



Tamar NRM

'Naturally Yours'

November 2011

President's Report



November already, which means the end of the year is close, and what an incredibly busy year it has been with the last few months being the busiest.

Adding to the busy burden at the moment is the renewing of our Strategic Plan. So far we have consulted internally with staff, Management Committee, with the three Mayors and General Managers and last week we had our Community and Corporate consultations led by Dr Ian Metcalfe from Adaptive Learning Pty Ltd based in Victoria. This was a rewarding and fun process. We now have a draft set of principles themes, some actions, and a format that we will enlarge on and put together ready for a second round of community consultations.

It was agreed by participants the new strategy must not be a large long winded document that nobody understands or uses - it will be short, no long words, and there will be a departure from an asset based approach to a theme based approach. This is a radical departure from what we are used to, however, it signals to me the community is looking to the future, and better ways of doing business - something we can all endorse.

For those that could not attend the planning days, you will be given plenty of opportunities to make comment. We will notify the community when the draft strategy is on our website, and we are keen and willing to come to you or your group so you can have input - this will happen during January 2012. It is important you have input so please call the office to arrange a meeting.

I am delighted to announce Tamar NRM with its philosophy of community involvement has put together an Alliance of Stakeholders (AoS) whose aim will be to, hopefully, secure Australian Government funds under the recently announced Australian Governments *Clean Energy Future (CEF)* program. The first task of the AoS will be to design, develop, implement and monitor any successful projects.

We hope to be able to tap into funding for research, extension, demonstration and on-ground activity through a range of programs benefitting rural and urban communities.

It will be the intention to value-add past projects and activities such as the outcomes of the community forum, *Creating a Sustainable Future*, held two years ago and the on-farm emissions auditing tool that showed farmers in the Tamar Region were sequestering more carbon than they were emitting.

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Enjoy the festive season



and happy new year

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So far making up the alliance are individual farmers, research, industry, Launceston, George Town and West Tamar Councils, business and other groups including Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (TFGA), TFGA Tamar Valley Branch, East Tamar Landcare, West Tamar Landcare, Lilydale Landcare, Rowella Landcare Groups, Blessington, Pipers and West Tamar Neighbourhood Groups, Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture Research, Greening Australia, Schwabenforest, TP Jones and Private Forests Tasmania.

We are determined to make sure the projects put forward are what the community want and need. If you or an organisation you know within the Launceston, George Town and West Tamar municipalities would like to be part of the AoS by direct involvement or contribute in any way, please contact the Tamar NRM office on 6323-3310. This is an exciting opportunity and your input is needed.

It is fantastic to see the Sustainable Living Working Group (SLWG) getting traction and delivering, in recent months, the concept of the month of August being Tamar NRM's *Sustainability Month*. The SLWG has run a food energy forum with seventy people attending, two seed swap days - all have been successful. The working group, chaired by Dr Sue Woinarski, has also been working on a solar hot water and photovoltaic bulk buy program (details to be announced soon) - keep your eyes and ears open! If you would like to be part of the SLWG, please call the office.

Many of you may have seen an article a month ago on a proposal to have a community based wind generator in the North East of Tasmania. Northern Tasmania especially near the coast has ideal locations for such a venture. The proposal being mooted is based on the Hepburn Springs model in Victoria - for more information on Hepburn community wind farm, please go to <http://hepburnwind.com.au/>. This idea, to me, is a great opportunity for the community with economic, social and environmental benefits being delivered.

As the weather has begun to warm and most areas have had substantial rains, the weeds are starting to flourish. Flourishing weeds means more work but those that have planted trees will be seeing the benefits. However, if you see weeds like Paterson's Curse, Boneseed, Bridle Creeper or Serrated Tussock please eradicate them immediately or call the office for advice. For information on these and other weeds please go to <http://www.weeds.asn.au/>

Recently we launched the findings of our project 'Feral Cat Management in the Weymouth and Bellingham Areas' - outcomes were 58 feral cats were euthanized. If these feral cats had remained in these areas, they would have decimated local wildlife by eating six tonnes of food a year, and spread diseases like Toxoplasmosis. We have on behalf of the community written to Minister Wightman asking for the following recommendations:

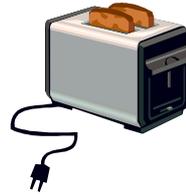
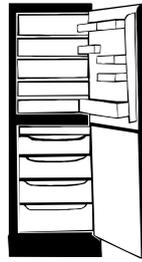
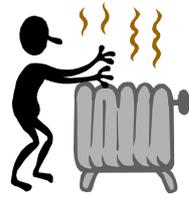
1. The introduction of a State-wide education campaign on responsible cat ownership
2. Compulsory micro-chipping and sterilisation of all domestic cats.
3. Research the effects of *Toxoplasmosis* on native wildlife
4. Funding for community based feral cat management programs

Hopefully we will see you on Thursday 8th December for the annual Tamar NRM Christmas function.

If we don't see you at the Christmas function, on behalf of me, Management Committee and Staff we send to you and yours - thank you for your support and help during 2011 and we hope you have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Ian Sauer

How to Save Energy



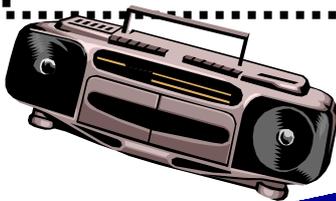
Can changing your power usage, change your life?

Tamar Natural Resource Management says, Yes...we can help. As power prices increase so does the pressure on households to economise. Tamar NRM has developed a project "Surge to Savings". This project will measure community support and action to reduce the use of residential power consumption.

Tamar NRM requests your last twelve months power bills and once our office has received them we will give you a 'Home Energy' booklet on how to reduce energy consumption. There are two booklets - one for homeowners and one for renters. An introductory letter explaining what we are trying to achieve will accompany the booklet. We will also request the energy bills for the twelve months during the project life and once ended will ask for an interview to determine how you used the advice in the booklet.

This project is an information gathering exercise and your details are kept strictly confidential. Throughout the project life, feel free to contact us and remove your name from the database - participation is voluntary.

If you would like more information about how you can help us and yourself at the same time, please contact the Tamar NRM office on 6323-3310.



Recycled paper could be used to produce bio-fuel with the help of bacteria produced in animal droppings - BitsofScience

A groundbreaking Greening Australia project in Victoria using direct seeding methods to restore threatened native grasslands for the first time has won the 2011 Earthwatch Rio-Tinto Citizen Science - The Leaf

The new suburb of Toolern being built south of Melton in outer Melbourne is set to become Australia's first water-neutral suburb through capturing and reusing stormwater and recycled water - Urban Environment News

A series of experiments has been carried out on office environments and productivity by Dr Craig Knight of the University of Exeter - he says "the clean desk policy has absolutely nothing going for it" and that "lean space is the worst in terms of wellbeing and productivity" - that it makes employees feel sicker - he says that maximum wellbeing and productivity is achieved where workers are empowered to decorate workspaces as they see fit - AFR

...snippets...

Weed Check



Paterson's Curse

Echium plantagineum

Family *Boraginaceae*

Origin Mediterranean region across to Portugal

Description Paterson's Curse is a herbaceous annual or short lived perennial. It starts off as a large, flat rosette of slightly hairy leaves with well marked veins. Flowering stems can grow to be 600-900mm tall. These uncoil with new flowers at the tip and developing seeds protected by bristly husks further down the stem. Flowers are deep blue to purple, 20-30mm long with five petals fused into a trumpet shape. Fruit/seed are crinkled brown or grey seeds in groups of four around the stem protected by stiffly bristled husks. Seed may remain dormant in the soil for up to six years but most will germinate within two years.

Distribution Paterson's Curse occurs in all agricultural areas of Tasmania in small scattered infestations. Most common near old homesteads or the sites of old homesteads or in rural areas where poultry are kept and along roadsides. It is spread by seed and long distance within fodder. Initial entry to the state was as garden plants.

General Notes The roughened seed coats allow seed to adhere to wool, fur and clothing. Viable seed can also be passed by animals feeding on the plants. Seed can also be transported by water runoff. An important means of dispersal is contaminated hay and feed grain. Paterson's Curse seeds normally germinate in autumn after sufficient rainfall and are best controlled at this early seedling stage.

Control Mechanical removal of small infestations by hoeing, pulling or cutting. It is necessary to remove the top 20-40mm of tap root otherwise regrowth may occur. Flowering plants should be burned or destroyed as seed may continue to mature on a plant after it is removed. Cultivation followed by cropping or a vigorous smothering pasture can be effective. The use of METSULPHURON METHYL (Brushoff™® or Brushkiller™®) is recommended for use on Paterson's Curse in non crop and pasture situations due to its low toxicity and nil withholding period. Some herbicides are toxic to bees. As a general rule avoid applying herbicides when and where bees are foraging.



Paterson's Curse

A Year of On-Ground Action

With the rapid approach to the end of the calendar year it is a timely opportunity to reflect on the accomplishments of some of the key projects for the year.

The year kicked off with the annual Ragwort Raids and while I was not present for these activities I have received reports on the ongoing success of this program and the significant impacts it is making on this weed through the Tamar Region. Further positive impacts on weed removal in the Tamar Region is our annual Boneseed Blitz held in September with Tamar NRM co-ordinating the community activities, particular mention must go to the CVA teams who supported both community groups and Council actions on this weed.

The war against weeds in the Tamar Region is going to be a long fought affair and action is the responsibility of the whole community. I would like to applaud the efforts of all who tirelessly dedicate themselves to this issue. Success would not be achieved without your efforts.

A number of forums and workshops have been held throughout the year across a range of subjects. They have been well attended and participants have walked away having expanded their knowledge and learnt new skills they can apply in their community. Workshops have explored bush foods; plant propagation; coastal community forum; weed mapping; seed swap days; reduce your food energy, eat well & live sustainably seminar as well as field days on river care and restoration, perennial pasture trials, Indigenous walks and talks and many, many more.

These events highlight the important role Tamar NRM plays in empowering the community with knowledge, skills and experience to enact within their local area.

Significant funded projects completed during 2011 include:

- ❖ *Feral Cat Management in the Weymouth & Bellingham areas* which has produced dramatic results and highlights an issue that has severe ramifications in the Tamar Region and across the State;
- ❖ *Coastal Community Engagement & Participation* which has seen delivery of on-ground works in coastal regions with track work, revegetation and weeding activities supporting the hard work of community groups plus knowledge extension activities with a number of workshops and the formation of our inaugural Junior Coastcare Group with Port Dalrymple School in George Town;
- ❖ *Optimise Your Hot Water* which reduced household energy consumption and increased the knowledge of the community on methods to sustainably reduce energy use in the home with the project identifying a need to expand such programs in the future and to further educate on this subject;
- ❖ *Perennial Pastures* was a successful trial that allowed farmers to see first hand the benefits and methods to raise production and yield using sustainable techniques.

The range of projects have delivered benefits across a broad cross-section of the community and the knowledge that has been gained will continue to be utilised even though the projects have been completed within their allocated funding and time cycles.

Looking forward I would like to extend my best wishes to the Tamar NRM community as we rapidly approach the Christmas period. I would like to thank the significant efforts of the staff at Tamar NRM - Amanda Bruce, Mike Poole and Grant Scurr. They are a team with expansive knowledge, experience and dedication and continue to deliver impressive results time and again.

President, Ian Sauer and the Management Committee are to be thanked for their contribution of maintaining Tamar NRM's strategic direction. Their knowledge and experience will guide Tamar NRM forward through these uncertain times. Last but by no means least I would like to thank you, the Tamar NRM community - community groups, Landcare Groups, Neighbourhood Groups, our Working Groups (Weeds and Sustainable Living) and of course all of our tireless and dedicated volunteers.

The strength of Tamar NRM lies in its community networks and as we review our Strategy, community will be our focus.

I look forward to seeing you at our events in 2012.

Craig Williams

Working Together to get New Gambusia Signs

A co-operative effort involving Tamar NRM, NRM North and volunteers with Tamar NRM and the Tamar Island Wetlands Wildcare group has had great results. Federal government funding provided through NRM Norths' Coastal Community Grants allowed for development and production of some great new Gambusia signage for the Tamar Island Wetlands site.

Simon Schorn, one of our great volunteers with the Gambusia project is a graphic designer by trade and has had previous experience developing interpretive signs. Given some blocks of text and a handful of photos, Simon worked his magic to produce two striking, informative and concise signs for the wetlands.

Once the signs had been produced, volunteers at the wetlands assisted the Gambusia Project Officer with their installation. The result is a larger, better located sign on the boardwalk where it is very hard to miss and a new display in the wetland centre which badly needed to be updated. This is a great example of working together from local community through to regional level.

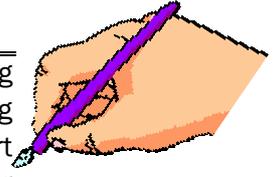
Grant Scurr
Gambusia Project Officer

Tamar Island Wetlands Wildcare Group volunteer, Helen Jones, showing off the new sign she helped to install



TAMAR NRM newsletters can be found on our website www.tamarnrm.com.au

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. It would be great to see how a project started and how it has developed over time.



Next 'Naturally Yours' edition due: February 2012

Tamar NRM wishes you and your family a happy festive season and wonderful holidays. Happy New Year!

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