



Tamar NRM

# 'Naturally Yours'

## February 2012

President's Report



I hope you and yours all had a nice Christmas and New Year break, that is if you were one of the lucky ones able to have some time off.

It was a short break for those involved with Tamar NRM with the strategic plan taking a lot of time and focus. To update you...we have had the community, business, Local Government and web based consultations. Now we are into the final individual community group consultations.

What has emerged so far from the community consultation is the plan needs to have the following characteristics - short, easy to read, plain English, theme based, recognition of both economic and environmental drivers, understanding of international issues, business involvement and facilitating practical on-ground activities - we are seen as the 'doers'.

The diversity of issues the community wants Tamar NRM to help with is large and very diverse. All these issues will be collated into our new format and you, the community, will have a last chance for input before it is finally launched.

There is not much time left to have input so if you or your group, workplace, whoever would like to make comment then please call the office. Craig Williams and myself will come to you to get your thoughts. Remember it is your plan. The only way you can see yourself in the plan is if you have input.

You may have seen some media relating to the setting up of the Tamar Carbon Alliance - what is it about you may ask? The group was formed to help develop, implement, evaluate and act as a reference and steering committee for a range of projects Tamar NRM may apply for under the "Clean Energy Program".

We had our first meeting where the group had input into the development of a project we have put forward under the action on the ground funding round. It was heartening to see everyone contribute in such an enthusiastic and positive way.

Will use this group and perhaps expend the group for the development of other projects that will be looking at energy efficiency. If you would like to be part of this group, or know other who may like to be part of the group, please contact the office.

Next week Tamar NRM will be launching another school partnership this time with Launceston Church Grammar School. You may remember towards the end of last year we signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Scotch Oakburn College. These partnerships are all different but allow the schools, students and their general community to interact with Tamar NRM by sharing resources and ideas with interaction on a range of issues.

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### Staff

**Craig Williams**  
Executive Officer

**Mike Poole**  
NRM Facilitator - Tamar  
(works: Thursday & Fridays)

**Grant Scurr**  
Gambusia Project Officer

**Amanda Bruce**  
Office Manager  
Newsletter Editor



Tamar NRM loves to see as many of the community at our events during the year...so to make it easier for your diaries and not to overbook, here are a few.

Now, please open your diaries and add in the following...

Saturday 25<sup>th</sup>

**G day...is here!**

10.00am - 2.00pm

Tamar Island Wetlands Centre

**All welcome - no need to RSVP, just come along and have fun!**

*What in the world is G day you may ask? It is all about Gambusia! But what is Gambusia? Gambusia is a pesky little introduced fish that eats the tails of our native tadpoles, and the eggs of our native fish and frogs. You can find out about the fish, try to catch a few yourselves, see if you can find some native Green and Gold Frogs, kids can pin the hook on the Gambusia too and win a prize. Find out what Tamar NRM is doing about controlling Gambusia and how you can help. Hear from our volunteers and the interview with the infamous Gertie Gambusia. So come and join us, enjoy a light hearted and informative day.*

**MARCH**

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup>

**'Celebrating the Environment' - women in our community** (this event coincides with International Women's Day)

10.00am - 3.00pm

Windsor Community Centre, Windsor Centre, Riverside

Join six community speakers

RSVP: Monday 5<sup>th</sup>

**MAY**

Monday 14<sup>th</sup>

**Volunteer Recognition Event**

10.00am - 11.30am

The Rotunda, City Park, Launceston

All volunteers welcome - win a Rotunda Entrance Prize and enjoy morning tea

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We will also email an invitation by including it in one of the quarterly newsletters, eTamar or just send out as a 'stand alone' flyer. The flyers will be for the above annual ones as well as other events yet to be thought of by the team.

*please note:*

If you would like to attend any or all of our events/activities, please contact the office on 6323-3310 to RSVP. We need to know for catering as well as some events/activities have limited numbers. We do not want you to miss out.

President's report cont'd from page 1

As many of you would know we have a Weeds Working Group (WWG) that deals with a range of weed issues like the Ragwort Raids and eradication plans for weeds such as Serrated Tussock. The WWG has been ably chaired by Hugh Mackinnon for the last five years. Hugh has stepped down from the role. I would like to put on record the fantastic job he has done keeping the working group on the straight and narrow. We are indeed lucky John Thorpe has agreed to take on the role of Chairman with Jayne Shapter as Deputy Chair.

Still on weeds two weeks ago we had the annual Ragwort Raids sponsored by BHP Billiton TEMCO for another year. These Raids are done in partnership with the Volunteer Fire Brigades and the community with over 1000 kms of Ragwort cleared from the roadside in the Tamar Region. When we started the raids we would filled a ten ton truck on each side of the river now we are down to a ute load - a fantastic effort by all especially Jayne Shapter who co-ordinates the days. It is interesting that a flow on effect of these Raids is we now have community members adopting small patches of road and pulling the Ragwort. Thank you for the fantastic effort by all those involved.

If you would like to be involved with weed issues and projects please call the office.

We are still getting a lot of feedback on the feral cat issue. There is more and more information and evidence that the feral cat issue is becoming a really serious problem - this cannot be ignored. We now have reports of sheep meat being rejected because of Toxoplasmosis cysts being found in carcasses and more wallabies are being seen with suspected Toxoplasmosis infection.

Remember, we have to be responsible cat owners, to make sure we have them vaccinated, desexed and micro-chipped. I know this alone will not fix the problem but it is a start.

We have been blessed with two good seasons with rain and warmth at the right time. This has meant plenty of grass growth and this leads to more weeds of course! Farmers are also reporting a huge explosion in rabbits, wallabies and possums that are not only having an effect on pasture and crops but we are getting reports of bush being damaged by the large numbers of browsing animals. It just shows how complex the environment is and how we need to make sure whatever we do is integrated.

Ian Sauer

The University of Montreal has discovered a mushroom that consumes petroleum – it may be able to decontaminate polluted sites. *Daily Soils Digest*

...Snippets...

The ACT has the highest amount of retail space per head of population in Australia. *Canberra Times*  
The average Australian consumes 64kgs of potatoes each year. *SMH*

Noise is the pollutant which disturbs more people in their daily lives - it is the number one complaint to the city authorities - yet there are no summits on noise; no ministers being ferried in sleek black cars to high-level discussions; no hotly-contested action plans – perhaps it's because so many decision-makers can escape from the noise to detached homes in quiet streets - in their offices, the whirr of the air-conditioning is often the only sound – they are a world away from a busy motorway, a poorly-insulated high-rise flat or the thunderous roar of industrial machinery. Earthscan

India has a population of 1.2 billion – 290 million of these people have no access to grid electricity – those that do have access to the grid, use 2.7 kilowatt hours power (kWh) per person per day – an Australian uses 30 kWh on average. *Daily Soils Digest*

## How Domestic Cats Become Ferals - What Not To Do?

I would like to tell you story so if you please, come closer....closer, that's right - now you're TOO close - back a bit...that's better...comfy?

Once upon a time in a land far, far away (no, this is not a Star Wars story) called Tasmania there was a cat named, well let's call him Tom - he was big, strong and able to fight off the Tassie Devils - he was tough. Then one day while walking through the bush, coming towards him with sun dappling her coat was ...you guessed it... a female cat called hmmm, let's see, Tubs Galore (just love the name).

Anyway Tom & Tubs Galore fell in love and then (cover the kid's ears - they had a litter of bubs also known as kittens) - four beautiful, fluffy, cute, destructive little demons. They were taught to jump, run, lie around doing nothing as well to develop a wonderful skill of playing with their food before eating it. They really preferred native birds and fauna especially baby ones provided by their mum and dad.

Tom & Tubs Galore were lucky - they also had the luxury of choice. Instead of munching on native birds or fauna they could take the easy road and eat the delicious goodies left out every morning and night on a plate by their benefactors.

That's right you guessed it, they were frauds! Tom & Tubs Galore may have been skilled hunters, had taught their kittens the best way to survive so they could very easily become feral cats but they had one advantage - they were well loved and looked after by their slaves (oh, I mean their humans). Feel no sympathy for them, when tired of the outdoors after demolishing the natives, they just came inside to the protection of their palace. With one miaow a door magically opened, food would descend from the heavens and a snugly place was always there...waiting.

The owners (correction...slaves) were always feeling somewhat lost - have you ever felt used and abused by a cat!! You sure get exhausted - *let the cat out, let the cat in, let the cat out again and so on* - what a life!!!

I know what you are asking yourselves - what is AB on about with this story...well further explanations are needed to make myself clear. I have loved cats all my life (a loooooong time) and although I love their beauty, their ability to make me feel inferior as well as their exceptional skills at hunting - they remind me of miniature lions or tigers stalking their prey - they are, at heart, hunters...they play, kill and maim anything which gives them attention and fun for a few minutes then they sleep usually in the best place (my chair, my bed, my arm - I keep saying 'get off', 'move over' and then it's morning).

I am digressing again. During 2010 and 2011 Tamar Natural Resource Management managed two separate phases of the same named project, 'Feral Cat Management in the Weymouth & Bellingham Areas'. Our consultant, Feral Management Solutions (Jamie Cooper), caught 78 feral cats and humanely euthanized them. All of these ferals had the parasitic disease, Toxoplasmosis, which affects unborn calves and even human babies. These feral cats were also in extremely poor physical health.

I am hoping those of you who own a cat and have not had them desexed or microchipped might consider doing this as it really helps to protect not only our native birds and fauna from predation but makes your cat a happier friend, giving years of longer life to them for you to love longer!

I have always hoped in my next life I would come back as a well-fed pampered cat with slaves (oops, I mean humans) who love me lots. I fear though I will come back as a feral cat struggling for life somewhere and hoping not to be found at the Weymouth tip and for Tamar Natural Resource Management not to be managing a similar feral cat management project. Why you ask? Ian Sauer (our President) has assured me he would shoot me if found at the tip even if I was wearing a coloured ribbon around my neck - the trials we cats face!

This was intended as no lecture from Tamar Natural Resource Management but a thought from me. I would love everyone to love a cat. So to protect our native birds and fauna as well as our 'adorables', please keep your cat home especially at night, desex and microchip them and never dump unwanted kittens - ring the RSPCA instead as they love cats too.

If you make them feel you are their slave, your cat will never leave - you, of course, will just pine away from exhaustion.

I now close what mind I have left and sign off with...see you at one of our events this year.

Linking People, Plants and Projects

Each year the Understorey Network organises a volunteer growers scheme whereby members either grow plants for themselves, grow plants for other members or projects, or receive plants for their own properties or projects.

Members growing for themselves can grow up to 250 free plants and are provided with all the pots, potting mix and seeds from locally collected native species. Members also receive a comprehensive step by step guide to growing Tasmanian native plants from seed. Growing your own is a satisfying and enjoyable way to source native plants plus it also saves you money.

Alternatively Landcare or Coastcare groups or private landholders undertaking revegetation projects can choose to receive up to 250 plants and an Understorey Network volunteer will grow them specifically for your project. Receivers pay a materials levy of \$44.00.

In the past Understorey Network members have grown plants for projects such as revegetation of the threatened Morrisby's Gum woodland, forty-spotted pardalote habitat, little penguin colonies within the Derwent Estuary and rehabilitation of bushfire affected areas in Victoria, to name but a few.

The Understorey Network is continually looking to grow more plants for projects, improving Tasmania's natural environment and to recruit more volunteers to help out. If you are interested in getting involved or finding out more, please contact Understorey Network coordinator, Oliver Strutt on 6234-4286 or [oliver@understorey-network.org.au](mailto:oliver@understorey-network.org.au).

Oliver Strutt  
Understorey Network



Community members (young and slightly older) participating in seed growing activity

# Weed Check



## Ragwort Raids 2012

The 14th Annual Ragwort Raid was held on the East Tamar on Saturday 28th January. Around 35 volunteers took part this year. Most of the 'raiders' came from the Fire Brigades in the area and included Pipers River, Pipers Brook, Bell Bay and Hillwood. Other volunteers included members of the local community, landcare groups and Tamar NRM. Ragwort was pulled on 660 kilometres of roadside and it is pleasing to see less than last year. We only managed to fill Brian Baxter's ute.

The 6th Annual Ragwort Raid was held on the West Tamar on Sunday 29th January. This year a few of our regular volunteers were unable to help, but new volunteers from local landcare groups, Tai Chi group and a local councillor swelled the numbers to 16. West Tamar Council also provided a truck and driver for the morning. We were able to fill the back of the truck and covered 398 kilometres of roadside.

On Wednesday 15th February members of West Tamar Landcare with the assistance of West Tamar Council pulled Ragwort once again through Frankford.

Many thanks go to Amanda Bruce at Tamar NRM who organizes publicity, posters, all of the paperwork and me.

**Jayne Shapter**  
Co-ordinator

Message from Tamar NRM and Jayne

We hope to see more community members at both annual Ragwort Raids in 2013.

A lot of fun is had by all and a BBQ always follows - sizzle, sizzle...yum!



Left - the dedicated team of volunteers proud of their achievements and  
Above - Jayne Shapter - our even more dedicated Co-ordinator

Community Energy Conference

14<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> November 2011

Bendigo, Victoria

The Conference was just fabulous, the atmosphere buzzing with enthusiasm. Things are certainly happening in regional Victoria.

The highlight presentation was by the other Alan Jones, engineer, headhunted from London, who showed us his plans to reduce Sydney's emissions by 75% by 2030, and along the way make coal fired power stations redundant. How does he plan to do this? By using renewable gas for trigeneration. Renewable gas is made from waste and when used to generate electricity gives 55% electricity and 45% heat. The heat is captured and used to generate more electricity. The gas is distributed in pipes underground. To defray the costs the gas pipes are accompanied by recycled water pipes and vacuum garbage pipes which take garbage trucks off the road. The electricity is inserted at nodes around the city according to local usage patterns and does not contact the grid. These plans are available and adaptable to any city.

The next most inspiring presentation was the newly commissioned Hepburn Wind. \$9.7 million was raised by the local community and the two windmills are co-operatively owned. The recent Victorian Government exclusion zone for wind turbines of 2km from housing would have prevented the project. A motion from this conference went to the Victorian Government expressing disappointment at the ruling. Grid connection can be a problem - it cost them \$2 million! The experience gained from this project has been channelled into Embark, a not-for-profit body to help others set up community owned electricity generating systems.

The next most inspiring presentation was from Robert Nichols who set up a wind turbine to provide electricity to power his poultry operation at Sassafras. He described his experiences as a Nuffield Scholar travelling the world to look at renewable energy on farms. He showed us pig manure digesters in India to the most sophisticated 140 MW wind farms in Germany. He has just received planning permission for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> windmills to supplement farm income.

Infogen Energy, the largest owner of wind farms in Australia, has a new project to allow community groups to purchase a turbine in a 40 turbine array in NSW. The profits from this turbine will flow to the co-operative.

Central Victoria Solar City, Federally funded, partners with local Sustainability groups. One of these, Renewable Newstead, has 80% of the households in their town completed a Home Energy Assessment, and aims to get all the town's emissions down to zero.

Members of the Dandenong Ranges Renewable Energy Association, living in leafy suburbs where their roofs are shadowed, invested in a large solar array on their local hospital. This gives them a reasonable return on their investment and insulates the hospital against excessive price rises for grid electricity, as well as enabling them to "do their bit".

Community Power Agency helps community renewable energy groups do pre-feasibility, and feasibility studies to decide firstly what type of project is suitable for their location, then what size project then, how to go about achieving it.

Reemerge works with a German producer of PV panels to set up medium sized PV arrays as investments. PV power will reach grid parity by 2016 and will become an attractive investment opportunity. "Set it up and forget it for 25 years". This can help farmers earn more on farm income.

Two things were stressed again and again: firstly to get electricity consumption as low as possible before starting a project to minimise the size of renewable energy system needed and thus expense; and the need to consult the community before starting any project, partly to minimise opposition, and keep them informed about progress along the way. Tamar NRM already has this social network in place and working. One way to start both these processes is to offer people free home energy assessments.

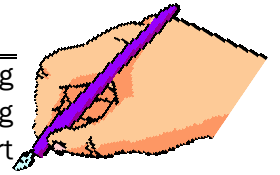
*TAMAR NRM newsletters can be found on our website [www.tamarnrm.com.au](http://www.tamarnrm.com.au)*

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Would you like to contribute an article to our newsletters – we are always interested in receiving news of completed projects funded by Tamar NRM and how they are progressing and being maintained by the landholder or community group. If you have always wanted to write a short story, then grab pen and paper (or as we all now use a computer) and start writing about your project. Please email any article (preferably with an after photo but if you have a before photo of the site, this would be fabulous) to [amanda.bruce@launceston.tas.gov.au](mailto:amanda.bruce@launceston.tas.gov.au). It would be great to see how a project started and how it has developed over time.

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Next 'Naturally Yours' edition due: May 2012

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7250