



# WARRINGAL CONSERVATION SOCIETY

## *Late Summer Newsletter*

Volume 42/two

March/April 2012

*Warringal Conservation Society is a local, not-for-profit, community organisation caring for the environment in Banyule.*

*Formed in 1970, the Society is an active and productive steward of Banyule's environmental heritage.*

### **Join us!!**

Warringal Conservation Society is not just a local environment group: it is stimulating, fun and companionable and takes an active role in the wider community.

Single \$15,  
Family \$20  
Pension/student/  
unemployed \$10  
Life \$150

Articles and photographs for the newsletter are welcome. We may edit for legal, space or other reasons. Opinions expressed in articles are not necessarily those of the Warringal Conservation Society.

Newsletter printed courtesy of Jenny Macklin MP.

## MARCH MEETING

**Darebin Parklands Escaping the Claws of the Machine,** Dr Sarah Mirams, author of *Darebin Parklands Escaping the Claws of the Machine*, and Ingrid Svendsen, president of the Darebin Parklands Association, will be guest speakers at our meeting on Thursday 1 March. The beautifully illustrated coffee table style book was commissioned by the Darebin Parklands Association and has a foreword by former Australian of the Year, Professor Tim Flannery. It tells the story of prize winning vineyards, orchards, dairy cattle grazing, quolls and platypus, a dusty bluestone quarry and a smouldering tip that became a much loved bushland park. Info and online sales: [www.dpa.org.au](http://www.dpa.org.au)

## APRIL MEETING

### **Speaker to be announced**

**Meetings on first Thursday of the month  
from 7.30 pm at the Old Shire Offices,  
60 Beverley Road.**

**Enter from Buckingham Drive near the Banyule Theatre and  
Greening Australia. Melways map 32:D3. All Welcome**

## AT A GLANCE

### March

**Thursday 1st:** General Meeting. Speakers: Sarah Mirams & Ingrid Svendsen - Darebin Parklands

**Sunday 18th:** 40th Anniversary planting tree guarding Warringal Park.

### April

**Thursday 5th:** General Meeting. Speaker: to be announced

**Sunday 15th:** Typha removal at Beverley rd Wetland / Mulching South end of Warringal Swamp

**Friday 20th:** Deadline for contributions to May/June Newsletter

## News & Events

### WCS Planting Calender for 2012

Greetings from your new planting coordinator. Thanks to Don Stokes who has done a stirring job over the last few years, and I take on the position knowing I have some big gumboots to fill. Another great year of planting and activities ahead. Generally activities will take place on the morning of the second Sunday of the month, unless it falls on a long weekend, in which case the following Sunday. A calendar of events is provided with this newsletter, including special dates and joint activities with other Friends groups within Banyule City Council. Look out for updates in the newsletter, or on the emailing list (contact [warringal3084@gmail.com](mailto:warringal3084@gmail.com) to join). The autumn months will generally be mulching and weeding, in preparation for the winter planting season. I look forward to seeing you around the parks throughout the year.

*Anthony Fernando, WCS Planting Coordinator*

Saturday February 25<sup>th</sup> - Night Walk at Banyule Flats. 8:30 pm, Somerset Drive Carpark, Viewbank. RSVP

Sunday March 18<sup>th</sup> - 40th Anniversary planting tree guarding at Warringal Park. Mulch and tree guard plantings throughout this area as follow up from previous year.

Sunday April 15<sup>th</sup> – Typha removal at Beverley rd Wetland / Mulching Sth end of Warringal Swamp in prep for 2013 planting. Decision on either activity for this month. Mulching as plant prep for next year.

Sunday May 6<sup>th</sup> - Friends of Plenty River working bee. Shared working bee with the Friends of Plenty River at Yallambie Park, Yallambie Melways map: 20 K8. Activity to be decided

Sunday June 17<sup>th</sup> - planting at the Swamp seat infill. Infill planting at the Swamp seat to enhance entrance area and bird food.

Sunday July 8<sup>th</sup> - Western Habitat Link Planting

infill. Planting understorey as a follow up from previous season.

Sunday July 29<sup>th</sup> National Tree Day Site and location to be confirmed.

August 12th - New planting at the Habitat Link site Nth. A range of species to connect this area with habitat link and ephemeral wetland.

Sunday September 9<sup>th</sup> - Friends of Wilson Reserve working bee. Weeding at Reedy Billabong habitat link. To be confirmed with Robert Bender and Friends of Wilson reserve calendar.

Sunday October 21st - Water watch activity with Julia at the Warringal Wetland site. Infill planting and waterwatch activity with Julia Vanderoord.

November - End of year excursion. Date and activity to be confirmed.

Sunday December 16<sup>th</sup> - WCS organised event. Any suggestions welcome. Maybe a picnic?

### Myrtle Rust

The fungus *Uredo rangelii* (myrtle rust), recently found in Victoria for the first time poses a threat to Victoria's nursery, forestry and beekeeping industries, as well as to parks and gardens and native forests. It can potentially attack all species of the Myrtaceae family that includes many native plants. For more information see: <http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/forestry/pests-diseases-weeds/diseases/myrtle-rust>



### How to contact us

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**Planting Coordinator:** Anthony Fernando

## **November 2011 – President’s Report**

### Works at Banyule Flats

An issue raised by members regarding works at Banyule Flats was raised at the October BEAC meeting. Information recently received advised that there were council works near Graham Road Drainage line, and on either side of Banyule Road. Corridors of Green funding has been obtained to allow for weed eradication and proposed planting in the area.

However, these works are not in Banyule Flats. Advice received is that if the works in Banyule flats are along creek banks, then it is more than likely Melbourne Water works.

### Impressionist Laboratory Reference Group

Members are aware of the Impressionist Laboratory Reference Group meetings held since November 2010 regarding a proposal to locate an Impressionist Laboratory/Gallery in Yarra Flats parklands.

There have been a number of meetings, and the issues in dispute have yet to be resolved. The Society has formalised its position regarding the proposed location of the Gallery to Council so there was no confusion in communications. Members of the Reference group are still awaiting receipt of concept plans for the gallery.

Banyule Council officers have been working towards finalising the Business Plan to ensure the concept of the Impressionist Lab idea is supported by key organisations and institutions, is a sustainable model and have developed some costings around capital and operational funds required. This has been happening at the same time as continuing to work with both Parks Victoria and Melbourne Water on the proposed location of the Lab within the Yarra Flats Park. The Business Plan has now been completed and Council continues to work towards gaining support of locating this facility within the Yarra Flats Park environment.

Parks Victoria are working towards a concept plan for the Yarra Flats Park and Council will continue to work with Parks Victoria on their development of the Yarra Flats Concept Plan which is looking at the proposed development of the three projects at Yarra Flats, the Tree Based Adventure Facility, Impressionist Lab and Melbourne Water Wetlands. This concept is still not complete as Parks Victoria work through the three projects.

Council are currently seeking funding to assist them move into the next stage of developing a

proposed concept design for the Impressionist Lab which will enable them to further consult around the concept and idea. Council will not be able to move into this phase until such time as the Yarra Flats Concept Plan is complete. If Council are successful in securing funding and are able to develop concept plans, they will once again come back to the Community Reference Group to seek guidance and formalise design principles.

Council have now finalised the Impressionist Lab Business Plan and are now in a position to present this to the Community Reference Group and outline the proposed development in more detail as well as the design principles for the Lab. The Business Plan outlines the projects Vision, Objectives, Business Model, Funding, proposed programming model and Budget.

Council officers have continued to work closely with Parks Victoria with their Concept/Master Plan for Yarra Flats Park and they are currently finalising these documents before they undertake community consultation later in the year. The Concept Plans shows there are a range of concepts for the park as well as the proposed Tree Based Adventure facility, Banksia Wetlands and Impressionist Lab projects. Council advised that they will keep the community reference group informed on any proposed consultations.

A meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday 29 November. Members will be kept informed on the outcome of the meeting.

### Bolin Bolin Billabong – Stormwater Harvesting Project

The Society has been informed that Parks Victoria, in association with Booroondara Council and other partners including Melbourne Water, & Carey Grammar are proposing a Stormwater Harvesting project for Bolin Bolin Billabong.

The project born out of lack of water in Bolin due to extended drought. The projects seeks to harvest stormwater, treat it to an acceptable level for the billabong, then replicate natural flooding events and frequencies to restore the billabong. Bolin needs water in winter/early spring, remainder of water to be used on nearby sportsfields /golf course over the summer. All harvesting of stormwater, treatment and storage is separate to the billabong. The billabong will remain stand alone and not form any part of Council’s stormwater drainage system

## Nov 2011 President's report cont.

Feedback thus far from the Wurundjeri has been very positive, further detailed consultation will occur as part of the preparation of the Cultural Heritage Management Plan for the project

ParksVic are planning a community briefing/consultation session for the evening of Wednesday 7th December to be held in the meeting room at the Westerfolds Park work-centre where both Manningham CC and Parks Victoria will be jointly running the session. A range of interested groups (like WCS) and individuals are being invited to attend this meeting.

Although Actual meeting time has not been set at this stage, this information may be available by email at a later date or at our December meeting on 1 December 2011. Members are encouraged to attend.

### New Law in Pipeline to Aid Loggers – The Age – 3 November 2011

An article in the Age dated 3 November 2011 referred to proposed changes by the State government to the code for timber production which allows for loggers to seek exemptions from State environment laws protecting endangered species.

The proposed amendments would allow the Secretary of the Dept. of Sustainability &

Environment to exempt logging projects from the requirements of the Flora & Fauna Guarantee Act.

These changes follow a landmark ruling in the Supreme court last year banning VicForests from logging old growth forests at Brown mountain in East Gippsland, after it was established that the endangered Long-footed Potoroo existed in the area proposed for logging.

The State Government has effectively sought to legislate around the Supreme Court ruling, and the Flora & Fauna Guarantee Act in order to allow logging of old growth forests to continue.

It has been rightfully stated by Luke Chamberlain of the Wilderness Society that this proposal by the State Government "...puts us on par with governance of logging practices in Indonesia...".

Allowing loggers to be exempt from the requirements of the Flora & Fauna Guarantee Act, is a clear and present threat to our endangered wildlife and old growth forests. It is proposed that once further information is obtained, the Society will write to the minister, objecting to the proposals, and all members are encouraged to add their voice in opposition these proposed changes.

*John D'Aloia*

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## Warringal Consevation Society - The Beginning by Doug Western

Apparently I have the genetic background of an environmentalist and this manifested itself during my role in the formation of Warringal Conservation Society in 1970.

You see my mother's grandfather, Alfred George Bolto, or A.G. as he was affectionately known, was Chairman of Mannum Town Council in South Australia during the early 1920s. Mannum is a town on the banks of Murray River and its trees were cut down and used to fuel paddle steamers. His daughter Enid told me he was responsible for the Murray's lagoons in the area being declared bird sanctuaries.

On the same side of my family I have a cousin who became a Professor of Biology and my mother was interested in native birds and plants too.

When I was about five years old I listened to Phillip 'Crosbie' Morrison's radio nature programs on Sunday evenings. His subject matter was so interesting it would leave me gobsmacked.

I was about ten when I replaced Mum on her Council of Adult Education trip to see Superb

Lyrebirds in Sherbrooke Forest. Naturalist, Jack Hyett, was our leader and I was excited when we saw our first Lyrebird and when we saw our seventh I was blown away.

Mum introduced native plants to our garden and our bird list lengthened. I was about 15 when I noticed instructions how to build a propagation cold frame in Your Garden magazine. After completing it I struck the seeds of Yellow Gums, Hair-pin Banksias and Melaleucas and pricked them out into tubes. In about 1966 I donated ten Yellow Gums to Banyule High School and they still grow in the Theatre car park that remains even though the school was sold off for housing development. Mum planted a few Yellow Gums along the Yarra River in 1966 too. Two still grow there.

At the time I was a student at Banyule High School and one day our class marched down to the Yarra River Flats below our school and planted native trees. Children from other local schools were also involved and three plantations were completed

## Warringal Conservevation Society - The Beginning cont

that day. It was great fun.



*One of my Banyule High School Yellow Gums*

My father was bullying me at the time and I would seek solace walking around Warringal Parklands Swamp and along the Yarra River in Heidelberg. The native birds distracted me from the causes of my anxiety and I attempted to identify them. One day when I was pondering life the thought, I'm going to discover the true essence of my natural self, flashed through my mind. I also made observations about human society and compared them to the natural world. I noted how each native bird was distinctively unique and was living in a particular niche in a range of habitats and I decided humans functioned similarly within human society. That observation helped decide humans are a product of nature and human society has powerful effects on the lives of everything on earth. In fact I would become angry when I thought of the selfishness of humans because they destroyed countless numbers of other living things and species. I also decided I wouldn't have children until I had resolved the hang ups I was developing so I wouldn't inflict them on my children.

I joined Bird Observers Club Inc. (BOC) when I was 17. H. R.(Reg) Johnson, a Macleod resident, was President at the time. I attended many meetings of the club and Reg would drive me home to Rosanna afterwards. At one BOC meeting in 1965 or 1966 our speaker spoke about impending climate change and global warming. That was the first time I had heard of these concepts and they sounded logical to me. I met many BOC members at meetings and

field excursions and I learnt a lot about birds. I also joined Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Inc. and Society for Growing Australian Plants Inc. Among the many people I met were Robert Marston 111 and Peter Thomas who were also regular bird watchers along the Yarra.

That year I also noticed the trees we school children had planted two years earlier were being overgrown with weeds. I wrote a letter to City of Heidelberg's Chairman of Parks and Gardens Committee to complain about the problem and I mentioned other conservation issues too. Cr Vern Henderson, Chairman of the Committee, called at my home on a Sunday while I was on a BOC outing and expressed interest in meeting me and discussing the issues I had raised. A few weeks later I met him and another Councillor at his home. He expressed surprise I was 17 years old. Vern worked for Victoria's Forests Commission so he had an environmental interest. The outcome of our discussions were that he committed Council to maintaining our tree plantations properly, he offered me a role in choosing plants for a landscaping project near football ovals in Warringal Parklands (this project didn't happen) and he strongly suggested there would have to be a strong display of public support for conservation measures before Council would act. Vern Henderson and Reg Johnson (employed by Land's Department) caught trains to work in the city. It appeared it was possible they caught the same train sometimes and I sometimes wonder if they knew each other and discussed conservation matters at that stage. Reg, in his book, Boiled Wheat and Rabbit, expressed frustration that Heidelberg Council did virtually nothing to support conservation measures in the 1960s.

I met the Holywell family about this time and often viewed Banyule River Flats through telescopes mounted next to their living room window.

Reg Johnson was great support for me. I was a young man with a fragile psychology. And he proved his support when he organised a meeting of local people interested in birds. This took place at Rosanna Tennis Club's club rooms. To a large audience Reg presented a slide show and talk about Australian birds. Shortly afterwards we formed a committee with the aim of forming a conservation society.

Apparently we planned well because the inaugural meeting of Warringal Conservation Society (WCS) at Heidelberg Civic Centre went

## Warringal Conservevation Society - The Beginning cont.

smoothly. An early planning problem was easily solved. Seventy people attended and that meant we needed a bigger meeting room. We had organised Cr Henderson, who was Mayor of Heidelberg at the time, to chair the meeting so he had the influence to easily solve our problem which was actually a blessing. I felt very pleased and honoured when Dr Len Allen, President of Yarra Valley Conservation League, nominated me as first President of Warringal Conservation Society. And I was elected to the position unopposed. Thank you.

And I thank everyone who has supported WCS during its 42 years of great work. You have continued to provide 'a strong display of public support for conservation measures' throughout the municipalities of Heidelberg and Banyule. Keep up the good work.

*Doug Western*

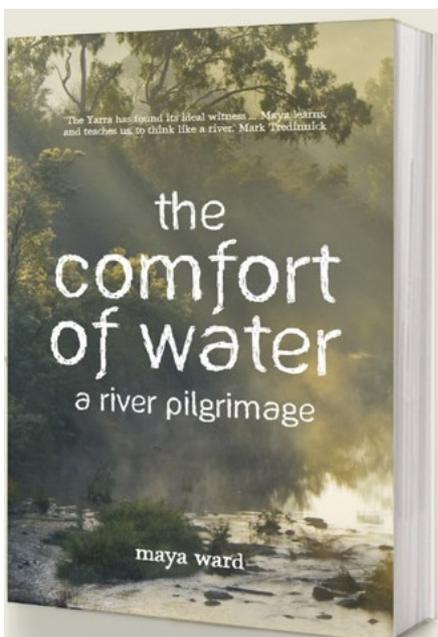


*Lobbying by Warringal Conservation Society saved Banyule Swamp*

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## February speaker - Maya Ward - The Comfort of Water

In 2003 Maya Ward and three friends walked the length of the Yarra river from Williamstown to its source near Mount Baw Baw. Maya's book detailing the three week journey has recently been published and she spoke about it at our February meeting.



Maya explained that the idea of walking along the Yarra to its upper reaches is not a new concept, with Aboriginal people frequently having made this type of journey. In the modern era accessing the river is

complicated by private ownership. This meant that Maya's group had to send out in the order of 300 letters requesting permission to cross people's land or camp for the night. The response was overwhelmingly positive with only three land owners saying no and many offering accommodation. Where there was no way along the bank, it was a matter of stuffing things into a dry-bag and swimming to the other side of the river. The trip was supported by a road crew that the walkers caught up with each evening. This meant that friends and family were able to join the group for parts of the journey.

Along the way Maya spoke to people from many different backgrounds including, Aboriginal people,



*Maya reading from her book*

## Feb speaker cont. Maya Ward

school children, the Banyule Bush Crew, conservationists, rangers, farmers and loggers; all passionate about the river in their own way and with stories to tell. Maya recounted talking to 84 year old Ted Chisholm in Warburton, a local who had spent many years revegetating the riverbank and received an award from the Prime Minister for his work. Maya, who now lives in Warburton, ran into Ted recently and gave him a copy of the book.

Maya noted that when people look at her book, they inevitably start by going to the bit that talks about their part of the river. For most of us at the Warringal Conservation Society, this means from Ivanhoe to Westerfolds park. Maya read sections of her book relating to Bolin Bolin Billabong and its Aboriginal history, meeting children from Ivanhoe

and Viewbank Primary Schools, seeing the Homestead at Banyule Flats, meeting the Banyule Bush Crew, and seeing the Banyule swamp in all its glory. She noted that, while many wetlands and swamps had been drained or filled in, the Banyule swamp had been saved because of action from passionate locals. There are many similar stories along the Yarra.

Maya's book is called "The Comfort of Water - a River Pilgrimage" and was selected by the State Library as one of six books to represent Victoria for the National Year of Reading 2012. For more details see <http://mayaward.com.au>

*James Deane*

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## The proposed North-East link freeway - what is at stake?

The proposed North-East link has not featured in the headlines as often recently, but there is no commitment that it will not go ahead. Rather than tracing a line on a map, the best way to appreciate what is at risk it to go for a walk or ride on the bike. From north to south, some of what could be lost: 1. Remnant Redgum forest at Simpson Barracks, 2. Creek Bend Reserve, 3. Rivergum Walk, 4. Banyule Swamp, 5 & 6. Warringal Parklands, 7. Heide Gallery grounds, 8. Riverside track in Bulleen, 9 Bolin Bolin Billabong. *(James Deane)*



## Nature Notes - Member's Observations

### February

Lene Kuhl Jakobsen - Four Tawny Frog Mouths near the small wetland in Warringal parklands.

Dianne Williamson - A Red-Backed Kingfisher on her balcony in Rosanna, 24th Jan - an unusual sighting.

Kath Johnson, Anthea Fleming and Heather Smith reported seeing Eastern Spinebills.

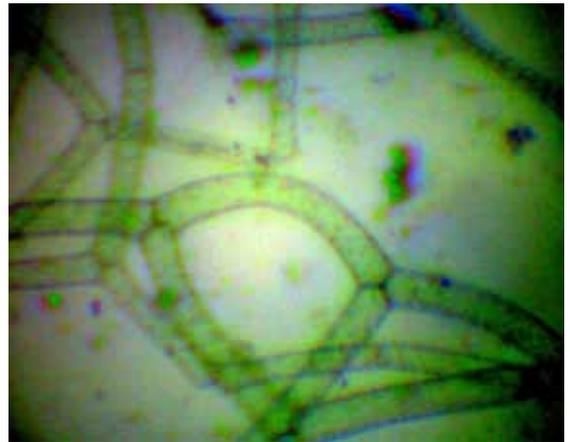
Kate - Fruitbats and a Tawny Frogmouth

Beryl Jarman - Rainbow Lorikeets and Mosquitoes.

James, William and Robert Deane - A Powerful Owl and an Owlet Nightjar at Pound Bend Warrandyte; an algal bloom (*Hydrodictyon* - net weed) at the Banyule Swamp.



*Powerful Owl - Warrandyte*



*Netweed - Banyule Swamp*

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