



WARRINGAL CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Early Winter Newsletter

Volume 47/three

May/June 2017

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.

MAY MEETING

Richard Loyn – Columbia and Ecuador

Richard is a biologist, bird enthusiast and photographer who travels to observe wildlife and natural history in interesting places all over the world. He previously presented a fantastic talk on Madagascar in 2014 that was illustrated with beautiful wildlife photos. Richard returns to speak to the Warringal Conservation Society about his recent travels to Columbia and Ecuador.

JUNE MEETING

Jemma Cripps - Eastern Grey Kangaroos in Urban Areas

Jemma works at the The Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research in Heidelberg, studying, fauna ecology, threatened species, native herbivores, human-wildlife interactions and arboreal mammals. Jemma will speak about kangaroos in the suburbs; a frequently reported sighting in the Warringal Conservations Society's Nature Notes.

**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

May

Thursday 4th: General meeting at 7.30pm - Ricahrd Loyn - Columbia and Ecuador

Sunday 21st: Working Bee - Warringal Pond - (See News & Events)

June

Thursday 1st: General meeting at 7.30pm - Jemma Cripps - Kangaroos (See news and Events)

Working Bee/Activity: Details to be confirmed (check WCS Facebook)

News & Events

Sunday 21st May: WCS working bee

10am – 12noon

Warringal pond, at the Sills Bend end of the Carpark, Heidelberg Football ground with morning tea after.

See WCS Facebook for more details of location.

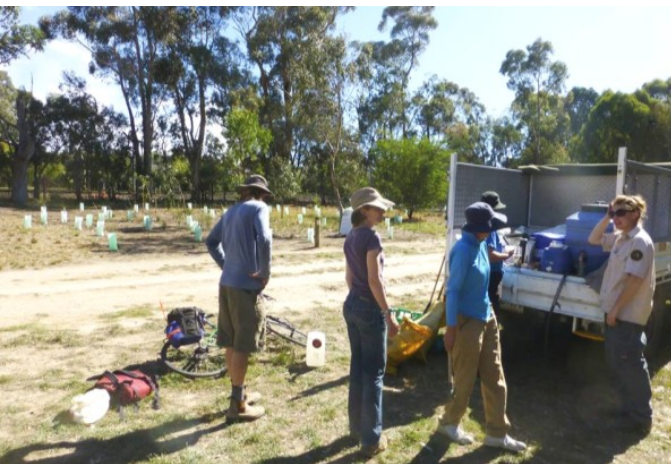
This working bee will involve planting about 30 semi-established trees next to the Warringal Pond leading to the Yarra River, and then further up the Main Yarra Trail from the northern end of Warringal Swamp leading to the Yarra River.

June Working Bee/Activity

To be confirmed. Check WCS Facebook for updates

Reports- Working Bees with Friends of Salt Creek and Friends of Plenty River

Sat 8th April - WCS members Penny Grose, Daphne Hards, Helen Brown and James Deane joined Friends of Salt Creek in the Rosanna Parklands. Native grass seed collected earlier in the year was spread and watered in. Fences shielding sensitive areas from trampling were repaired.



Sun 9th April - WCS members Heather Smith and Daphne Hards joined Friends of Plenty River. After thunder, lightning and a few downpours, thousands of broom seedlings (weeds) were removed.



Top: Kevin Ley (Friends of Plenty River) and Heather Smith. Bottom: Daphne Hards.

Who we are and how to contact us

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News & Events cont.

Information forum - North East link

Tue 30th May 2017 7 pm - 9.15 pm

Attention all Banyule residents interested in the North East Link and its possible route through Banyule! Banyule City Council is holding a forum with guest speakers from various stakeholder groups to inform the community of NE Link developments.

Tuesday 30 May 2017

7.00pm to 9.15pm

Streeton Room, The Centre Ivanhoe

To register phone 9490 4222 or email:

transport@banyule.vic.gov.au

Significant Tree Tour

Do you love trees? Want to know more about the outstanding trees in Banyule? Banyule City Council is hosting a Significant Tree Tour on 13

May. Council has over 720 trees which have been

identified as 'significant' and are afforded greater protection under our Planning Scheme. Trees can be deemed significant due to their: Remnant status; Cultural significance; Landscape, Habitat or Horticultural value; Historical importance; Size or age; Botanical Rarity, and / or; Form. Council will bring to life many of the stories behind some of our amazing trees this May, with a guided tour of ten of our most notable public trees. The tour will be facilitated by a professional arborist, who will present information on the trees scientific, historical and cultural qualities. The tour is on Saturday 13 May from 1-3pm leaving from Old Shire Council Offices in Heidelberg. Places are limited so secure yours through

trybooking: www.trybooking.com/272869

Duck Season 2017

Victoria's tranquil wetlands are some of the most beautiful and peaceful places in Australia. They are havens for many native waterbirds that are found nowhere else in the world. Why is it that a very small percentage of the population is allowed to shatter and brutally destroy this tranquillity, and make targets of our country's unique and defenceless native waterbirds for a few hours of selfish fun?

Numbers of waterbirds were at an all-time low in Victoria at the start of 2017, but still a duck shooting season was called by the Government. It started on the 18th of March and will go for three months. On the opening morning, thousands of hunters came out across the State to hunt including more than 2000 in the Kerang area. Compliance officers from the Game Management Authority (GMA) were kept busy issuing infringement notices to hunters over gun licences, unattended camp fires, littering, breaches of the Firearms Act, and the illegal taking of protected species. Infringement notices and \$930 fines and banishment from the wetlands were given to anti-duck shooting activists who waded into the water to retrieve wounded ducks before 10am.

According to several accounts it was a bloodbath at First Marsh in Koorangie State Game Reserve near Kerang. Shooting began half an hour early, and significant numbers of protected species such as threatened Freckled and Blue-billed Duck were shot. The GMA reported that many hunters took excessively long shots that left birds wounded rather than killed; and many hunters made no attempts to recover downed birds and just kept shooting.

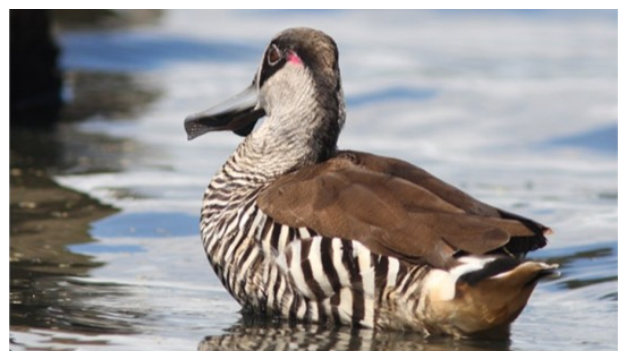
Volunteers collected more than 1200 waterbirds that had been shot and left behind in this area. They later displayed them outside the offices of the Premier Daniel Andrews, and the Agriculture Minister Jaala Pulford.

Further evidence that there had been a bloodbath at Koorangie State Game Reserve on the opening weekend emerged in the footage of pits containing almost 200 dead ducks which was shown on the ABC's 7.30pm program. All of the dead birds were game species, but none had had the meat removed and appeared to have been shot for fun and then hidden from view.

A Government that allows this barbaric slaughter to continue and aligns itself with the shooting lobby is no longer acceptable to the broader community. It is a recipe for election disaster, rather than election success.

What you can do: Go to www.banduckshooting.com for 3 actions you can take *to end duck shooting!*

Celia Smith



March Speaker - Gary Presland - Aboriginal Melbourne

Gary Presland is an archeologist by training. He studied the history of Aboriginal people in Melbourne, and has written several books and a PhD thesis on the topic. He is also an incredibly knowledgeable and engaging speaker.

Gary explained how Aboriginal people view themselves as part of nature, whereas Europeans typically view nature as a resource.

Aboriginal people had a complex social structure with clans defined by language groups. Women married outside their language group, reinforcing social networks that involved reciprocal obligations and access to resources.

The land was managed using fire at a frequency and intensity that favoured herbaceous species with tubers, and open grassland for grazing prey species. Men usually hunted while women gathered. 4-5 hour work a day was usually sufficient to cover all needs.

Tubers from lilies, orchids and daisies provided a reliable staple and digging for them aerated the soil. Smaller tubers were left and to regenerate and the land was rested and burnt as necessary to keep it productive.

Wetlands were highly regarded by Aboriginal people as they were very productive. Eels were abundant and hunting them supported visitors during gatherings. The area where the central city area of Melbourne lies had a number of large wetland where visitors from other areas camped for months at a time. Europeans were less enthusiastic about wetlands and Albert Park Lake is one of the last highly modified remnants of these once prized areas.

For more about Gary and his books see:

<http://garypresland.com.au/>

James Deane

Meeting with Hon. Anthony Carbines MP, Member for Ivanhoe, Parliamentary Secretary for Energy Environment & Climate Change, Parliamentary Secretary for Water – 24 March 2017

On 24 March 2017, representatives of Friends of Banyule (FOB) and Warringal Conservation Society met with Hon. Anthony Carbines, who is the State Member for Ivanhoe and Parliamentary Secretary for Energy Environment & Climate Change, and Parliamentary Secretary for Water.

There were a number of items on the agenda for discussion, including:

- North East Link
- Infrastructure projects including level crossing removal and duplication of the Hurstbridge line
- Development issues in Banyule - impact on amenity, environment, heritage & infrastructure.
- Changes to Plan Melbourne - planning zones etc.
- Water Tank site development
- Austin Hospital heritage overlay
- Yarra River protection legislation
- Strathallan Golf Course / La Trobe University Development

North East Link.

Given the government's recent announcement on North East Link, this was a key item amongst issues for discussion. The official press release notes that the route will be determined between now and 2018, and a final decision taken to the 2018 election. \$35m has been set aside for a feasibility/

business case study including options for the final route. As mentioned at various forums dating back to 2008 and leading up to the 2010 election, WCS and FOB have remained consistently opposed to the N-E Link.

With respect to Banyule parklands and Banyule Flats, WCS & FOB have outlined the ecological significance of these wetlands, and the considerable habitat restoration works undertaken by Council and community groups like WCS over the past 45 years.

In addition to numerous species of flora and fauna, it is a nationally recognised site of ornithological significance. If the route were to be through this area, it would have a very significant environmental impact whether above ground or as a tunnel.

From a traffic management perspective, it would deposit traffic at Bulleen Rd, only a few kilometres from Hoddle St, one of the busiest sections of the Eastern Freeway. This route would also require tunnelling under the Yarra River potentially at three points and would involve a steep grade. This is not favoured by the trucking industry including VTA, who we are advised, prefer not to have a tunnel as it would preclude use by over dimensional and hazardous goods vehicles. Resolve Rosanna Rd residents, are now also opposed to this route, for similar reasons. Discussions with RRR in August indicated that their discussion with the transport

Meeting with Hon. Anthony Carbines MP, cont.

industry had confirmed this, with the result that even if N/E Link were to proceed via the Banyule route, dangerous goods placarded and heavy vehicles would still potentially use Rosanna Rd.

The freeway, whether a tunnel or above ground, would also have the effect of dividing the community along its route. It has the potential to also negatively impact the grounds of Heide Gallery, as well as the schools' sports ovals along Bulleen Rd. Given the costs of the previous proposed N/E Link in 2010, approximately \$8b, and the projected costs for East West Link in 2014, in the order of \$10b, the potential costs of a similar tunnel in this location in 2018 would be in excess of the \$10 estimated cost, possibly \$11 - \$12b over a ten year build. Given the potential to increase congestion on the Eastern Freeway at its exit point at Bulleen Rd and likely additional traffic generated at the Chandler Highway bridge, when additional lanes are added, the cost/benefits of this route are unlikely to add up.

The N/E Link authority has sent out a community update advising there will be information sessions on the project and a Community Reference Group will be established, to represent community views. We indicated that we would be interested in participating in these forums.

Infrastructure projects including level crossing removal and duplication of the Hurstbridge line.

We commended the initiative to duplicate the Hurstbridge line whilst carrying out the level crossing removal and new station at Rosanna. WCS and FOB have been lobbying over a long period for this, together with other public transport infrastructure. This will provide a basis for new technology signalling, allowing more trains through the loop and across the system without increasing congestion at level crossings.

We encouraged the government to extend this infrastructure spending to further public transport initiatives, including overdue, cost effective projects such as Doncaster Rail, extension of the South Morang line to Mernda and an Airport Link as well as an integrated (preferably electric) bus fleet.

Given N/E Link would not be completed till 2028, traffic management measures on Rosanna Rd need to be taken now. As we have consistently advocated, these should include, heavy vehicle curfews (with time of day/night adjusted as required), inside lane restrictions, reduced speed limits (ie; 50k & 40k in school zones) for similar vehicles, increased on the ground and traffic camera

enforcement, and road engineering solutions where appropriate.

Development issues in Banyule - impact on amenity, environment, heritage & infrastructure.

Current intense levels of development across Banyule is heavily impacting neighbourhood, character, amenity, heritage and infrastructure. This is placing Council in a difficult position in endeavouring to uphold its planning scheme and structure plans, whilst still providing for a diverse housing mix around activity centres in accordance with Plan Melbourne. Developers consistently push the envelope, in many cases, ignore planning scheme provisions. Council and the community are then forced to defend neighbourhood amenity and character at VCAT, facing the considerable legal, financial and specialist resources of the proponents. The impact on infrastructure is significant, including local streets, arterial roads, parking, drainage, school communities, as well as diminished amenity/overlooking/significant vegetation and canopy loss etc. All are affected by increasing competition for parking around activity centres during construction and ongoing. Developers are not paying their share towards this and much of this development benefits overseas and negatively geared investors rather than young families trying to buy their first property, who are being priced out of the market. Meanwhile, the look, feel and character of neighbourhoods is being irrevocably altered, in a negative way, heritage, views and vistas are being lost.

Changes to Plan Melbourne - planning zones etc.

Proposed changes to Plan Melbourne has both positive as well as negative aspects. Whilst mandatory height limits in some situations is welcome, as is minimum outdoor space provisions, not so welcome, is removal of the current maximum two units per block provision as well as increased height limits in neighbourhood and general residential zones. This will lead to greater intensity of development in many cases, exacerbating existing pressures. We would like to see more detail on the proposed changes.

Water Tank site development.

WCS & FOB welcomed the government's involvement via its land development agency, Places Vic. The design, layout, building density and open space provision is a more environmentally sustainable and considered design than would be the

Meeting with Hon. Anthony Carbines MP, cont.

case with a private developer. This was reflected in the response by the community at the initial forum. At the latest forum, however, one of the key issues raised re the concept plans, was height. At twelve storeys, it considerably exceeds Banyule Planning Scheme and Structure Plan provisions. We understand there is some potential for amendment in relation to height, but this would involve some trade off against the open space component.

We were advised concept plans are in the initial stages and adjustments to these will occur as the consultation and design process proceeds. Other issues raised were access egress, over shadowing, potential for public housing component and community use facility.

Austin Hospital heritage overlay

FOB raised this matter with Council along with Heidelberg Historic Society and together with Dr Corral Tudball, made submissions to Planning Panels Victoria. Their submission is, that whilst not opposed to a reduction in the heritage overlay currently covering the whole of the Austin site, FOB believed the heritage listed Davies and Bowen buildings should be retained, and outlined their reasoning for retaining these buildings

Yarra River protection legislation

WCS, FOB and other community groups made submissions to the public consultation process of this proposed new legislation aiming to protect the Yarra corridor.

We understand a new body, the Birrarung Council will be established to oversee planning and development on the middle and lower Yarra. Issues will include provisions in relation to set backs, mandatory height limits and impact on amenity of the riverine environment. Final details are yet to be determined.

There is an upcoming forum organised by the Yarra River Keepers association on 5th April, which we and other groups and interested parties will attend. In our view, it is critical that the Yarra River corridor and its environs be protected from inappropriate development along its banks. The lack of soil permeability and vegetation loss associated with denser, larger developments along the Yarra and within tributaries catchments is contributing to increased pollutant load and damage associated with

more intense flood events (despite less overall average rainfall) Melbourne now experiences, due to Climate Change.

Strathallen Golf Course / La Trobe University Development

The concerns of the local community were raised over La Trobe University's proposal to sell the Strathallen Open Space land, including the Golf Club, subsequent to the preparation of a development plan overlay. The usage of the Strathallen Open Space has been a significant community issue spanning over 30 years. In 1996, the then State Government recognised the significance of the flora and fauna within the Habitat Link that was managed by the University. Ironically, at the time, the University itself had [raised concerns that development of the open space would adversely affect the quality and quantity of water that would likely flow into the University's Moat System, and that the "...effect of full scale development could be catastrophic."](#)

When the land was purchased by La Trobe University, it stated that it wished to maintain the open space, including the Golf Course, in its present form and manage it as a buffer to the Habitat Link. The importance of the Strathallen Open Space land has not really changed. In fact, it has become more significant over the past 30 years. Not only is it an important environmental space acting as a buffer to the adjacent Gresswell Native Habitat Link, but it has become an extremely valuable enduring community recreational, and social asset that should be preserved.

It was indicated that Anthony would discuss the matter with his Parliamentary colleague Collin Brooks, Member for Bundoora and would further advise.

We believe the meeting was a worthwhile one and the discussion was very constructive. With so much happening in terms of the environment, planning, transport, infrastructure and other key issues for the community, dialogue between the community and its representatives is important. We conveyed our appreciation for the time and interest shown by Anthony Carbines on the issues raised, and his undertaking to follow up on a number of matters.

Nature Notes March/April

In late February and early March, a Freckled Duck and a Musk Duck were seen at Banyule Swamp.

On 3rd March, I saw a Grey Goshawk, white form, from our back garden, trying to land on the neighbour's chimney. It was pure white, so much so as to be (very briefly) taken for a cockatoo, but with yellow cere and strong yellow legs – probably female. They are occasionally seen in the Yarra Valley. Alas, no photo, but a lifetime sighting.

Heather Smith reported seeing a Tiger Snake swimming in the Yarra.

Lene Jakobsen saw a blue parrot with a very long tail – this sounds like an aviary escape.

James Deane saw White-necked Heron at Banyule Swamp.

Don Stokes saw a Swamp Wallaby at the Horseshoe Billabong in Wilson Reserve.

On 5 March, Clean-up Australia Day, I visited the Grotty Pond to see if a Latham's Snipe was still there. I was able to take several photos (see next page) because it was less wary than usual, feeding steadily, fattening up for its long flight back to northern Japan.

Dianne Williamson saw a mother Wombat with a young one on 3rd April, near the Plenty confluence. She also had a small party of White-eared Honeyeaters in her garden.

On the same day, John Merory saw a large male Swamp Wallaby at the Horseshoe Billabong.

On 6th April, Channel 7 News reported that a large Stag had jumped through a window into a house in Alphington, and attacked its reflection in a mirror – observed by a resident. - Location not stated, probably on Darebin Creek or near the Yarra? Presumably this would be the same Sambar deer reported a few months ago at the Ivanhoe Golf-course.

Roland Hieser reported that his garden was full of flowers and attracting Spinebills and Wattlebirds and other nectar-feeders.

Ann saw Black Cockatoos over Somerset Drive.

Dianne reported three Black Swans on Banyule Swamp. On 10 April, she saw a male Sacred Kingfisher by the Bike Path below Banyule House – it swooped down and caught a small lizard. This is late in the year to see one – it should be moving north soon.

On the morning of 10 April, I found a Fox in our back garden and was able to take some hasty photos (see below).

On 14 April, alarm calls from lorikeets and Noisy Miners alerted me to an Australian Hobby whizzing overhead. Not seen locally for several years.

Pied Currawongs are numerous around Ivanhoe and Heidelberg at present – the regular autumn influx.

Anthea Fleming



Latham's Snipe at Banyule Flats



A Latham's Snipe feeding in the Grotty Pond at Banyule Flats - 5th March. Taking on fuel for the long flight home to northern Japan. *Photo: Anthea Fleming*

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