

TAMAR NRM Inc.



Tamar NRM

2017-2018 Annual Report

Supported by:



Postal Address

PO Box 396, Launceston TAS 7250

Street Address

Launceston City Council Depot
50 Remount Road, Mowbray TAS 7250

Telephone

[03] 6323-3310

Email

tamarnrm@launceston.tas.gov.au

Website

www.tamarnrm.com.au

Facebook

www.facebook.com/TamarNRM15

Table of Contents

1. About Tamar NRM.....	4
2. Management Committee	5
3. Our Staff	8
4. Key Numbers	10
5. President's Report	11
6. Program Coordinators' Report	15
7. Overview of Tamar NRM Projects	17
7.1. Sustainable Energy Expo (Sustainable Living Working Group)	18
7.2. Ragwort Raid	19
7.3. Tamar Valley Rural Biodiversity and Landscape Learning Project.....	20
7.4. Agricultural Focussed Projects.....	21
7.5. Fire and Biodiversity.....	23
7.6. Tamar NRM Works Teams.....	25
7.7. Education Program	27
7.8. Christopher Strong Sustainability Grant	28
8. Working Groups.....	29
8.1. George Town Coastal Management Group	29
8.2. Weeds Working Group.....	31
8.3. Plastic Free Launceston.....	33
8.4. State-wide Community Cat Eradication Taskforce	35

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 Exeter then Launceston. He has worked in agricultural extension, agripolitics, training and workforce development. He is currently a Director of the Migrant Resource Centre and President of Landcare Tasmania.

Anna Povey



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.

Barry Pickett



Barry is the Natural Environment Manager for City of Launceston Council. Barry worked for the ANZ Bank, Ansett Australia and Comalco, before moving to the Northwest Coast in 1996. Barry spent 10 years as the President of the Devonport Aquatic Club where he lobbied local, state and federal government for the funding towards the Devonport Indoor Aquatic Centre. Barry spent many years as the Manager of CSR Gyprock and Fibre Cement on the north coast before deciding to return back home to Launceston. He has been with council for over 3 years.

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.

Greg Unwin



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

James Ireland



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

John Thorp



John is a trained agricultural scientist and extension officer having worked at all levels from the field to highest levels of government. He is a participant in community groups and volunteers his time to local causes. 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.

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. Her current role with the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association brings added experience within the agricultural sector in Tasmania.

David Richardson - George Town Council Representative. Commencing 10th September, 2018.

Retired

Justine Brooks-Bedelph

Justine has been an important link between the George Town Council and Tamar NRM since the beginning of 2015. Her sound advice and hard work on the committee has been invaluable in developing projects, re-imagining Tamar NRM and maintaining good relationships between the two organisations over this time of change. Justine took on the role of General Manager at George Town Council in 2017, but ensured that Tamar NRM had a primary contact and representative of the council on the Management Committee since then. Justine is moving on from George Town Council into the aged care sector. We would like to wish her the best of luck and thank her for all her help and support of Tamar NRM over the last 3.5 years.

Juanita Sands

Juanita joined the Management Committee in May 2016. Juanita took on the role of treasurer and her work in accounting and tax law was invaluable to the committee. Commitments elsewhere have made it difficult for Juanita to be able to attend meetings and so she has decided to step down. We would like to thank her for her help over the last 2 years and wish her well in the future.

Table 1: Attendance at meetings during 2016-2017

Management Committee Member	Possible Meetings	Meetings Attended
Roger Tyshing	6	6
Anna Povey	6	3
Barry Pickett (or Kathryn Pugh)	6	4
Ben Hooper	6	6
Brigid Morrison	5	1
Brian Baxter	6	5
Greg Unwin	6	4
James Ireland	6	4
John Thorp	6	6
Juanita Sands	6	1
Justine Brooks-Bedelph (or Stephen Yam)	6	3

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 my knowledge and passion for the environment with others.

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

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 three 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

Ian Gleeson, Work for the Dole Supervisor



Ian took over from Anthony as the Tamar NRM Works Team Supervisor in mid-February and stayed in the role until the completion of the project in April 2017. He ran both of our Tamar and Meander Valley Green Army teams. We then employed Ian as the supervisor of our two Green Army Work Teams. Ian's success with the team was demonstrated by the completion of jobs, great feedback from land managers we worked with and the high level of involvement and output from the team.

Gabrielle Stannus, Sustainable Living Expo 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, Gabrielle 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 now balances life and work in Liffey with her partner, Ludovic. Together, they run Inwardout Studio, designing unique spaces for people to live and work in from the inside out. Gabrielle writes regularly for Hort Journal Australia and the Nursery and Garden Industry Australia (NGIA). She also coordinates environmental events including our very own Tamar Sustainable Living Expo.

4. Key Numbers

Table 2: Key numbers for Tamar NRM events and other works carried out in 2017-1018.

	No.	Participants	Engagement Hours	Amount (Granted)	No. Trees Planted
Workshops	19	460	2662		
Information Events	3	90	75		
Sustainable Energy Expo	1	1344	2004		
Volunteer Events (Events and Meetings)	35	430	1759		
School Events (School event days + Tree Planting Days)	29	1345	1937		
Education Day Events	13	5075	1550		
Grants Applied For	10			\$283,978 *(\$27,434)	
Trees Planted (Works Teams and 20 Million Trees)					10314
Hectares Direct Seeded					25
Works Team Hours		2 teams of 9	13104		
Total Events 2017-2018 (Excluding Works Team)	110	8744	9987	\$283,978 **(\$101,244)	10314 (+25ha seeded)
Total Events 2016-2017	76	4078	6066	\$273,140	1320

* Still waiting to hear about the \$3,383 from SUES Grant.

** Total grants received includes the MLA grant funding that was applied for in the 2016/17 financial year, but funding was not received until the 2017/18 financial year.

Table 3: Grants applied for by Tamar NRM in 2016-1017. (Rows highlighted in grey were not successful.)

Grant	Amount	Success	Comments
RACT Ragwort Raids	2000.00	2000.00	2018 Ragwort Raids
Green Army	14434.00	14434.00	Plus two team of 9 people undertaking works for 24-26 weeks each
Smart Farms Tier 1 - Website	10500	10500	Tamar Wees Strategy Website Update
Smart Farms Tier 2 MTG	100000	Nil	Master TreeGrowers courses x 2 plus peer mentoring
Smart Farms Tier 2 - BYBA	94170	Nil	Backyards to Broadacres workshops
Smart Farms Tier 1 - Coastal Forum	22000	Nil	Coastal Climate Change Forum - GTCWG
Smart Farms Tier 1 - Weeds Project	22500	Nil	Develop Community Weed Management Plans
TFGA (Tamar Valley Branch) and East Tamar Landcare		500.00	Chemical for Serrated Tussock control. TNRM provided labour.
Tasmanian Landcare Fund	15,000	Nil	Soil health field days
SUEZ Grant	3,383.00		National Waterbug Blitz
Total	\$283,978	\$27,434*	

*Still waiting to hear about the \$3,383 from SUES Grant

5. President's Report

The last 12 months has been an amazing year for Tamar NRM in many ways. On the back of two successful years refocusing and rebuilding the organisation we shifted our thinking away from utilising a hub model with our own place, where people came to us, to reconfirming the model we had been successful in redeveloping over the previous two years while we waited for our own premises. That model has been actively going out into the community and running events, field days and workshops, participating in, and supporting where we can add value, other organisation's events and activities and most importantly, aligning ourselves with relevant strategies of our three funding Councils to assist them in meeting their communities' needs and expectations.

Being able to shift our thinking, in a short space of time, is a credit to the Tamar NRM Management Committee and our two Program Coordinators and we have as an organisation been rewarded by the success of the programs and events we have run throughout the year, the feedback we receive from the community and the feedback and ongoing commitment we have received from our three Councils.

Our amazing Program Coordinators will provide more details about the programs and events we ran throughout the year in their report but I will touch briefly on some of the events and activities that defined the success of Tamar NRM over the last 12 months.

Last financial year we had an active Work for the Dole crew. Unfortunately, due to changes in the program, having crews of participants fell out of favour and our ongoing difficulties dealing with the provider left us disappointed and disillusioned with the program, despite the valuable contribution and achievements of the participants. We were successful however, in getting another two Green Army crews up and running for the 2017-2018 financial year. Members may recall that we had two Green Army crews over 2013-14 who worked with the City of Launceston undertaking works in the Gorge and along the upper reaches of the Tamar Estuary.

Unfortunately, the Federal Government scrapped the Green Army program despite it being enormously successful, especially in the north of the state, with some excellent environmental outcomes. Both the Work for the Dole and Green Army programs provided participants with a range of new skills sets, confidence and, in many cases, the generic skills and attributes that many of us take for granted, to go out and find paid employment, during or after participating in one of the programs. These programs created opportunities for young people to contribute to their community and enabled organisations like Tamar NRM to undertake works that would normally not be undertaken.

The short-sightedness of governments in scrapping or changing programs such as Work for the Dole and Green Army, demonstrates a lack of commitment to young people and to the community. One of the unexpected outcomes for our Green Army team was that after the program finished, the City of Launceston provided some extra funding for us to employ the team for another week to help clean up the litter and rubbish that had blown into a creek that borders the tip. I had some positive,

unexpected feedback from the father of one of the Green Army participants who told me, without knowing that I was involved with Tamar NRM, that his son really enjoyed being part of the Green Army team and was really grateful to have had the extra week's paid work.

In September last year, Tamar NRM ran a highly successful Sustainable Energy Expo. This came about after running a number of smaller energy efficiency workshops during 2016 and early 2017 and being continually asked when we were running the next one. So, we took the bit between our teeth and ran an Expo. This of course fits our model of being the facilitator of events, activities and workshops out in the community. The Expo was supported by the City of Launceston and a number of supportive local businesses and community organisations such as Sustainable Living Tasmania with whom we've developed an excellent relationship with over the last 15 months. Thank you to our Program Coordinators and all those who volunteered to assist on the day for making the Expo such a huge success.

When we ran the Expo, we provided a number of free display sites to community not for profit groups. One of those was Plastic Free Launceston run by the amazing Trish Haeusler. Trish, with a small number of enthusiastic helpers, had just started up the group, connecting via social media and attending as many venues and businesses as possible to share with them, ways they could reduce their use of plastics. After the Expo, we spoke to Trish a couple of times about her plans for the group and as a result, Tamar NRM was pleased to help Plastic Free Launceston grow and increase its effectiveness by inviting them to become a working group of Tamar NRM. Working groups have been an ongoing, successful initiative of Tamar NRM from its early days and we now have five working groups. No doubt most of you will be aware of how active and how successful Plastic Free Launceston have been in driving positive change in the community.

Our 20 Million Trees project came to an end during the year. You may not know but the 20 Million Trees project is Australia's contribution to The Queen's Commonwealth Canopy, a network of forest conservation projects involving Commonwealth countries around the world. Tamar NRM, land managers, volunteers, students and our Work for the Dole and Green Army works teams contributed around 28,000 trees and understory species to that project.

Gill Basnett, in conjunction with Tasmania Fire Service has been a key contributor during the year to a series of well attended Bushfire Biodiversity and Mitigation workshops across the north of the state.

Greg Lundstrom ran a successful series of Backyards to Broad-acres workshops in the Tamar Region throughout the year. These workshops were funded by a grant from Sustainable Agriculture Small Grants Round and along with a Meat and Livestock Australia grant enabling us to run a series of workshops and field days to enable primary producers to manage their pastures better to lift livestock production in the Tamar region by 10%, we have been quite active in the sustainable agriculture space. Importantly, we have also been able to reach out and cater to hobby farmers and backyard vegetable producers to encourage them to improve sustainability of the soils and environments they manage.

Late in 2017 the Federal Government announced their National Landcare Program (2) funding model to commence in July 2018. As expected, community groups and community Landcare groups were effectively excluded from the process. Not surprisingly two of the three incumbents were deemed to be not providing value for money - no surprises there! Federal Government is now continuing to fund them with support from the State Government while they resubmit their proposals attempting to demonstrate how they will deliver something of value. NLP 2 also released a smart farms grant round to which Tamar NRM submitted a number of proposals. Unfortunately, only one small project was successful. It will be interesting to see what percentage of funding ends up in Tasmania, who was successful in their applications and what type of projects were funded.

What is clear is that Federal Government priorities are not the community's priorities, demonstrating once again how out of touch they are. Fortunately for Tamar NRM, we have three years of operational funding ahead of us enabling us to remain truly independent and we are absolutely committed to delivering on ground activities and works that genuinely reflect community priorities. In addition, we have allocated around 10% of our retained earnings to enable us to deliver the types of activities and workshops that the Tamar region community sees are important to them.

Also, not unexpected, is the lack of any action on feral cats in the state. The Tasmanian Cat Management Plan as predicted, is a dud, sitting on shelves gathering dust while every feral cat eats its way through up to 1000 small native animals, reptiles, birds and insects a year as well as spreading toxoplasmosis through native mammals and sheep as well. Tamar NRM has led the way in lobbying for action on feral cats and been the only Natural Resource Management organisation brave enough to take the feral cat issue head on and we will continue to do so.

Our Reference group continues to remain strong and is a fabulous resource for our Program Coordinators. So, thank you to our reference group members new and old. We appreciate your input. Thank you also to the enormous number of volunteers who have contributed to our events throughout the year.

Last year we presented a graph of our engagement and volunteer hours logged throughout the year. We have further refined the way we define engagement hours and volunteer hours to give a far more accurate historical picture. This year results demonstrate another lift in activity by nearly 50% on last year. Add to this the 13,100 hours contributed by our works teams, up from 5000 hours in the 16-17 year and a 25% increase in the number of people we engaged with during the year and it's not hard to see the value Tamar NRM brings to the Tamar region. However, with the lack of grant funding around and the demise of Green Army, we do not see how we will be able to maintain these figures for the year ahead. 2017-18 has been a tremendous year for Tamar NRM.

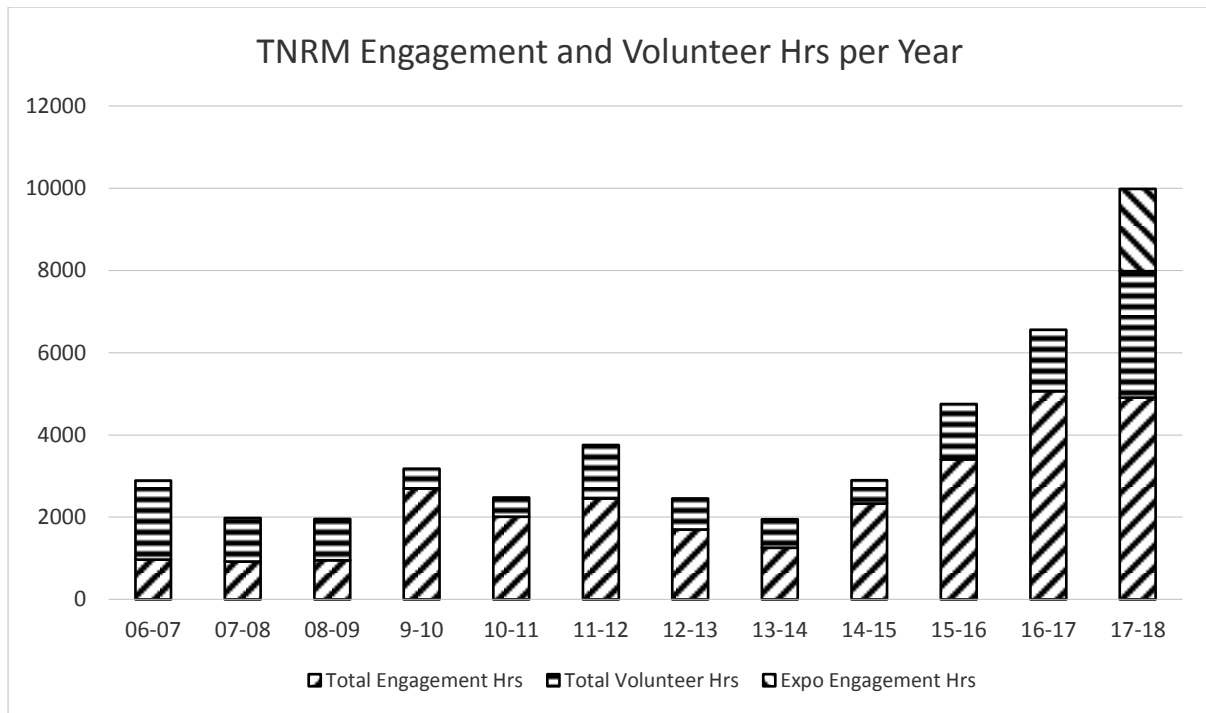


Figure 1. Tamar NRM engagement and volunteer hours per year

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

In his report our president Roger Tyshing pointed out the importance of aligning ourselves with relevant strategies of our three funding Councils to assist them in meeting their communities' needs and expectations. From a staff perspective we agree wholeheartedly. Tamar NRM wants to be relevant and as staff delivering programs and projects, we understand the importance of this and know that the ability of our organisation to be flexible enough to respond quickly to emerging issues and threats to our natural resources is a key strength we possess.

The 2017-18 financial year was our third year as a team of two, we both have conservation work histories and with our skill sets in different areas of NRM we bring complimentary perspectives to project delivery. And we like working together! We thank the Management Committee for having faith in us by renewing our contracts until mid-2021. Who knows what the NRM world will look like then, but by maintaining a focus on the five areas of sustainable living, sustainable agriculture, biodiversity, weeds and feral cats, as identified in the development of the Strategic Directions 2018-2021 document, we feel Tamar NRM will make a difference. The key will be to keep an open mind about new ways of thinking and doing and maintain our flexibility to work with communities on issues that are important in the region.

The past year we have run a number of projects, mostly in partnership with community groups and schools, councils, university, government agencies, not-for-profit organisations and industry. These include our three partner councils: City of Launceston, West Tamar and George Town; Landcare Tasmania and local Landcare groups; Tasmania Fire Service; Tasmania Parks and Wildlife, Australian Agro-forestry Network; Australian Natives and Botanicals; NRM North; TIA; and DPIPW. These and many more, too numerous to thank individually, have generously donated their time and or goods and services to our projects we thank them all for helping us help the Tamar Valley community.

Over the last two years, we have undertaken to review and update two key aspects of the organisation, our Occupational Health and Safety Policies and Procedures and the Tamar NRM Strategic Directions. We have worked closely with Worksafe Tasmania and council OHS staff, to ensure our policies and procedures are as current and workable as possible and cover the wide range of programs and events that Tamar NRM runs.

Our Strategic Directions 2018-2021 update incorporates input and feedback gathered over two years and a process of alignment with the three Tamar councils' objectives and strategic plans. Importantly, the Tamar NRM Strategic Direction 2018-2021 builds in what the rural and urban communities want of an NRM organisation, delivering grass-roots-driven projects across the Tamar Valley. We would like to thank everyone who took the time to provide input and feedback, your involvement was invaluable to ensuring we remain relevant to the Tamar community. The key areas of focus remain the same as outlined above.

We have also adapted our key values:

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.

Greg and Gill



7. Overview of Tamar NRM Projects

Tamar NRM has undertaken quite a few workshops, field days and information events as well as project planning with Working Groups, community members and groups, councils and other partners over the last year. We have continued with long term community projects such as the Ragwort Raid and Boneseed Blitz and partnerships such as with Landcare Tasmania and NRM North. Affiliations with schools, community groups, Tasmania Fire Service, Parks and Wildlife, and DPIPW more broadly were renewed or extended with the exchange of ideas and collaboration on possible future projects.

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

- The inaugural Sustainable Energy Expo;
- Hosting Costa Georgiadis for a day with Landcare Tasmania showcasing some of the amazing work done by community/Landcare groups in the region;
- Sustainable agricultural field days;
- Facilitating 50 staff from Boags Brewery who volunteered a day for a massive Boneseed Blitz with us and Landcare Tasmania;
- Burning to Plan fire management planning workshops for private property with Tasmania Fire Service;
- Planting thousands of trees for biodiversity, many with local school students;
- Biodiversity surveys in council reserves with City of Launceston and QVMAG;
- Continuing long standing weed management programs such as Ragwort Raid and Serrated Tussock control; and
- Education days - World Wetland Day, Big Day of Science, Clean up Australia Day, World Environment Day and the Kids for Kids Conference.



7.1. Sustainable Energy Expo (Sustainable Living Working Group)

In September 2017, Tamar undertook an ambitious project to stage an expo at the Albert Hall, Launceston with a focus on sustainable energy and it was a huge success!

The Sustainable Energy Expo attracted 22 Exhibitors - 20 in the hall and two, the Australian Electric Vehicles Association and Alternative Technologies Association, out in the carpark. Although there was still space in the hall for more exhibitors, a wide range of sustainable energy generation and energy efficient building design aspects were covered. We are hoping for exhibitors displaying wind and hydro generation, insulation and new double glazing to have a greater presence next time around.

Along with exhibitors we had a range of speakers providing information throughout the day. The speakers program attracted nine different speakers, covering a range of relevant topics from climate solutions, wood heater efficiency, understanding energy use, off-grid/ongrid power, batteries, energy tariffs, efficient hot water, commercial solar, building design and whether councils could become energy producers. Up to 80 patrons attended the various talks at any one time.

The Expo attracted 1100 people through the doors (not including those who just came into the carpark to look at the electric vehicles and didn't come inside.) This was just over twice the number of patrons estimated. The feedback we had from exhibitors, speakers and volunteers has been really positive and the reaction we've had from patrons has also been very encouraging. So, we are doing it again, only bigger and in an expanded format! Come along to Albert Hall on the 13th October 2018 for the Tamar Sustainable Living Expo

We are sincerely grateful for the support of City of Launceston, Mode Electrical and EPA Tasmania who were our Platinum, Gold and Silver Sponsors respectively. Thank you also to the 12 amazing volunteers who helped make the day run without a glitch.



7.2. Ragwort Raid

January 2018 saw the 19th Tamar Region Ragwort Raid kick into action with community groups, Landcare groups, volunteer fire brigades, landholders and the general public joining together to keep Ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*) at bay. Volunteers travelled 819 kms along the Tamar Valley roads in their own vehicles at their own expense, contributing 345 hours of volunteer time.



Figure 2. Roads covered in 2018 Ragwort Raids

Tamar NRM conducted four Raids in various locations, and volunteers were still pulling Ragwort in February near Ben Lomond and at Brady's Lookout, travelling considerable distances to deal with infestations. There is a greater understanding in the Tamar Valley of the potential for Ragwort to become a serious issue and that motivates Landcare and Friends groups and landholders to target the weed.

There are a surprisingly large number of residents from our municipalities who target Ragwort. These people often start as Raid participants or are inspired through our public weeds education program. We acknowledge and thank the contribution of community groups and landholders who control Ragwort on an ongoing basis. It was pleasing to see West Tamar Councillors Richard Ireland and Peter Kearney attending the West Tamar Raid. Our Weeds Working Group chairman John Thorp attended most raids and contributed his considerable knowledge about Ragwort biology and the location of past infestation locations.

Thanks to the 2018 Ragwort Raiders and this year's participating groups: West Tamar, East Tamar and Lilydale Landcare groups, Friends of Punchbowl, Piper's Brook, Piper's River and Hillwood Fire Brigades, and TNRM Green Army Team.

Jill Jones, Environment Extension Officer, State Roads, sent a letter of thanks to all concerned. In the letter Jill said: *"The longevity of the "Raid" really is a great example of community commitment and direct action which benefits the wider community."* While sponsor organisation RACT wrote: *"The RACT is delighted to support Tamar NRM and again be part of this unique annual event. It's terrific that the raids not only eradicate a weed but also involve so many members of the community"* Will Oakley, RACT's Community Manager.



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).

Table 4: Tamar NRM 2018 Ragwort Raid statistics.

Municipal Area	Number Volunteers	Hours	Roads Patrolled	Land Under Threat (Ha)	Losses Prevented (\$ per year)
George Town	13	104	222.6 km	17000	\$533,000
West Tamar	22	176	237.5 km	15600	\$488,000
Launceston	5	40	315.2 km	32000	\$1,001,900
Bordering Councils			43.7 km		
Total	40	320	819 km	64600	\$2,022,900

7.3. Tamar Valley Rural Biodiversity and Landscape Learning Project

Three years of planting and seeding have flown by. The final report for the Tamar Valley Rural Biodiversity and Landscape Learning Project, supported by funding from the Australian Government, shows the amazing achievements we have made. The aim of the project was to increase biodiversity and wildlife habitat by reconnecting urban remnants to farmlands and nearby parks. We wanted to work with schools, community groups, landholders and councils to plant local natives across the landscape, and, thanks to everyone involved, we have done just that!

In the last three years we have:

- Planted at least 20,359 seedlings;
- Direct seeded 25 ha of native shelterbelts;
- Engaged over 1,300 people;
- Established shelterbelts with 16 landholders;
- Improved biodiversity in 18 council reserves;
- Youngtown Primary won 2017 Tasmania Junior Landcare Care Award for their work with us; and
- Discovered a new Threatened Species Record.



Thank you to the following, because without their help we couldn't have done it:

- Students, teachers and parents from 15 schools: Exeter High, Exeter Primary, John Clavin School, Newstead College, Peddy Patter, Port Dalrymple School, Punchbowl Primary, Queechy High, Scotch Oakburn High, South George Town Primary, Tamar Valley Steiner, Trevallyn Primary, UTAS, Waverley Primary, West Launceston Primary, Youngtown Primary.
- Volunteers from at least nine community groups: Bellingham Progress Association, Conservation Volunteers Australia, Friends of Exeter Farm School, Friends of Punchbowl, Landcare Tasmania, Lilydale Landcare, Lowhead Landcare, NRM North, Rotary Club of Launceston, West Tamar Landcare, Weymouth Progress Association.
- Sixteen landholders involved across the Tamar.
- The Tamar Works Teams (both Green Army and Work for the Dole).
- Special thanks to staff from City of Launceston and West Tamar Council for sites, site preparation and planting.



7.4. Agricultural Focussed Projects

Sustainable farming is a key pillar of the Tamar NRM Strategic Directions (2018-2021). Keeping true to our goals, throughout 2017-18 we delivered, via externally funded grants, two projects, namely the Tamar Valley Pasture Improvement Demonstration Project and the Backyards to Broadacres workshop series.

In June 2017, the Tamar Valley Sustainable Agriculture and Pasture Improvement Technical Working Group formed to drive these two projects. With representation from Tamar valley farmers, foresters, agronomists, agriculture marketing sector, natural resource management and soils professionals, we have the checks and balances necessary to deliver regionally relevant information to our producers.

Tamar Valley Pasture Improvement Demonstration Project

Tamar NRM is project managing a three year producer demonstration site (PDS) project with the objective to demonstrate on 136 ha of land, at three Tamar Valley properties, that pasture and associated grazing management practices can increase the profitability of the red meat supply chain by at least 10%.

This project is funded by Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) with in-kind support from Landcare and farmer groups, Tamar NRM and local agriculture businesses. We were fortunate to secure the services of pastures expert and breeder Eric Hall as the lead consultant.

The PDS Field Days have proven quite popular with around 50 producers attending each time we run them. It shows the interest producers have in pasture improvement to maximise profit into the red meat chain.

Partnering with East Tamar Landcare Group and led by staff of Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture, the "Tamar Pastures in Spring - Maximising Production" Field Day on 21st September 2017 looked at two trial sites with various pasture mixes (e.g. perennial ryegrass and white clover, tall fescue and strawberry clover, cocksfoot and red clover, plantain and red clover, rye corn). Thanks to Archer's 'Greenhythe' Farm at Hillwood and Headlam's 'Oakbank' farm at Piper's Brook for their participation.

A Field Day held in March 2018 at 'Elverton', Blessington showcased farm pasture production and management at one of the Tamar Valley PDS. Experts were on hand to discuss practices for pasture and other improvements that will add to more efficient production. Tamar NRM's consultant to the project, Eric Hall, TP Jones agronomist, Iain Bruce, and property owner, Ian Dickenson, all presented their perspectives to the attendees.

The MLA PDS project will continue until June 2020 and another spring field day is to be held looking at the PDS paddocks of Hooper's 'Springmere' farm south of Beaconsfield on 1st November 2018. These pastures were sown in mid-February 2018, on just over 27 ha of land plus control paddocks and so far, the crop is looking good. You can follow the progress of this and other demonstration sites run by Tamar NRM by registering your interest to attend a field day or workshop.

It's clear from the PDS outputs recorded that the 10% target of production increases is being well exceeded with some renovated pasture paddocks demonstration 100% improvement! All results and analysis is on Tamar NRM website under "Reports" tab.

Backyards to Broadacres

Backyards to Broadacres commenced in 2016, and concluded in March 2018 with a workshop/field day held on the topic of native foods and botanicals. Over the time the project ran, a series of 10 farm focussed workshop themes were delivered to 220 landholders. The aim of the program was maximising profit and produce in the Tamar valley across multiple themes and scales

The quality of the speakers and workshops delivered has been of a high standard and we have received a lot of positive feedback with suggestions to hold events on the topics of sustainable farming practices, biodiversity, composting large and small, trees on farms and emerging regional threats, and we want to hear from you, the producer, what you need to know about.

A continuation of the Backyards to Broadacres flexible delivery model, responding to local needs, is planned to fill the knowledge gap where there is a lack of extension services. We are keen to partner with organisations to present innovative and forward-looking solutions to the issues affecting agriculture in the Tamar Valley and will continue to seek out future funding opportunities.

Thank you to those on our technical working group, presenters, sponsors, partners and, in particular, attendees. We believe you all gained from the experience and will come back again next year.



7.5. Fire and Biodiversity

Tamar NRM received a \$28,700 grant from the Australian Government and Administered by the Tasmanian State Government for the Tamar Community Fire Resilience Project. The aim is to increase people's understanding of the role of fire in many Tasmanian environments and to increase their capacity to manage for fire on their own properties. Information and planning workshops and biodiversity surveys are to be run as part of the project. It was a project that Tamar NRM took on as Gill Basnett is a fire ecologist and has a background in delivering fire management planning information and workshops.

Since the program started Tamar NRM, in partnership with Tasmania Fire Service's (TFS) Bushfire Ready Neighbourhood, has run:

- A three day workshop series at Greens Beach: Bushfire Mitigation and Biodiversity Forum, Bushfire Property Assessment Field Day and Bushfire Survival Planning Workshop with 68 residents involved, many coming to multiple days.
- A Bushfire Mitigation and Biodiversity Forum at Lulworth with 23 residents involved.
- Two Burning to Plan workshops which helped 53 landholders from 40 properties, mostly with land for wildlife and conservation covenants, develop fire management plans for their own property with a focus on hazard reduction and ecological health. TFS, Tasmanian Land Conservancy and Tamar NRM experts were on hand to answer individual landholder questions.

Participants have been keen to get as much information about regional fire management and how they can manage their own properties with respect to fire as they can. Making sure there were lots of "experts" on hand at each workshop meant many peoples questions could be answered. Feedback from all the workshops has been overwhelmingly positive.

"...I arrived feeling a little stupid and frankly slightly sceptical of how a group of professionals each with their unique expertise and with many years of experience could possibly help me (the idiot with a fear of fire and lack of knowledge) make decisions and offer additional perspectives to help me expand my options with regard to planned burning or my safety in the case of wild fire. This is vitally important information and indescribably empowering for an urban person recently relocated to the bush.

Somehow in the process of a day and half it seemed to me that Dave Cleaver, Anne Povey and Stephen Bresnehan met all participants' needs and addressed the most concerns possible. And you Gill Basnett pulled it all together as the masterful ring-mistress that you are! For the short time I was there I felt truly looked after, you should be thrilled, your team are all fantastic and immeasurably patient. Each question was generously answered albeit in my case often repeatedly. I can't thank you enough....

....The information and views gathered during the day I believe would have met most needs and addressed most concerns possible of all participants. This is a rare and generous opportunity in a world of fast bucks and limited resources.

Because of this knowledge community members have information and options to consider. And this information can make the difference between a good and poor decision or indeed between life and death." Rachel, Burning to Plan Participant.

A Bushfire Property Assessment Field Day is organised for Beechford a Burning Field Day to provide Burning to Plan workshop participants a hands on fire workshop are planned for September 2018. Some community biodiversity survey events are also in the planning stage.

Tamar NRM's Gill Basnett has also been involved in various discussions organised by TFS and State Fire Management Council on how to further develop and fund Burning to Plan/Red Hot Tip's style workshops with private landholders and University of Tasmania on their plans to establish a UTAS Bushfire Research Hub.



7.6. Tamar NRM Works Teams

Tamar NRM was approached by Landcare Australia and Manpower in May 2017 to take over two Green Army teams that were scheduled to undertake a cat management project in Meander Valley. After some negotiation to get the project changed and the team mostly working in the Tamar region an agreement was reached for us to host two Tamar and Meander Valley Green Army teams from June 2017 to June 2018. The partnership between Landcare Australia and Manpower worked out really well and we thank them for the opportunity to get on-ground works teams in the Tamar after our dissatisfaction with the Work for the Dole process.

We were lucky that Ian Gleeson, our Work for the Dole supervisor was still free to take on the task of Works Team Supervisor. Having worked with him before, we knew he had a great ability to inspire and coordinate a group of young people into a motivated team. The young people we had in our teams were made up partly from some of our Work for the Dole participants as well as new and old hands to the Green Army model. The team never ceased to amaze us at the amount and quality of the work they got through. In fact, we struggled to keep up with the team as they constantly finished jobs ahead of schedule.

Over the last 12 months the two teams have undertaken a wide range of conservation and natural resource management tasks. These include:

- Weed management in over 120 ha of land mostly targeting Gorse, Blackberry, Spanish Heath, Willow, Ragwort, Boneseed, Cotoneaster and Sea Spurge.
- Planting just under 22,000 seedlings (partly for our 20 Million Trees project and partly for the Agricultural Landscape Rehabilitation Scheme flood recovery project).
- Repaired or removal of 2 km of fencing, half of which was around the threatened species *Tetratheca gunnii* at Dan's Hill.
- Track maintenance and fire management (clearing breaks and around habitat trees prior to burning) on over 45 ha of land.
- Conducting 3 ha of erosion control in coastal areas.
- Tree survival, weed and fauna surveys.

The team worked in over 22 council reserves, 16 Parks and Wildlife/Crown Land reserves and 16 private properties.

City of Launceston - Canning Street Park, Carr Villa, Cataract Gorge, Charlton Street Reserve, Havelock Street Reserve, Heritage Forest, Hobblers Bridge, Hollybank, Lilydale Falls, Swan Bay, Mt Barrow, Mt Stuart Reserve, Punchbowl Reserve, Underwood, Waverley Lake, West Tamar, Trevallyn Recreational Reserve (Council and Parks and Wildlife) and Youngtown Recreational Park.

George Town - Bell Bouy, Bellingham, George Town, Low Head, Lulworth, Mt Direction, Pipers River, and Weymouth.

West Tamar - Beaconsfield, Dan's Hill Conservation Reserve, Glengarry, Greens Beach, Holwell Gorge, Notley Fern Gorge, Riverside, Sidmouth, Snake Gully and Tailrace.

Meander - Carrick Reserve, Elizabeth Town, Kate Reid, Liffey Falls, Oura Oura Reserve, Quamby Bend, Reedy Marsh, Westbury Town Common and Wildwood.

The team undertook the standard TAFE training in chemical handling and weed identification but for the second team we organised for them all to receive their fork lift licences. It was also a testament to the teams hard work that the City of Launceston contracted us to employ the team for a week's work tidying up around the tip. Not a fun job, but one they did extremely well under trying conditions.

They engaged well with each other and land managers they worked with. We had many positive comments after they finished up a job. Having the two fantastic on-ground teams that we did, also helped improved regional relationships, networks and partnerships shown by feedback from councils and Parks and Wildlife that they received positive community feedback on works we undertook on their behalf.

"Please pass on my enormous gratitude to Ian and the great Green Army team. These guys worked really hard to remove and break down the timber boardwalk at Bell Buoy beach. Every time I have had an interaction with Ian and the army I noticed that everyone was together and enthusiastic. I have spoken to a few of the team and each person had an interesting comment or observation. This was impressive." Justin Widdowson, Ranger – Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service.

"Very impressed with the work of Ian and his wonderful green army. They did an incredible job this morning. So happy and grateful. Can't wait to see the results in a few years time." Private Resident

For all the hard work the team put in to making the Tamar a better place, we are truly grateful!!



7.7. Education Program

Our main program with schools this year has been tree planting through our Tamar Valley Rural Biodiversity and Landscape Learning Project. The main idea behind the project was to engage students with their local reserves and increase their understanding of, and connection to the environment. Many of the 15 schools we worked with were ones who helped us last year. Some, like Youngtown Primary, we have been working with for many years. We are hoping to have continued funding for this project into the future as it is a great way to get everyone outside doing something for the environment and their community. In the 2017-18 financial year we planted over 3,500 seedlings with students, mostly in council reserves.

We have also been involved in events organised by others such as the Department of Education's Kids for Kids day; World Wetland Day at Tamar Wetlands; the Big Day of Science at QVMAG, and the College Climate Change Symposium 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 everyone who organises them for everything they do, as it is their hard work and commitment that makes these events a success and it is why we commit to undertaking them each year.



7.8. Christopher Strong Sustainability Grant

Delivery of the Christopher Strong Fellowship Grant was reviewed by the Management Committee over February-March 2018. The committee decided to make minor changes such as asking applicants to provide more detail on methodology and two referee contacts. The change in name from Christopher Strong "Fellowship" to Christopher Strong Fellowship Sustainability Grant is the likely reason for the increase in applicants in this current round.

The Christopher Strong Sustainability Grant recognises the vision, passion and appreciation Christopher Strong had for the natural world. It respects and values his significant contributions to the management of our resources with his dedication and tireless contribution to Tamar NRM. The Fellowship is open to any individual, school, or community group undertaking a project in rural or urban area of the Tamar Valley. The annual grant offer is for projects up to \$1,500.

The 2017-18 grant recipient was University of Tasmania student, Matthew Tedford. Matthew produced a comprehensive report studying the intervention and rehabilitation measures that have been carried out on the Pipers River system in Tasmania, including streambed clearing for flood mitigation, and extensive willow removal in an attempt to return the river back to its healthy native state.

His project entitled "Reassessing the Fluvial Geomorphology and Hydrology of Pipers River, including Rehabilitation Outcomes" is well worth a read as it showcases the grass-roots actions taken by Landcare over many years. You can find a copy on the Tamar NRM website under the "Reports" Tab.

The work has since be submitted and accepted as a journal article in the respected international journal "Ecological Indicators" (Volume 91, August 2018).



Colgraves Rd site Piper's River looking downstream, 2017. Credit: Matthew Tedford

8. Working Groups

8.1. George Town Coastal Management Group

Chairperson – Ian Sauer

It's been eighteen months since the George Town Coastal Communities Action Plan was launched by the then Minister of Environment and Parks Matthew Groom. Since then coastal communities have continued to work tirelessly in their own time to improve their local patch. The enormous effort of each community, working in sand dunes, in coastal reserves as well as coming together to share experiences and plan together as a management group is to be commended.

The George Town Coastal Community Management Group (GTCMG) have representation from the coastal communities of Low Head, Bellbouy; Beechford; Lulworth; Tam O'Shanter; Weymouth; Bellingham; and Hillwood. Agencies including Parks and Wildlife Service and George Town Council attend the meetings, with Tamar NRM playing a coordination role. Often meetings are attended by other stakeholders who present and have an active role in the management of coastal communities. These include Tasmania Fire Service, State Growth, DPIPWE and other interest groups, e.g. UTAS students and Save the Tassie Devil program.

The Action Plan is a community driven, non-statutory document that aims to preserve the natural values of the George Town coastal region by addressing management issues in a coordinated and systematic manner. This Plan covers the coastal reserves, recreation reserves and some areas of unallocated Crown Land in the coastal areas of the George Town Council. The Action Plan and Summary Document are all available on the Tamar NRM website under the "Reports" tab.

Coastal Community's Highlights Since June Last Year

- Pipers River Erosion Remediation Project: A taskforce of the Weymouth Progress Association formed in 2017 to specifically deal with the urgent problem of river erosion at Weymouth. (I am delighted to inform you that funding has been sourced from the State Government and in-kind support from the George Town Council. A soft engineering approach, utilising specially engineered large sandbags will hopefully be in place by Christmas).
- Coastal Plant Identification Workshop: Around 25 people attended a Coastal Plant Identification Workshop and BBQ held Sunday 29th October 2017. Anna Povey conducted a dune and heathland walk for the new Beechford group and it was extended to all members of the coastal communities. As a follow up Greg and Gill, presented to the Beechford Community on Saturday 9th December where they discussed the George Town Coastal Community Action Plan as it relates to the Beechford actions.
- Coastal Weeds: Around 20 people benefitted by attending a Coastal Weed Treatment Workshop on 10th November at Lulworth. Denis Giasli, Land Management North, explained problems weeds can cause in sensitive coastal environments, providing the basis needed to identify and treat weeds.

- Ongoing Activity Agreements have been negotiated between Parks and Wildlife Service and Lulworth, Weymouth and Beechford, outlining project activities they wish to achieve including weed management.
- Tamar NRM Green Army teams undertook a support role in the coastal zones working on public lands and supporting the volunteer effort. Over the past 12 months they spent time working at Weymouth, Lulworth, Low Head and Green's Beach on weed removal, tree planting and track and trail maintenance.
- Coastal Threats/Impacts Forum: A small working group met with UTAS representatives on 3rd October to advance the Forum. This meeting decided on the format and content for the Forum and Workshop that will present recent UTAS research directly related to the George Town coastline, estuaries and local rivers. Community input through a facilitated "Change Exchange" will document landscape change observations and include photographs. Our funding through the NLP2 grant round was unsuccessful; effectively putting the forum on hold until funding can be secured via other sources.
- Sharing Experiences: Tam O'Shanter Golf Club was the venue for a coastal communities meeting on 17th April 2018. Twenty seven people attended and shared their current activities with the broader group. It was pleasing to see some revitalised groups with new members present from Low Head, Weymouth, Lulworth and Beechford. The day doubled as a "Thank You" to volunteers as lunch was provided courtesy of funding allocated by Tamar NRM. An activities snapshot of the coastal communities was distributed in June 2018.

I cannot stress enough that all of this work is made possible because of the vision and dedication of Tamar NRM and its support in finding resources and funding to keep implementing our strategic plan, a big thank you to Tamar NRM. A big thank you also, to the George Town Council, Parks and Wildlife and Crown Land Services who are also integral to the whole process, and most importantly thank you to all the community members who give up so much time not for private but for public benefit.



8.2. Weeds Working Group

Chairperson - John Thorp



The Weeds Working Group (WWG), facilitated by Tamar NRM, met on 24th August 2017 and again on 18th April 2018. The group existence is important to the Tamar Valley, as it provides a vital interface between agencies and the community in an environment where collaboration is essential to effectively manage weeds. The make-up of the WWG comprises Tamar NRM; the 3 councils of City of Launceston; George Town; West Tamar; NRM North; DPIPWE; TFGA; State Growth; Parks and Wildlife; TasTafe and community and industry representatives.

Tamar NRM takes a "priority weeds" approach with its on-ground weed and awareness raising activities. 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. Our Tamar Weeds Strategy model is one that works, but it is not without challenges. The weeds funding environment is a difficult one to navigate with very few grant opportunities available. Still, we stand committed to deliver what we can and 2017-18 has been another year of good outcomes.

We again staged a successful "Ragwort Raid", supported by RACT, the patrolling of 819 kms of roads in the three Tamar council areas and having willing volunteers who collectively contributed 320 hours of volunteer time is again a local good news story (see 7.2 above). Thanks to the volunteers and also to our local councils who have once again arranged for the disposal of the Ragwort. Jayne Shapter is again to be thanked for her ongoing support with coordination.

The 2017 Boneseed Blitz received a huge boost this year with the involvement of 50 staff from Boags Brewery. The day was a collaboration between Tamar NRM, Landcare Tasmania and Boags Brewery along with West Tamar Council and West Tamar Landcare. A 6 ha patch of native bushland, that seemed to have an impossible to manage infestation of Boneseed, was cleared of the weed by the merry band of volunteers and staff, with a few follow up days undertaken by the Tamar NRM Green Army team. The transformation is stark and shows what can be achieved when you have an enthusiastic bunch of people on hand.

In addition to Ragwort and Boneseed events, we continued our focus on other priority weeds that threaten the region's biodiversity and agricultural lands including Patterson's Curse (*Echium plantagineum*), Serrated Tussock (*Nassella trichotoma*), and Besom Heath (*Erica Scoparia*). Australia's only known Besom Heath infestation occurs in the Tamar Valley, mainly around Bridgenorth. Tamar NRM is working with Biosecurity Tasmania staff and has identified landholders in the Bridgenorth area who are willing to participate in control trials for effective Besom Heath management.

John Thorp and Program Coordinator Greg Lundstrom, met with the new Minister for Primary Industries Sarah Courtney on the 7th June this year to share a vision for maximising the proposed State Government weed management investments. Our goal is to advocate for more money for grass-roots community projects and community based delivery. They have a record of delivering great outcomes for small amounts of investment.

Over the past 12 months, Tamar NRM has taken a renewed interest in the insidious introduced grass Serrated Tussock. The 2007 discovery of Serrated Tussock in the Tamar Valley was one that rang alarm bells for farmers, as it is a serious threat to pastures as it has virtually no feed value what so ever.

Recent surveys by DPIPWEE Nassella Weeds Project Officer and Tamar NRM have determined that currently five properties in the Mount Direction area are affected. We know it is locally eradicable and with donations received from East Tamar Landcare Tamar branch of TFGA, the correct selective herbicides is now being used to manage the infestation and stop the spread. Tamar NRM is determined not to let this one get away from us. In the past 12 months, we have made five visits to the area, ran a public education workshop at Hillwood, coordinated TasRail to inspect the rail corridor, and helped to get all the landholders onside. We will be revisiting in the spring of 2018 just prior to the seeding time. Thanks to Jarrah Vercoe and Mandy Smith from DPIPWEE for advice and support.

Paterson's curse is a toxic winter annual pasture and cropping weed, native to the Mediterranean region. Concerned about its potential to spread, WWG chairman, John Thorp, is communicating with John Ireson (Honorary Research Scientist DPIPWEE - Biological Control of Weeds) about the use of biological agent insects for Patterson's Curse and currently defining a role for Tamar NRM in the transport and release of those agents known to be effective. We know of two nursery sites that would be suitable for bio control release and flea beetle harvesting.

We will be continuing the conversation on areas of shared responsibility to maximise effort and minimise the use of resources for us all, with particular emphasis on cooperation across land tenures.

We continue to receive enquiries on weeds on an almost daily basis. This is a service we are only too pleased offer, as early intervention leads to good weed management outcomes.



8.3. Plastic Free Launceston

Chairperson - Trish Haeusler

Plastic Free Launceston (PFL) was invited to become a working group of Tamar NRM last October. Having commenced as a small group of volunteers, who primarily relied on Facebook to spread our messaging, we have now grown to be a working group of 5. PFL has become an organised and coordinated group, and for this we would especially like to thank Roger, Gill and Greg for their support and guidance.

PFL was formed to encourage community discussions about the impact of plastic pollution, in particular, single use plastics such as plastic straws, bags, bottled water and coffee cups. PFL now has 1233 followers on Facebook and a further 128 signed up to our quarterly newsletter. With a formal planning structure now in place we can target community engagements with schools, community groups, business and organisations, as well as actively engage local council.

PFL aims to continue to present positive messaging to encourage individuals, groups and businesses to engage in behaviours that act to reduce plastic pollution. Our group aims to provide up to date information concerning the impact of plastic pollution. We are fortunate to have strong links with research scientists at UTAS. Dr Jenn Lavers, globally renowned for her research about the impact of plastic pollution on seabirds, is an active contributor at our meetings and events and we are thankful to her for being very generous with her time, information and resources. Jenn has provided us with samples of plastic pieces removed from the stomachs of Shearwaters (100 % of these birds on Henderson Island are found to have plastic in their stomachs). These samples always attract the most interest when visiting schools and when displayed at events. With a solid foundation based in current science, PFL can present this information to the public in an accessible manner that aims to make a clear link between our everyday use of plastics and the growing problem of plastic pollution on the land, in catchments and marine environments.

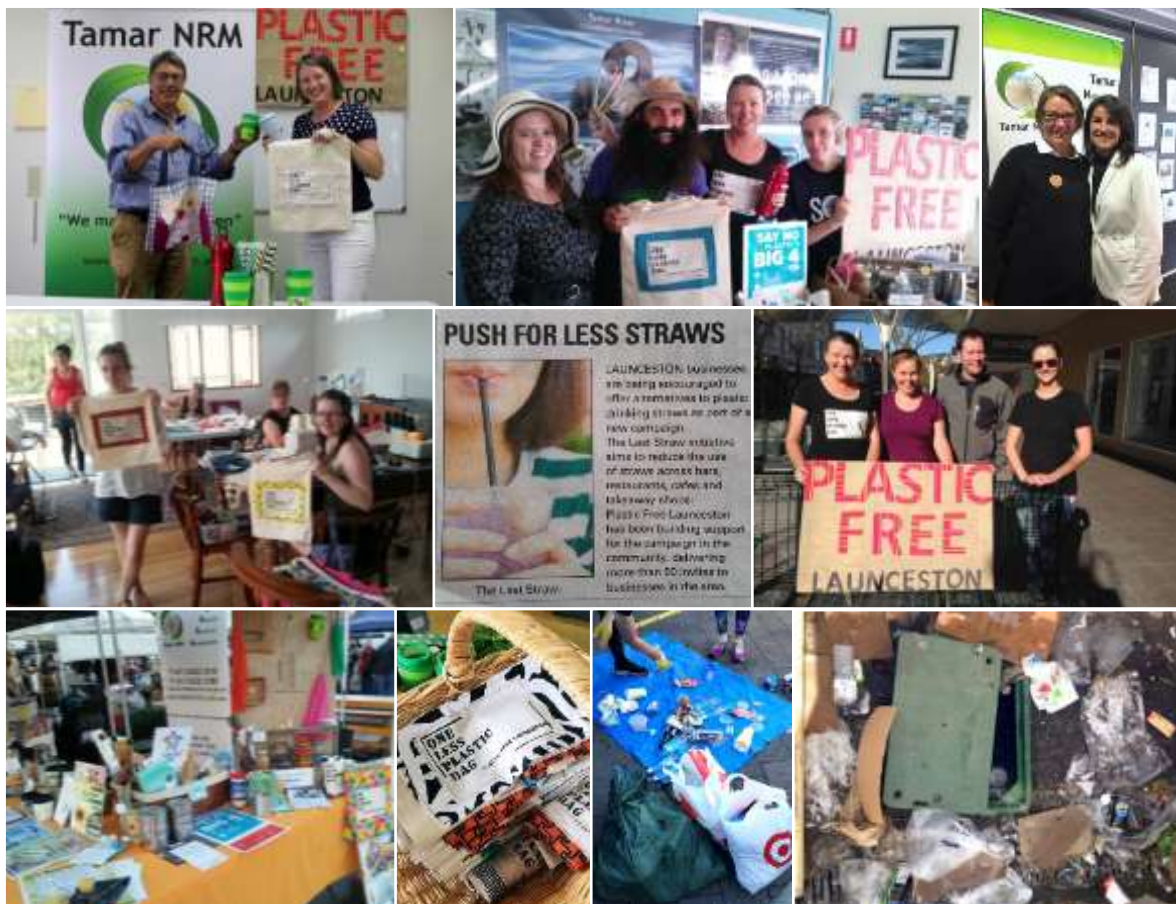
By far our most popular activity has been the monthly 'One Less Plastic Bag' workshops. We have also added an additional activity to these workshops by demonstrating how to make products such as deodorant, toothpaste, dry shampoo and household cleaners. We are approaching our 10th bag making workshop in September 2018 and, to date, have engaged the assistance of 106 helpers. This has included a core of volunteers, intermitted volunteers who are able to come when available, and at least one new volunteers each month. PFL is grateful to the people who give up a Sunday afternoon to help and to those who have donated materials

PFL has provided public education with our displays and presentations and many events and schools. We have attended 12 events throughout the year such as: World Wetlands Day (we all loved meeting Costa!), The Big Blue Marine Community Expo, Ulverston ECOFest, Tamar Discovery at Beauty point, the screening of the beautiful, if not disturbing film, 'Albatross', UTAS Open Day and Sustainability Market Day, the Tamar Peace Festival, Science week presentation at a Steminists event, as well as a shared information stall with City of Launceston Council at LINC promoting Plastic Free July.

To connect with schools, PFL invited children from Sacred Heart and East Launceston Primary schools to help in the lead up to Plastic Free July this year. The children did a terrific job participating in an ABC interview with Belinda King and then recording plastic free tips that were aired throughout July. We were so pleased with their efforts which included a very early morning start to get to the studio. This is the second year we have been invited to help promote Plastic Free July with Glen Dhu Primary School involved last July.

June was a busy time for us with preparations for our launch of Plastic Free July. In partnership with TASTafe Drysdale a morning tea, hosted by Jo Palmer, was planned and included guest speakers from local Council, business and Drysdale. PFL also kick started Plastic Free July at Harvest Market with an information stall for 5 consecutive weeks leading up to and including July. These events provided opportunities to engage local radio and print media to further promote Plastic Free July. This year over 3.4 million people from 177 countries took part in the Plastic Free challenge. it was great to hear the many stories from local people who also had a go at Plastic Free July this year.

PFL wishes to thank the many people who have supported us this year. In the last 12 months we have seen a substantial increase in the number of people wanting more information about the impact of plastic pollution as well as practical tips about how to reduce plastic waste. We look forward to continuing our work with Tamar NRM and shortly commencing our 'Plastic Free Christmas' campaign.



8.4. State-wide Community Cat Eradication Taskforce

The State-wide Community Cat Eradication Taskforce (SCCET) is a northern Tasmanian group made up of people and organisations active and concerned about the issues of cats, domestic, stray and feral, in Tasmania. Tamar NRM facilitates the group with other members including: Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association, Landcare Tasmania, Upper Meander Catchment Group, Field Hunting and Conservation Tasmania, East Tamar Landcare, a vet involved in Tamar NRM's Cat Management Project in George Town Coastal Areas and local farmers. The group formed to try progress the eradication of stray and feral cats and make responsible cat ownership a legal requirement for pet owners.

The main outcome, initially, was a review of, and a submission to, the draft Tasmanian Cat Management Plan and proposed *Cat Management Act 2009* amendments. The development of the Tasmanian Cat Management Plan was a very long winded drawn out process with a range of levels of consultation. SCCET's main concern was that the plan did not have eradication as it's main goal, had no real measures or enforceable outcomes, lacked resourcing to, and value of, community involvement in cat management, lacked resourcing to councils for cat management facilities and enforcement officers and, significantly, very soft domestic cat ownership requirements which are not a state-wide approach but rather rely on councils to develop their own by-laws.

Tamar NRM has continued to lobby State Government representatives, DPIPWE and local councils to improve both the Plan, the proposed amendments to the Act and local cat management options. We are also continuing on our education campaign and keeping an eye out for funding that can help local community members and groups actively manage feral cats in their area.

The Tasmanian Cat Management Plan was finally released in August 2017 and nothing has happened since then, except the employment of three Regional Cat Management Coordinators. Although a good step the main focus of the role is on domestic rather than feral cats and Tamar NRM believe this is not nearly enough to address the issue.

