our amazing Program Coordinators, Gill Basnett and Greg Lundstrom for their tremendous enthusiasm and sustained effort throughout the year. Of course, you will all know that in early June, Gill informed us that she was leaving us to take on an exciting new role as the Statewide Coordinator for the Red Hot Tips program run by the Tasmanian Fire Service.

When Gill and Greg started at Tamar NRM five years ago, I told them both that while we had a strategic plan, they were largely free to develop the role as opportunities arose. Both had skills and experience in the NRM sector. I then told them that, above all, I just want you to make stuff happen! Each in their own way as you've no doubt observed, did exactly that. Gill brought enormous energy, innovation and professionalism to the role. Her ability to engage with people from all walks of life has been wonderful to watch and her work in the education space, working with mainly Primary School students in large and small groups has really lifted our profile and above all has increased students' awareness of how we can all contribute to creating and maintaining a healthy environment. Greg has continued to build our capabilities and engagement in the Agriculture sector and worked with Weeds Working group to address the plethora of weed issues in the region.

During the year we engaged a number of casual project officers to assist us with various projects we have been delivering. I'd like to take the opportunity to thank each of them for their contribution in making the year such a success. I'd also like to thank all those volunteers who have contributed to Tamar NRM events either directly, such as our Ragwort Raids or indirectly through our one of our working groups. Right up to the shutdown we had a pretty reasonable amount of volunteer activity. My last slide will clearly show that. So, once again, to all our volunteers, thank you so much for contribution. Everybody wins when it comes to volunteering in our own communities especially when it is improving the wonderful region in which we live.

Every year, I get great pleasure in reporting our community engagement and volunteer hours to you. Obviously, with the shutdown, due to the COVID-19 restrictions we cancelled all field days workshops and events from mid-March right up until June 30<sup>th</sup>. So, we are really reporting on 8 months. One would therefore expect numbers to be down in both categories, however, as you will see from the graph, Volunteer hours are up on last years and roughly equal to the 2017-18 year which is an amazing feat. Even more remarkable, because last year it's understood that volunteerism in general is declining.

A significant contribution to the increasing volunteer hours has come from Plastic Free Launceston which, I believe, indicates its relevance to the community and the ongoing and energetic commitment of its volunteers.

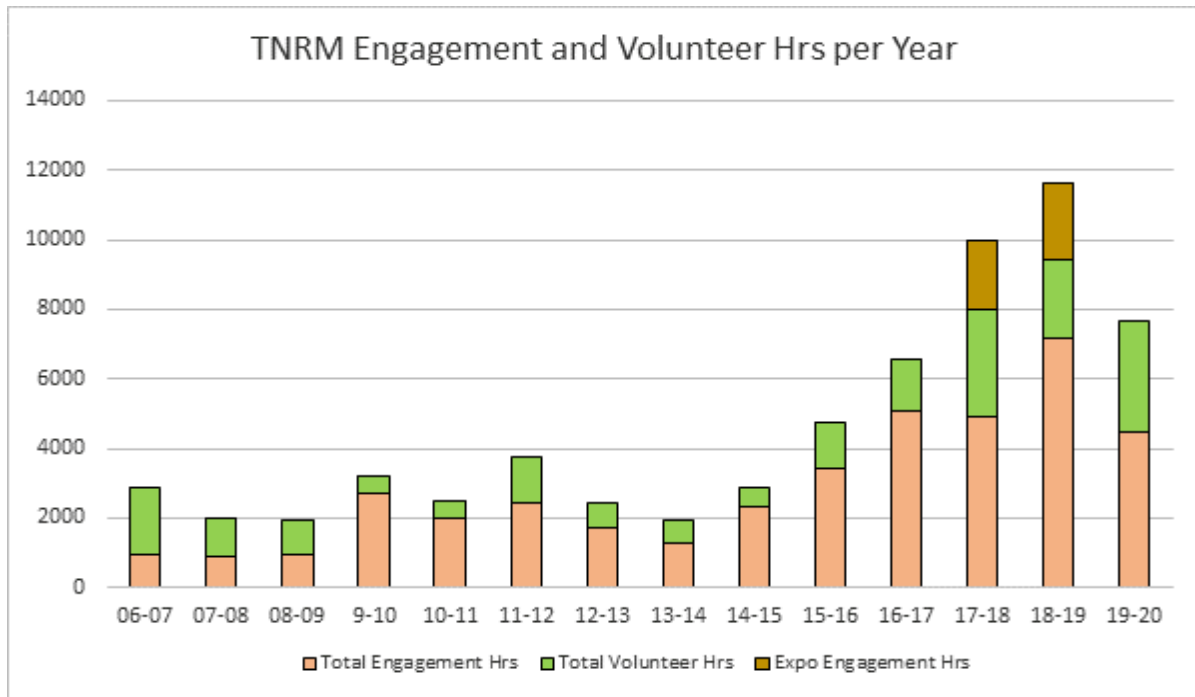


Figure 1. Tamar NRM engagement and volunteer hours per year 2006-07 to 2019-20

### Engagement Hours

Events held that involve learning, education or pass on knowledge, for instance forums, workshops, training days and field days such as: Pasture field days, Master TreeGrowers, Backyards to Broadacres, fire management workshops, Expos.

### Volunteer Hours

Events held that involve community members contributing their time and or resources for the benefit of the community, for instance: Ragwort Raids, Boneseed Blitz, School tree days, bag making workshops, Working Group meetings, MC meetings, Reference Group meetings and Tamar NRM volunteers exhibiting/presenting at events.

Roger Tyshing

Tamar NRM President



## 6. Program Coordinators' Report

Tamar NRM continues to deliver programs and projects to benefit our environment and promote a sustainable way of life.

2019-20 saw activity across all of our five target areas of Biodiversity, Sustainable Farming, Sustainable Living, Weeds and Feral Cats.

The highlights of the 2019-20 year are many and it's impossible to include them all in this report or to give due recognition to the many partnerships and volunteers involved. It is all these partnerships, old and new, short and long, that were recognised on Saturday 26th October 2019, at the Landcare Tasmanian awards ceremony with Tamar NRM being presented with the Australian Government Partnerships for Landcare Award. The Tamar get-together held, on 11th February, was our small way of saying “thank you”.

Others in the region were also acknowledged. Anna Povey (Vice President Tamar NRM and President of Friends of Trevallyn Reserve) was awarded the Honourable Mention in the Australian Government Individual Landcarer Award, Soils First was the winner of the Australian Government Landcare Farming Award, NRM North and Westbury Town Common Landcare Group were finalists in the Partnerships for Landcare Award. The Grade 3 classes of Riverside Primary were finalists in the Woolworths Junior Landcare Team Award. Northern Tasmanians Brian Baxter, Jenny Baxter, Don Defenderfer, Helen Eastburn, Ross Eastburn, Ian Sauer, Jayne Shapter, Dr Graeme Stevenson, and Jillian Weston were all recognised as long-standing living Landcare legends.



The community driven project approach in our experience sets us apart from other delivery models, and over the fence learning works in the sustainable ag-space, where we continue to build momentum.

Without repeating what our president and working group chairs have reported, we highlight in our coordinator’s report two activities where high-level engagement with community and stakeholders was evident.

The three-year Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) funded Tamar Pasture Improvement Demonstration Project concluded in June, and was one of our five sustainable ag projects. The project held 4 field days with 132 people attending, with feedback received from 50 producers. Implementation and adoption of better practices was captured in landholder surveys, case studies and narratives, building a clear picture of what is of value to the Tamar Valley producers and informs us designing new locally relevant ag-projects. A big “thank you” to all involved and in particular, our producer demonstration site hosts and data collectors – Ian Dickenson, Tom Richards, Ben Hooper and Ed Archer. The 50-page final report can be viewed off the Tamar NRM website under the “Reports” Tab.



Another long running projects was the Tamar Valley Rural Biodiversity and Landscape Learning Project (20 Million Trees Project) In December 2015, Tamar NRM attracted \$107,800 to the region through its 20 Million Trees funding application. The project involved planting 28,000 plants (20,000 trees and 8,000 understorey) established on 65 ha of land. It connected schools and the community in planting on council reserves and worked with landholders to establish biodiverse shelter belts through planted seedlings and by direct seeding. The project was federally funded with in-kind support from Tamar NRM, Councils, landholders and students and concluded this year.

The project had an urban and a rural component, linking in with schools and councils to revegetate with endemic species in Launceston, West Tamar and George Town council reserves. We engaged with landholders to establish biodiverse shelter belts and returned areas of degraded farm land to enhance ecosystem services. The project provided a fertile learning experience through our "Landscape Learning" approach. A worthwhile project we would like to revisit.

On the back of the highly successful Tamar Sustainable Energy Expo (2017) and the Tamar Sustainable Living Expo (2018), Tamar NRM started this year organising a bigger and better Tamar Sustainable Living Festival. This was to be held in September 2020, but in light of the restrictions and uncertainties due to Covid-19 we have made the difficult decision to postpone the festival to Spring 2021. What we have got is some excellent planning thanks to Gabrielle Stannus, who we engaged to grow the event into a Festival. Tamar NRM has invested quite a lot in time and money in the area of sustainable living and believes its one area we can make a real difference in.

We are pleased to report that activities undertaken this year have been delivered in a safe and accident free manner. Only incidents of a minor nature reported and no serious personal injuries. Our work health and safety processes are regularly updated and risks assessments undertaken for every event. But this year we had the added complication of dealing with Covid-19 restrictions. It halted our face-to-face events like field days and workshops for a time, and while engagement hours took a hit, we adapted and found other ways to get the important NRM messages out. We now have a Covid-19 safety plan.

Finally, we highly value the support we receive from our three partner councils: City of Launceston, West Tamar and George Town. From program coordinators, Greg and Gill please accept our appreciation for this support and the support we get from the broader community. You all are the key ingredient in "making stuff happen".

*Greg Lundstrom & Gill Basnett*  
*2019-20 Program Coordinators*



## 7. Overview of Tamar NRM Projects

### 2019-20 Active Projects:

- Small Farm Roadmap Project
- Farm Business Discussion Group
- Carbon Neutral Farming Project
- High Risk Grassy Weeds Project
- MLA Healthy Soils Discussion Group
- Biological Control Agents Project
- Tamar Pasture Improvement Demonstration Project
- Tamar Valley Rural Biodiversity and Landscape Learning Project (20 Million Trees Project)
- Tamar Valley Weed Strategy website update
- Prevention and early detection of high risk grassy weeds project. (Serrated Tussock and Chilean Needle Grass)
- Biological weed control project (Funded by Tamar NRM)
- Besom Heath Chemical Control Trials
- Boneseed Blitz
- Ragwort Raid
- Plastic Free Launceston Community Education Project
- Sustainable Living Festival 2021
- Community Microplastics Surveys
- 2020 Catch it in the Catchment

A number of environmental and sustainability projects are run by Landcare groups, Friends Groups, Service Clubs and Progress Associations, etc totally independent of Tamar NRM. We acknowledge the effort and dedication of these groups.

### **Tamar NRM Working Groups:**

Weeds Working Group; George Town Coastal Management Group; Sustainable Farming Technical Working Group; Feral Cats; Plastic Free Launceston.

## 7.1. 2020 Ragwort Raid

In our 21<sup>st</sup> year of the Ragwort Raid, the attendance, roads travelled and the amount of ragwort removed has demonstrated the benefit of community driven weed control programs. The overall abundance of Ragwort has been reducing in the region, and although the prevalence of Ragwort was down on 2019 figures, some years will be bumper years for ragwort collection due to seasonal factors and having more volunteers pulling ragwort. However, the long-term trend is downward compared to when we started the Raids two decades ago. There is significantly less Ragwort in the region and hence less pressure on volunteer effort needed to complete the annual raids.

Forming collaborations across multiple land tenures and land managers and taking an integrated approach to weed management in Tamar Valley contributes to the success of the Raids. These collaborations are coordinated by the Tamar Valley Weeds Strategy and overseen by the Tamar NRM Weeds Working Group chaired by John Thorp.

This year the Tamar NRM weeds coordinator Kay Bailey instigated a community monitoring survey to record the presence/absence of Ragwort biological control agents. It was not the most ideal time of their life cycle to observe all three agents released in Tasmania, but Ragwort Flea Beetles were detected during the East and West Tamar Raids. Despite close inspection and splitting the stems of many plants, no agents were detected in the southern areas around Blessington and Targa where ragwort was most abundant.

Collectively, compliance measures, working with agencies, public education, biocontrols and the Ragwort Raids combine to be an effective model that other regions could pick up and implement. Reminding land managers of their responsibilities under the Weed Management Act (1999) in November-December would assist Ragwort control before seed sets in January-February. Tamar NRM also promotes machinery and vehicle wash down practices to limit weed spread.

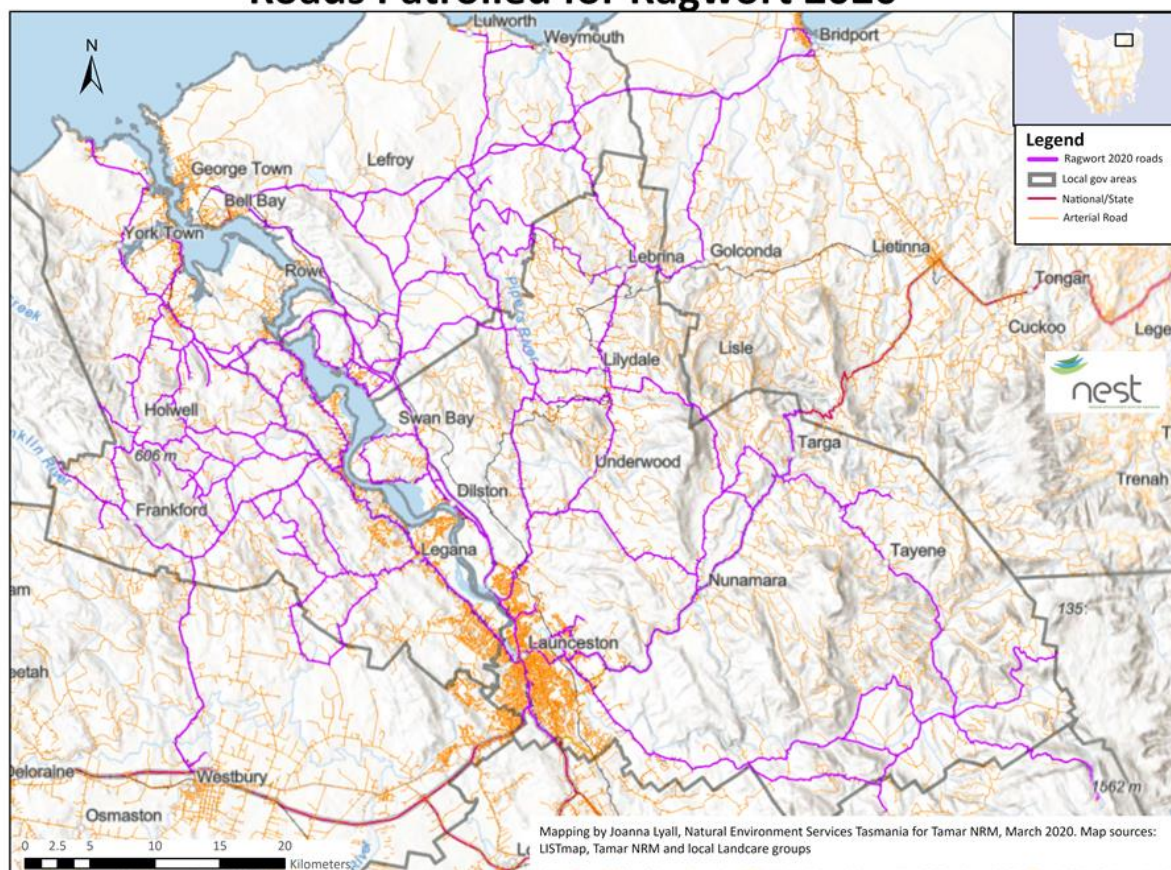
With sufficient numbers of volunteers willing to provide their own time to attend the Raids, then Tamar NRM will continue to facilitate this annual event.

This work is a community partnership which builds capacity and awareness. It also builds community confidence that we can manage weeds at a local level, "something can be done!"





## Roads Patrolled for Ragwort 2020



Map produced by Nest Natural Environmental Services, showing significant roads patrolled for Ragwort, other minor roads were also patrolled, but not marked.

### Tamar NRM 2020 Ragwort Raid statistics.

Municipal Area	Patrol Base Location	Number Volunteers	Hours Donated	Length of Significant Roads Patrolled	Bags Collected	Land Under Invasion Threat (Ha)
Georgetown (1 <sup>st</sup> February)	Pipers River Fire Station	13	65	207.75 km	6	17000
West Tamar (2nd February)	Winkleigh Hall	14	70	263.01 km	4	15600
Launceston (5th February)	Waverley Lakes	11	55	518.79 km	9	32000
Dorset, Meander Valley, Northern Midlands Councils				90.18 km		
<b>Totals for all councils</b>		<b>38</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>1079.74km</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>64600</b>



The Ragwort Raid Report is on Tamar NRM's website under "Reports". The event is underwritten by City of Launceston, West Tamar and George Town Councils, with specific funds provided again this year by the Royal Automobile Club of Tasmania (RACT).

## 7.2. Agriculturally Focussed Projects

Sustainable farming project activity continues to be well supported across the Tamar Valley through our field days and project activity, all featuring partnerships with professionals and other organisations working in the agricultural sector.



The three year project Pastures Improvement Project funded by MLA wound up in June. The last Field Day held on 12th March 2020 at Springmere (Beaconsfield) and Greenhythe (Hillwood) farms.

The joint Tamar NRM/Meat and Livestock Australia three-year pasture demonstration site (PDS) project demonstrated that the profitability of red meat production could easily be increased by at least 10 per cent (the MLA target), through establishing better pastures, improved pasture utilization and livestock management.

Two of the three sites, “Springmere” and “Elverton”, were chosen to demonstrate best practise pasture establishment and pasture management. Both farms exceeded the MLA target expectations while the third site “Greenhythe”, situated at Hillwood was selected to build on a 2016 Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA) pasture trial, looking at the adaptation of four pasture blends planted under that trial. Measuring longer term pasture species persistence was a valuable dimension to the project.

The Tamar Pasture Improvement Demonstration Project has many legacy products which Pasture Snippets which continue to be shared at field days and with our data base of over 80 producers.

A big “thank you” to all involved and in particular:

- Producer demonstration site hosts and data collectors – Ian Dickenson, Tom Richards, Ben Hooper and Ed Archer.

- Meat and Livestock Australia
- Tamar Valley Pasture Improvement Working Group
- Ian Sauer (Technical Working Group Chair)
- Consultant Agronomist and plant breeder: Eric Hall
- Consultant: Jenny Craigen
- Tamar Natural Resource Management Committee and reference group.

The 50 page final report can be viewed off the Tamar NRM website under the “Reports” Tab.

### **Soil Health Discussion Group:**

The Tamar Valley is one of eleven soils discussion groups supported through MLA funding, across New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria.

The MLA/Tamar NRM Soils Health Discussion Group commenced in spring 2019 and delivered 3 of the 6 field days to 15 participating farms. The remainder were planned to be delivered in Autumn 2020, but postponed to spring due to Covid-19 restrictions.

We acknowledge the support of MLA and their commitment to improving farm outcomes financially, environmentally and socially.

Over the past year the role out of the Tamar Valley Pasture Improvement Technical Group has become increasingly important in ensuring the information we deliver is relevant to the farming community and sustainably focused. We thank the group for taking the time to provide input. Thank you Ian Sauer for your guidance as chair of the group.

### **Members:**

Farmer/Fire/Community	Ian Sauer (Chair)	Pipers River
Farmer/TFGA Tamar Valley	Ben Hooper	Beaconsfield
Farmer/Forester	Ian Dickenson	Blessington
Farmer/Longford Red Meat Trial	Ed Archer	Hillwood
Farmer/Soils improvement	Tim Reed	Rosevale
Biosecurity/Animal Health	Paul Nilon	Perth
Pastures	Eric Hall	Pastures Consultant
Pastures	Rowan Smith	TIA
Tamar NRM	Greg Lundstrom	NRM & group facilitator

Recognition of our role assisting agriculture came with invitations to present at two high profile events. We were approached by MLA to present at the Grasslands Society of Southern Australia Annual Conference (Creswick Victoria 16-18 July 2019), about our pastures demonstration project. Ian Dickenson provided an on-ground perspective, and attended on our behalf. The opportunity of presenting at Red Meats Updates in July 2019 was accepted with Ben Hooper undertaking the presenter's role. Thank you Ian and Ben and to Ed Archer for liaison with Red Meats Update for us.

Over 2019-20 our two most recent NLP2 projects attracted farmer interest. In June 2019, two new ag-focussed projects were funded through the National Landcare Program Small Grants Fund. Project funding of \$67,562 and \$42,900 for Carbon Neutral Farming and Small Farm Roadmap projects positions Tamar NRM as an important player in northern Tasmania delivering the much needed extension services to farmers.



Carbon Neutral Farming in a Northern Tasmanian Context is a project which aims to show that Tasmanian farmers have a greater opportunity than most mainland states to become carbon neutral and as a consequence their farming enterprises benefit by gaining a market edge. Our goal is to provide whole farm Greenhouse Gas (GHG) accounting at 5 farms around the Tamar Valley showing the multiple benefits of adopting adaptation and mitigations measures including on-farm carbon storage, GHG emission reductions from on-farm recycling, pasture and livestock management, conservation tillage, converting to solar energy, cogeneration, and offsets through forestry and/or native vegetation. The project will culminate with a carbon forum showcasing best practice to an observer group of producers. The project findings will be synthesised into resource utilisation opportunities for farmers. A collaborative partnership has been formed with the NEXUS carbon project, running on farms in the midlands and north west.

The Small Farm Roadmap project is a continuation of the "Backyards to Broadacres" Workshop series, which saw the participation of 190 Tamar Valley producers over 2016-17. This new small farm project will continue to providing regionally relevant farming information across the Tamar Valley building producer capacity to be profitable and sustainable. By attending the six interconnected farm field days, small to medium size farming enterprises will gain an understanding of Tamar Valley soils and land capability; what makes an up-to-date sustainably focussed farm plan; transitioning to new and profitable enterprises; biodiversity values and practical solutions of living with nature; and the marketplace and opportunities for Tamar Valley producers.

### **7.3. Education Programs**

As usual, we have been involved in events organised by others such as Climate Youth Leaders Conference (80 students) organised by Greening Australia. We like to support these larger events as they are a great way to engage with the community and we want to help make them the success they are. We would like to acknowledge and thank all the event organisers and volunteers.

Supporting Nel Smit from Greening Australia and Youth Leader Toby Thorpe organised the second conference day for Climate Youth Leaders in Launceston at West Launceston Primary School, following on from the initial day held in March. The day was to bring students, teachers and mentors back together 6 months after the initial conference day to see how the kids had gone with a variety of projects aimed at tackling the big issue climate change.

And what an inspiring group of young leaders they were. Students from West Launceston Primary School, Deloraine High School, Scotch Oakburn College, St Patrick's College came together to share their wins as well as some of the difficulties they faced. They also discussed solutions and provided encouragement and used the opportunity to network with each other and the mentors present.

Having Costa Georgiadis sharing his knowledge and experience with the students was fantastic. He even brought along his Logie award which he feels is everyone's to share. We certainly thought the students were winners!

This year we welcomed back community educator and lecturer John Gooderham (co-organiser of The National Waterbug Blitz). John presented to the public in the auditorium then oversaw a hands on bug identification and accreditation session. Tamar NRM collaborated with Queen

Victoria Museum and Art Gallery (QVMAG), Waterbug Blitz and City of Launceston's Natural Environment Unit for this event.

Making the planetary links tested Tamar NRM staff to come up with something relevant for our stall at the "Big Day of Science" on the 10th August. The overall science theme was on the moon and celestial bodies, making it difficult for us to choose a topic that would resonate with QVMAG visitors and link to life on earth, which by definition natural resource managers are trying to protect. We finally decided upon "How life can thrive in extreme habitats" knowing that a number of organisms do pretty well to survive in hostile environments. So we used aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates as our examples. It gave us an opportunity to try out our stereo microscope and macro lenses thanks to a Bell Bay Aluminium grant.



At the end of the 20 Million Trees project last year we found that we had reached all our milestones but still have \$15,000 to spend. What a nice little surprise. So we used that money to buy some more seedlings to plant around the region.

This year we again planted with City of Launceston staff (who also beautifully prepared the sites) and students from Youngtown Primary School, John Calvin School and Newstead



College in Youngtown Recreational Reserve. It is wonderful to be able to carry on with this project that was started way back in 2010.



Conservation Volunteers Australia stepped up to the plate to plant trees at Merthyr Park, West Tamar and Waverly Lake, putting in over 800 plants. City of Launceston staff planted over 400 plants in Punchbowl Reserve and 100 plants in Riverbend Park. Thanks everyone, the plantings will really help with City of Launceston's rehabilitation works in these areas.

West Tamar Council staff planted 400 rushes, saggs, tea-trees and paperbarks in a detention basin to add some habitat for frogs, particularly the threatened Green and Gold Frog and reduce sediment run off.

Beechford Residents and Property Owners Association and Lilydale High School planted 280 and 65 plants respectively in Beechford and the school grounds to increase biodiversity in some open grassy areas, bring back some habitat for local wildlife, and, in the case of the school, start a Aboriginal tucker and medicinal plants garden.

The few left over plants we have will be put into various spots around the Tamar.

## 7.4. Christopher Strong Sustainability Grant

Current recipients of the Christopher Strong Sustainability Grant are 2019 Recipient: Punchbowl Primary School - "*Enhancement of habitat gardens and nature based play space*") and 2018 Recipient: Kathryn Pugh ("*Litoria raniformis - Green and Gold Frog in Launceston's urban wetlands*").

Punchbowl Primary School's \$600 in funding was used to purchase a range of Tasmania native shrubs, grasses and ground covers, along with stakes, weed mats and guards. Existing plantings in 4 garden beds were compliment with these new plants, which aimed to increase the diversity of species and size of plants in the school grounds.

The school grounds have several large gums but had limited smaller trees, shrubs, grasses and ground covers, hence these new plantings provide increases habitat opportunities and also improve the natural beauty of the grounds. 2 of the garden beds are at the front of the school and can be seen from Punchbowl road. These garden beds had large trees that had been deemed dangerous by arborists, so were removed providing space and light for new planting. Another had lots of evasive introduced species removed. One garden bed on a steep hill, so new plantings were added to prevent erosion, while the other bed is a nature play space for students featuring rocks and logs for climbing and exploring. All the plants were planted by students with the help of a parent.

Pleasingly the vast majority of plants have survived and are growing well. These plants will enhance the natural environment of the school grounds greatly and we are most grateful for the funding for enabling us to do this.

Green and Gold Frog in Launceston's urban wetlands project has been granted an extension to undertake the Green and Gold Surveys over this Spring.

Both active projects have agreed to finalise their projects and present their project findings at a Tamar NRM event, later in 2020.



*Punchbowl Primary School enhanced habitat gardens and nature based play space.*

## 8. Working Groups

### 8.1. George Town Coastal Management Group Chairperson – Jason Orr

The George Town Coastal Community Management Group (GTCMG) has continued to work hard on the George Town Coastal Management Plan attending workshops/ working bees like Ragwort Raid, Bone Seed Blitz, Sea Spurning; cleaning up the coastline at events like “Catch it in the Catchment” and “Clean up Australia Day” or just when locals go for their daily walks. We also held two coastal walks along our spectacular coastline being the Low Head to Beechford “Triple Bluff Walk” and the Lulworth to Weymouth “Triple Bay Walk. Both walks consisted of a day of shared learning and building community where we took time to share stories and knowledge from local experts and non-experts. The unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic has placed unforeseen restrictions on everybody however, local groups continue to work hard within the guidelines to ensure community projects keep ticking along and it is business as usual as much as possible.

Our annual “Coastal Catch Up” this year was held at the Low Head “Chapel” in early March 2020 where groups and guests reported on their highlights over the previous twelve months.

**Bellingham** - Judy Morrison reported that working bees, maintenance of tracks and community events have been held. A basketball court, walking tracks, 9 hole golf course and gym have been projects undertaken with George Town Council (GTC) assisting with some funding. A federal government grant

assisted with heat pumps and painting of the community hall. Clean up Australia Day was undertaken and visitors in motor-homes were still regularly in the area at that time.

**Beechford** - Steve Bruinewoud reported that the group canvassed the community for project ideas with about 7 being received and they have now been completed. Walking tracks have been cleared, picnic tables installed, speed zones reduced. The BBQ area and community shed have been completed with financial assistance from GTC. Community spirit has increased. A boardwalk to protect coastal land is the next project with an application currently before Crown Land Services (CLS). If approved the group will be seeking funding assistance including applying for grants. The camping area/rec ground is currently a grey area and strong use from campers was expected until Easter. The group is meeting with the GTC to address issues with rubbish and a new toilet block. There have been some issues with motorbikes in the area.

**Bell Buoy Beach** - No attendees. The GTCCMG is looking to get a group going in that coastal community and people were encouraged to spread the word and generate interest. Mayor Keiser is a resident of Bell Buoy so there may be an opportunity there.

**George Town** - No attendees specifically from the George Town community. The GTCCMG is looking to get a group going in George Town and planned to use the upcoming "Catch it in the Catchment" gain some interest.

**Hillwood** - Ross Grange reported that projects in collaboration with GTC had been going well and included upgrade of the rec ground and a fishing spot at the pontoon. Hillwood History room kicked off last year. The group have a great deal of information to sift through, collate and display at the room which is located at the Hillwood hall. Three oak trees planted to commemorate three local men that died in the war have been recently discovered. Egg Island Reserve has had some ongoing issues but a new approach is being adopted to resolve the problem of beach access. A walkway from the creek to the park area is being discussed with GTC. In the coming year the annual Clean up Hillwood will be held in conjunction with the garden club, Catch it in the Catchment and the Boneseed Blitz are also on the agenda.

**Low Head** - Steve Gordon gave an overview of the history of the Low Head Progress Association and how the land came to be preserved. The meeting venue was originally a chapel from across the road that was moved to its current location in the 70's. The GTC has assisted in the group getting the building up to scratch and compliant. The group run golf on Friday afternoons and have been working towards greater community engagement and participation with other local groups to assist with sea spurge, rubbish collection etc.

**Weymouth** - No attendees however, the group had been undertaking considerable work on the foreshore area with the assistance of funding obtained as a result of the 2016 floods.

**Lulworth** - The group had been undertaking considerable work in respect to weed management. Sea spurge, boneseed and asparagus are particular issues. Funding was obtained through the Weed Management Fund in respect to asparagus fern and once that work is undertaken, the group will look towards blackberry eradication. Australia Day Cleanup was the weekend following the meeting. A number of community events have been held including membership drive pizza night. A 4WD trip in June 2019 undertook the traverse from Bellingham to Bridport. Jason extended appreciation on behalf of the Lulworth Community Association (LCA) for their collaboration and assistance.

**East Tamar Landcare (ETLC)** - Jenny Baxter extended appreciation on behalf of the group to all local community groups present and the GTC for their ongoing support and assistance. Jenny provided an overview and history in respect to ETLC, weed management including those which are specific issues in the local area including cape weed, gorse, ragwort and Paterson's Curse which has just been identified. Jenny provided an overview and information regarding the boardwalk and interpretation centre which opened on Baxter's Road in September 2019. ETLC holds true to being positive, persistent and proactive.



**Friends of Low Head Penguins** - Bruce George provided an overview and information on how the group came to be formed in the last 12 months or so. The group has compiled a mission statement and has significant support from PWS and Dr Eric Wohler. Funding has been secured for cameras and training of volunteers. Bird counts are being held and a number of educational events in respect to cat management and the Dogz Day Out, in conjunction with the GTC, have also been well received. The group are looking to increase community involvement and education.

**Department of Defence** - Dr Kate Hibbert discussed surveying of the Stony Head to assist with a site management plan. An indigenous survey has recently been conducted. The Bushfire management plan is being reviewed in response to outcomes from the fires on the site in November/December 2019. Devils will be checked and surveyed next week. Environmental testing of soil and water is being undertaken to monitor any issues arising from training activities. Work has been commenced on pulling sea spurge as it is quite infested in the Maitland Bay area. Phytophthora (root rot) is being monitored as the site has some threatened species of plants that are vulnerable to that.

**Dorset Coastal Working Group** - Louise Bokker gave an overview of their group which is just outside the boundary of George Town municipality. They have been doing work since 2008 and have about 4 meetings per year. Participation with the group is at a fairly low ebb since Dorset Council withdrew their support of a facilitator from NRM.

**George Town Council (GTC)** - Shane Power, General Manager, expressed appreciation on behalf of the council for all the work done by local groups. The council are currently working on a bushfire management overlay for the municipality. They are funding free green waste days at the George Town transfer station. The council are currently looking at roadside management and a review of dog and cat management within the municipality. Rex Cassidy and his alter ego "Macca" are working to educate the community about dog management. Council are meeting with Beechford residents on 13/3/20 regarding short term accommodation in their area. The GTC strategic plan is currently in process and will come out to community groups for consultation. There is a sports survey circulating at the moment and an interpretation strategy in relation to heritage, natural and cultural, assets. The council have good working relationships with Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) and Tamar NRM.

**Tas Fire Service** - The agency was unable to attend. There are no burns scheduled for autumn in our municipality. Fire workshops are on the agenda to be held in coming months around the municipality.

**Parks & Wildlife Service (PWS)** - Justin Widdowson expressed his appreciation to all groups for their work and assistance. There has been some confusion around Crown Land Services and Parks & Wildlife Service so some maps are being produced for each coastal community. Work is being done currently at Egg Island in relation to boneseed. The application submitted by Beechford in respect to the proposed boardwalk was outstanding and is currently being considered. Jayne Cooper (PWS) is the reserves manager and is happy to catch up with groups whenever needed. Vehicles on beaches remain a concern particularly at Fanny's Bay. Justin clarified that Bellingham actually come under Scottsdale Field Management Centre (FMC). Jayne stated Scottsdale FMC comes under her and she could speak with Bellingham about any issues. Justin confirmed that the issues with frog deaths in the area had been referred to Scottsdale FMC. Justin outlined that PWS are currently working closely with Scottsdale Police on some targeted activities in respect to motorbikes.

**Landcare Tasmania** - Peter Stronach gave an overview of Landcare Tas and what assistance they can provide to local working groups. It is a priority for Landcare Tas that they provide what the community needs and/or wants.

**NRM North** - Monique Case provided an update in respect to the group's current projects having a landscape focus. There is some work being done in the Bridport area with freshwater lobsters; on Flinders Island with hooded plovers and bandicoots on the West Tamar and through the Midlands. There is also work being undertaken collaboratively with the weed action fund. Monique reassured the group that NRM North are there working away in the background.

**Tamar NRM** - Greg Lundstrom outlined recent achievements and events including the celebration of the group's 21st birthday; Catch it in the Catchment; a Sustainable Living Festival and other agricultural projects. Gill Basnett thanked the George Town Council for their ongoing commitment and support and advised that weed sprayer/trailer is available for hire, by groups and there is also some wildlife survey equipment available.

**George Town Coastal Communities Management Group** - The group's plan is all online and up to date. The SPRATS group completed their annual sea spurge work on the west coast again. There is a biological control for sea spurge fairly close to being released. Jason acknowledged members of the group who had been awarded individual achievements at the Landcare Tas 25th birthday celebrations in October 2019 - Jenny Baxter and Ian Sauer to the honorary membership roll and Brian Baxter life membership. Tamar NRM were the recipients of the partnership award at the same event and were to represent the state at the national Landcare conference later this year.

## 8.2. Weeds Working Group



### Chairperson - John Thorp



This year, we supported and ran various weed specific projects and continued with our annual signature events, Boneseed Blitz in September, Ragwort Raid in January and conducted two DPIPWEE Weeds Action Fund (WAF) projects and initiated a Weeds Biocontrol Plan for the Tamar Valley. The WAF funding enabled us to conduct weeds work and plan for the next round of funding soon to be announced. We still undertake our signature events the Ragwort Raids and Boneseed Blitz. The Weeds Working Group has been active over the year with extensive work being undertaken with the WAF funding. Full reports of events can be found on the TNRM's web site under the reports section.

We met with Minister Barnett and attended the WAF launch held at Bridgenorth at a Besom Heath infestation to seek more cooperation with their department and give TNRM's views on our preferred model for weed funding delivery for on ground works. Our approach has been well received and the announcement of the Weed Action Fund aligned with our views.

### External Funding

In September the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment announced the Weeds Action Fund. A total of \$5 million over 5 years for strategic weed management. With an initial round of small grants followed by applications for larger projects.

TNRM submitted three applications for short term funding and was successful in gaining funding for the three projects (one funded by Tamar NRM) listed below aimed at developing these to larger projects in later years. Conducting these was a major undertaking primarily undertaken by Kay Bailey and Greg Lundstrom over nine months of the year.

They are as follows:

- **Prevention and early detection of high risk grassy weeds**

This project develops a monitoring program for invasive Nassella grasses for high risk areas where movement of animals or machinery results in high risk for seed spread for these new and emerging weeds. During phase 1, Tamar region will be used as a pilot. Once proven to be effective, the methodology will then be spread more broadly into other areas of northern Tasmania during Phase 2. The Nassella grassy weeds to be highlighted are Chilean needle grass (Priority 1) and serrated tussock (Priority 2). Due, in part, to the difficulty in identification due to similarity to many native tussock grasses, these grassy weeds often go undetected until infestations reach a large size. The aim is to pro-actively prevent this occurring in the Tamar Valley and surrounding areas. This project also provides an added benefit where other invasive weeds recorded during surveys can be reported to authorities.

- **Besom Heath project**

Australia's only known infestation of besom heath is limited in range to the Bridgenorth area in northern Tasmania. This weed of pastures, grasslands and bushland was first formally recorded as naturalised in 1983. It is now threatening to become a state-wide weed (Noble, Smith 20161). While its range is restricted (possibly only 20 properties), it is vital to effectively target this declared weed while eradication is still possible, and in the first instance putting a high priority on containment.

## Biological Control

TNRM has self funded the biological control project conducted by Kay Bailey with the assistance of Dr John Ireson, because it was seen as important that all the available biological control agent available in the State were distributed in our region. Whilst biological control is not the total weed solution, it can be most usefull as an adjunct to the overall weed management task.

- **Towards Community Biological Control of Priority Weeds in northern Tasmania;**

This project (stage 1) has developed a four-year, community-driven, Biocontrol Action Plan for thirteen high priority weeds in northern Tasmania – A review of the status and application of biocontrol agents for gorse, Paterson’s curse and ragwort had been produced in the leadup to development of the Biocontrol Action Plan.

Another ten weed species to investigate their potential lfor use of biocontrol were identified by the project:

African boxthorn (*Lycium ferocissimum*); arum lily (*Zantedeschia aethiopica*); boneseed (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera*); bridal creeper (*Asparagus asparagoides*); Californian thistle (*Cirsium arvense*); cotton thistle (*Onopordum acanthium*); English Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*); Montpellier broom (*Genista monspessulana*); Spanish heath (*Erica lusitanica*); and wild passionfruit (*Capparis spinosa*).

The Action Plan establishes the foundation for strategic outcomes with subsequent planned implementation as Stage 2 to achieve long term community action.

## Weeds Working Group

We have held one Weeds Working Group Meeting in December 2019 following the announcement of the WAF projects however, stakeholder meetings have been held throughout the year.

## Ragwort Raid

The annual Ragwort Raids were undertaken as three events in the east, west and Nunamara areas with over 1000 Km of roads covered by 190 volunteer hours The amount of ragwort collected was again reduced to a small ute load in each area, with Nunamara -Blessington still showing significant infestations on private land. However the overall reduction in infested areas over the 21 years of the raids is testament to their effectiveness. Consideration has been given to the need for their continuation and we concluded that they still play an active role in containing the weed. Should we obtain funding for biological control, agents will be released in hot spot areas.

The Ragwort Raids continue to attract community groups, Landcare groups, volunteer fire brigades, landholders and the general public who join together during late January - February to keep Ragwort at bay. The event is underwritten by City of Launceston, West Tamar and George Town Councils, with specific funds of \$2,000 provided again this year by the Royal Automobile Club of Tasmania (RACT).

## Boneseed Blitz

Over the months of September and October 2019, Tamar NRM and its partners staged the annual Boneseed Blitz. This event organised by Tamar NRM, is in its fourteenth year and was supported by the Launceston City Council, West Tamar Council, Georgetown Council, Department of Primary Industry, Water and Environment, Parks and Wildlife Service, State Growth and various community and Landcare groups. This year's Blitz contained many elements which supported the objective of preventing Boneseed from establishing a major foothold in the region. Actions included:

- Continued with awareness raising activities (focus was Boneseed on private land);



- Worked with agencies and councils toward shared responsibility;
- Obtained the necessary agency approvals to access lands and transport Boneseed;
- Sourced latest Boneseed mapping and recorded reported sightings;
- Revisited 2017 treatment sites;
- Documented and reported private land infestations to compliance organisations;
- Promoted community group weed working bee days;
- Supplied "Dabbers" for cut and paint treatment (cut stump);
- Helped with plant identification and weed treatment information;;
- Undertook risk assessment and safety briefings for volunteers; and
- Took an integrated weed management approach consistent with Tamar Valley Weed Management Strategy.

### **Coastal Groups**

We continue to work with coastal groups on weed issues and provide support to volunteers.

### **Invasive Grasses and Other Species**

The Serrated Tussock (*Nassella trichotoma*) on the East Tamar continues to be controlled and monitored with the cooperation of landholders. We are acutely aware that the weed may be present in other parts of the region and have applied for funding to attack the problem.

I wish to thank all our community volunteers who undertake weed control and participate in our events ably coordinated by Greg and Gill. Project work for WAF applications has been ably undertaken by Kay Bailey.

Whilst I wish we could remove all weeds, we know that this is impractical and we follow a strategic plan which gains the most for the region with available resources.

## 8.3. Plastic Free Launceston

### Chairperson - Trish Haeusler



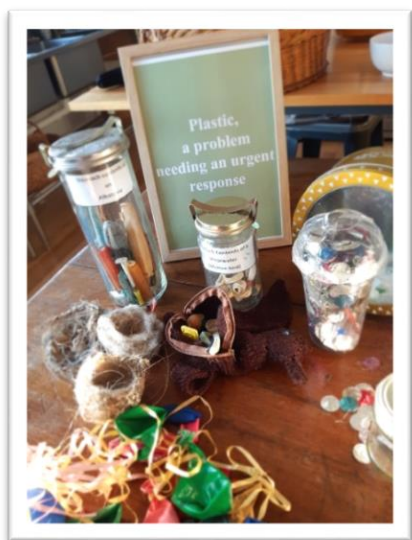
I would like to start this report with a thank you to Tamar NRM for their continued support of the work carried out by Plastic Free Launceston. It is also a good opportunity to highlight that the projects were planned and delivered by our very enthusiastic working team comprised of: Mel Morrison, Kylie Boatwright, Eerin and Alex Hardman and Tori Haeusler. They all bring valuable skills and talents to the working group, and with backgrounds in business, education and community services and hospitality, provide the diversity of ideas which are so valuable to this group.



Plastic Free Launceston is now in its 4<sup>th</sup> year. For those who may be unaware, this name was chosen to demonstrate our support for Plastic Free July - an Australian initiative, now in its 10 year with 250 million participants, from 177 countries. Rebecca Prince Ruiz, the founder of Plastic Free July, was very supportive of our group's name which incorporates 'plastic free'. Plastic free is about taking decisive steps to reduce the unnecessary use of plastics especially, single use plastics such as: plastic bags, plastic water bottles, disposable coffee cups and straws – we call these The Big 4. Plastic Free is not anti-plastic and we understand that in many instances it is still the only available material suitable for the likes of medical equipment or for ensuring the longevity of food on supermarket shelves. This may change in the future!



During the last 12 months we have followed discussions about plastic pollution at a local, state and federal government level, and we have had the opportunities to discuss our concerns directly with local council and members of State and Federal Parliaments. Plastic Free Launceston is proud to have had the opportunity to speak directly with our local Council and urge them to make moves to bring about a stronger response to single use plastic waste in our city. This year, the Council's announcement to ban all single use plastics from Council run events and at Council owned venues was greatly appreciated and we see this as a decisive step towards more actions in reducing plastic pollution. At the Federal level, we are closely watching "The Product Stewardship Amendment (Packaging and Plastics) Bill 2019" which aims to combat the use of single-use plastics in Australia by establishing a mandatory product stewardship scheme for manufacturers, importers and distributors. In anticipation of changes at a national level, Plastic Free Launceston has remained focused on community education to ensure our community is knowledgeable about plastic pollution and ready and accepting of the changes that we hope will be legislated for in the future.



Plastic Free Launceston kick started Plastic Free July with our launch at St John's Craft Beer, at which we promoted July's calendar of events including:

- Five consecutive weeks at Harvest market with our display stall and workshops
- Plastic Free cooking workshop
- Launceston library display and children's workshop.
- City Park Radio weekly plastic free tips/ ABC Radio promotion with Children's tips read out on Belinda King's morning program throughout plastic free July.
- Children's University and Adrift Lab at the UTAS Holiday Program workshops.
- Northern Suburbs Community Centre – bunting making / AUSMAP workshops with Children's University participants.

We also participated in the following events throughout the year:

August 10 – Big Day of Science at Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery.

October 26 – Interactive activities at the children's event - *Kid I am*, held at the Silverdome.

November 11– Catch it in the Catchment - community clean up participation.

February – Children's Activities at the St Leonards Primary School Community BBQ

### **Community education training with Anthony Hill - Plastic Pollution Solutions**

As a working group of Tamar NRM, Plastic Free Launceston has benefited from the ongoing support assisting us to develop and deliver more workshops and build on our Education Program. As part of our education program development, we invited Anthony Hill to deliver a training day in February. Anthony has been involved in plastic pollution education for some years now and, with his charismatic and enthusiastic style, he delivers a strong message with a positive and 'can do' spin to it. Anthony guided the training participants through discussions and activities to design our own personal delivery style and personal story, as well providing participants with an abundance of resources. Anthony travels around Australia in his Campervan called 'Bev', delivering educational programs and professional development workshops to educators. He is a big fan of Tassie, and we have been very lucky to tap into his experiences and expertise to help us with our delivery of information about plastic pollution – who would have guessed that you could have so much fun with such a challenging issue!



*Our new mascot, Rory*

Our messaging therefore continues to be focused on the problem of plastic pollution – how it is caused, the environmental, social, and economic impacts of plastic pollution and how we can respond at a community and personal level.

With so much happening in 2020 – bush fires earlier in the year and with Covid 19, we feel even more strongly about the delivery of a positive message to a problem that we can all help to address, be it at home, work, in our social or sporting groups or in our day to day actions and interactions Plastic Free Launceston looks forward to continuing our work and spreading the plastic free message. In 2020/ 2021.