



Warringal
Conservation
Society

EARLY WINTER NEWSLETTER

Volume 49/three May/June 2019

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 \$20
Family \$25
Pension/student/
unemployed \$15
Life \$200

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 Anthony Carbines MP.

MAY SPEAKER

Lawrence Pope - From Controversy to Conservation – the Grey-headed Flying-fox in Melbourne

Since 2003 Friends of Bats and Bushcare has worked to further enhance the flying foxes camp at Yarra Bend Park and to educate the public. The long term survival of this species depends upon local groups advocating strongly to retain existing and potential camp sites of urban and rural habitat, and protecting forest and bushland foraging areas.

JUNE SPEAKER

Ian Endersby - Corridors and Sugar Gliders

Montmorency locals started a project to encourage householders to improve habitat corridors for birds and other wildlife. Because tree hollows are so rare now, boxes were installed to encourage Sugar Gliders. Regular checking of the boxes has indicated that Sugar Gliders are present and stable in the best remaining corridors in Montmorency.

JULY SPEAKER

Vern Steele - La Trobe Wildlife Sanctuary

Vern will talk about feral animal control, and plans to reintroduce native animals to the sanctuary.

**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

Thurs 2nd: General meeting at 7.30pm - Flying-fox

Sun 19th: Planting at Tawny Pond (See News & Events)

June

Thurs 6th: General meeting at 7.30pm - Sugar Gliders

Sun 16th: Planting at Banyule Native Gardens (See News & Events)

July

Thurs 4th: General meeting at 7.30pm - Wildlife Sanctuary

Message from the President

Is everyone familiar with NEL, NELP, EES, EPR and PER? The first is North East Link and NELP, or North East Link Project, is the renamed authority which is developing this mega-road. In two weeks time, mid-April, we anticipate that the Environmental Effects Statement (EES) will be released by the State government, and everyone has 30 working days to comment on it, via a written submission. The EES will document all the social and physical environmental tests and analysis that NELP have undertaken over 12 months or so, and NELP will be hoping that the report puts the project in a good light. The EES will be about 30,000 pages only! We are hoping to read some of it and write a good submission; and subsequently, in approximately August, attend the public hearings out of which a set of Environmental Performance Requirements (EPR) will be crafted, which are legislated construction standards that the chosen contractor must adhere to. The PER or Public Environment Report will be released by the Federal Government at the same time as the EES. This is required because there are sites and species that are governed by federal legislation, e.g. Simpson Army Barracks and Matted Flax-lily. As I write in late March the committee is in a state of suspended dread. We shall be working night and day through late April and May, to showcase the negatives of the NEL but also to extort the best environmental outcomes for Banyule as we can. We shall be doing little else. Wish us luck.

Daphne Hards

News & Events

Upcoming WCS planting and working bees

Details of all monthly activities are in the newsletter, on the Facebook page and in the calendar on our website. If you would like to be notified by email contact Heather at elephantstamp@optusnet.com.au www.facebook.com/WarringalConservationSociety

Sunday 19 May - Tawny Pond

10:00am - 12:00pm

We will be doing some infill planting among last year's plants and continuing on the Northward extension. The site is adjacent to the Somerset Drive car park. Melway ref 32:F2. WCS and the Bush crew will have their signs out. All welcome - it is a lovely way to spend a Sunday morning. Bring own

gloves and wear suitable footwear. Children are welcome.

Sunday 16 June - Banyule Native Gardens

10:00am - 12:00pm

Parking in Banyule Road, Viewbank. The gardens run down from the road down to the Yarra Trail. Melway ref 32:F1. Keep a look out for the WCS sign and the Banyule Bush Management truck. All welcome - bring your friends and family and stay for a cuppa after we finish.

North East Link Environment Effects Statement

The Environment Effects Statement (EES) was released on the 10th April and can be accessed in full via the NELP website <http://northeastlink.vic.gov.au>

Who we are and how to contact us

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There is information on the NELP website about accessing USB and paper versions of the EES at libraries & Council offices. This is a large document but we would be delighted if members would consider their special concerns (e.g. ecology, hydrology, trees) and write an individual submission to the Inquiry and Advisory Committee. Submissions can be lodged on-line at <https://engage.vic.gov.au/north-east-link-project> until 5.00pm on 7 June 2019. Your committee is preparing a submission focusing on our environmental concerns for this project.

Up to 26,000 Trees to go for North East Link

The North East Link EES provides detail of the project construction footprint and the loss of up to 26,000 trees through clearing or indirect effects such as water draw down. Trees that will be lost include endangered Studley Park Gums in Simpson army barracks and old River Red Gums. The current design involves cutting down a River Red Gum more than 300 years old near the intersection of Manningham Rd and Bridge St (in front of the service station- photo below).



A very old River Red Gum near the intersection of Manningham Rd and Bridge St that will be cut down to build the North East Link

Working with Banyule City Council

WCS Committee members recently met with Banyule City Council Officers from the Environment and Parks areas. We discussed plans for management of the reserve including location and types of revegetation, nest boxes, management of feral pests and weeds, and pathways for walkers and cyclists. Our shared vision for the future is for a more natural parkland that supports wildlife, with plantings softening the European influences. We highly value the work of the Council staff who manage the reserve and support the Society's regular revegetation and other working bees.



Reports on March and April working bees

March: Clean up Australia Day at Grotty Pond

It was hot and it was hard work - especially in waders. About 25 people came along to help clean up the rubbish in and around Grotty Pond, and along the north western corner of the Banyule Swamp. Thank you to all that helped. Getting into waders proved a drawcard for the younger [and not so young] members of the crew. It was a very satisfying location as there was lots of rubbish and we lost count of the plastic bottles and tennis balls!

April: Salt Creek/Yarra River Confluence clean up

Thanks to Friends of Salt Creek and the Salt Creek Sweepers who joined us for a morning's hard work. The Salt Creek Sweepers moved along the creek bank picking up bags and bags of rubbish while the rest of us hoed in on the woody weed removal. Bush Crew Megs and Lauren supplied the snake gaiters [exciting just getting them on!], safety glasses, saws and other tools to get us started. We cut and painted many Hawthorn, Poplar, Oak, Ash and Prunus and dragged them out next to the Main Yarra Trail ready for collection and chipping. Wonderful to see the

News & Events cont.

view from the trail to the creek opened up, revealing a massive old Red Gum that has stood sentry over the creek's confluence with the Yarra since way before white settlement.



Clean Up Australia Day at Grotty Pond.



Removing woody weeds at Salt Creek

Kids Arty Farty Festival Report

Sunday March 17th produced the best weather ever for the festival and everyone had a ball. Congratulations to Banyule Council for putting on such a great event for children, and adults. WCS was on site at 8am to set up our marquee under magnificent spreading oaks. We had our NEL information board out front, colourful displays of

our activities inside – what we do, advocacy and public engagement – and out back we had a table for children's activities. We had face masks of a kangaroo and a Powerful Owl to colour in, and origami instructions for a duck and a snake. And didn't the kids love it! By lunchtime we had no masks left but Lene deftly traced more to save the day. Origami skills emerged after lunch also. A steady stream of people wanted to chat about the North East Link and we were able to inform and discuss the progress. A very successful event and thanks to Doug, James, Dianne, Heather, Daphne, Irene, Denise, Michelle, Lene, Dennis and Maureen for their help.



Duck Shooting 2019

The 2019 duck shooting season commenced on March 16th. The Game Management Authority estimated that only 1,300 shooters were active across the State this year (compared to 100,000 in the late 1980s and 1990s); and they announced that 37 shooters were booked for illegal behaviour. Multiple breaches of regulations were also documented by rescue teams, and these are being forwarded on for investigation.

Many Victorian wetlands were dry this year, but large numbers of endangered species were taking sanctuary on some wetlands still holding water. Fortunately groups like Birdlife Australia, Animals Australia, and Andy Meddick MP managed to get those wetlands closed to shooting.

Rescuers watched wetlands across the state, but most travelled to Kerang for the opening weekend. A strong contingent of 170 volunteer rescuers (including teams from the ACT and NSW) covered Lake Cullens, and they far outnumbered the few shooters who were present.

Sadly and inevitably, despite so few shooters and the presence of unprecedented numbers of regulating officers, endangered and protected species were still shot including a Freckled Duck, Eurasian Coot, Caspian Tern, and a Purple Swamphen which was recovered early Sunday morning after suffering all night from two broken legs. Veterinary teams swung into action and attended to all birds that had been senselessly and needlessly shot, wounded and left to suffer.

The 2019 season ends on May 19th. Newly elected Animal Justice Party MP, Andy Meddick, is pushing strongly to ban recreational duck shooting in Victoria. WCS will keep you informed on this.

Celia Smith



WCS member's letters in the Age

Link to disruption

The caption "Something needs to happen" on the photo on the front page of The Age (11/4) says it all about the lack of effective opposition to the North East Link. Solutions to the unbearable congestion of the Rosanna Road corridor are complex, long-term, multi-layered and difficult to convey to a frustrated motoring public looking for immediate relief. The legacy of North East Link will be environmental degradation and years of disruption for a doomed attempt to satisfy the voracious appetite of the single occupant vehicle for road expansion.

Don Stokes, Heidelberg

Freeway jam

Tony Morton (Letters 16/4) is correct. A mountain of evidence shows that building more freeways doesn't resolve congestion but adds to it. Mega road projects such as North East Link will be beyond capacity by the time it's completed in eight years. It will have added significantly to exhaust-borne pollution along its corridor and will adversely affect the health and wellbeing of communities including residences, sporting and recreation facilities as well as schools, some of which will be less than 100 metres from the freeway.

Dennis O'Connell, Ivanhoe

Heidelberg Theatre Company Dates

The program of plays for 2019 is below and we would encourage you to purchase charity tickets for the dates given, cost \$20 each, where \$10 comes to the Society, \$10 to HTC. Every little helps so please consider purchasing your tickets through us, either by seeing Doug McNaughton at a meeting or by emailing warringal3084@gmail.com

It's a Wonderful Life - based on film by Frank Capra. Wednesday 8th May

A View from the Bridge by Arthur Miller. Wednesday 10th July

The Drawer Boy by Michael Healy. Wednesday 11th September

Tartuffe by Moliere. Wednesday 20th November

News & Events cont.

Warrigal Conservation Society Greeting Cards

A portrait of male and female Chestnut Teal has joined the views of Banyule Swamp. Blank inside they can be used for any occasion, including as Easter or Christmas cards. A steal at \$3.50 each (envelope enclosed) or three for \$10, they are available for purchase at meetings or via email warringal3084@gmail.com



Committee report -February 2019

Committee business

We have sent letters to several politicians emphasizing the need for public transport rather than mega roads and have received a response from Anthony Carbines. Several Committee members attended the VCAT hearing on the proposed 30 townhouse development at 69 and 71 Banyule Road: the site inspection and final day of the hearing will not be completed until April.

Daphne and Michelle have attended a social media workshop and members of the Committee will do further website training to ensure that our website is informative, interesting and up to date.

We have received an administrative support grant of \$1,100 from Melbourne Water which will be used for our public liability insurance policy.

We will be a signatory together with 40 other organisations, to a full page advertisement in the Age on 10 March. A copy is attached to the Newsletter. This was organized by Regional Victorians Opposed to Duck Shooting Inc. to show community opposition to duck shooting.

The Committee met at Banyule Flats with BCC Officers from Environment and Parks units on Friday 1 March. We discussed BCC current work and issues with weeds and feral animals, protection of Powerful Owl habitat, and the proposed cycle and walking trail through Banyule flats. Nest boxes for sugar gliders and ducks are being installed by the Bush Crew. Preliminary results of a study on watering of the swamp were explained and we will schedule this study as a talk for members at a future General meeting. Our future vision for the area is for more natural planting lines to camouflage the straight edges of Banyule Creek and Banyule

Billabong, and open grassy woodland instead of mown grass in more areas of the reserve. Planting next year will include thickening of the vegetation along the embankment between the playing fields and the swamp.

BCC have raised the proposed shared use path through Banyule Flats as a potential NELP funded project. WCS remains opposed to this because of the impact of heavy machinery needed for the construction of a 3 metre wide concrete path, and because it will disturb the quiet ambling and wild life observation of those many people who use the reserve for passive recreation.

We are starting to plan for the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of Warrigal Conservation Society in 2020 – a great achievement for a small but enthusiastic group of community volunteers.

Planting/weeding activities and events

Supported by BCC Senior Ranger Megs we held a successful Clean up Australia Day working bee at the Grotty Pond, on March 3. The April working bee will be working with Friends of Salt Creek removing woody weeds at the confluence of Salt Creek with the Yarra.

North East Link

A joint WCS and FOB Working party is already working to prepare for EES and PER submissions. Several of the Committee have been attending EES hearings for the Mordialloc Bypass to learn more about the process of the Advisory Committee which reviews EES submissions, both written and in hearings, and makes recommendations to the Minister.

Dianne Williamson

March Speaker - Megan Davidson - Wildlife Victoria

Megan Davidson, CEO of Wildlife Victoria (WV), started her presentation with a history of the organisation. Small before 2007, it really grew after the Black Saturday bushfires due to large donations prompted by their rehabilitation work. In February this year they received 6,666 emergency calls throughout the state; 16%, the highest, related to Eastern Grey Kangaroo, 13% for Ringtail Possum, who are poor mothers, and 10% for ducks. Magpies, Brush-tailed Possum, and Rainbow Lorikeet account for many of the remaining 60% of calls.

The most common mishaps involve bird chicks being found on the ground, animals having been hit by a vehicle, native animals found displaced from their usual habitat, or found inside a building, or trapped, e.g. in a drain, old mine diggings, etc. In many instances the caller just needs some advice/education to solve the problem, such as offering water on hot days. 3,877 animals/year are accepted for rehabilitation, 8% are euthanized, 6% die, and 5% are referred to other organisations for specialist care.

The WV team consists of transporters (711), rescuers (10,000), police involvement (460), veterinarians, and carers (2446). Training occurs in Melbourne, and this involves different levels of competency, as quite a few rare animals are encountered. As is crime against wildlife. Unusual patterns of illness or death can be investigated. The poisoning of a suspected 400 Wedge-tailed Eagles

occurred in East Gippsland - to be prosecuted; an 874% increase in sick or injured Barn Owls in South Australia – deemed to be part of the boom and bust drought response, and not suspicious.

Other activities of WV are to educate, in schools, meetings and media; to advocate for better environments, such as switching to fruit netting with maximum mesh dimension 5mm, and to have valuable relationships with men's sheds, who make wildlife boxes. All WV funding comes from donations or trusts, though they are hoping in the future to obtain government grants. The benefits of their work flows through to wildlife, to the callers, the community, and local and state governments.

We were strongly advised to remove unsafe fruit netting. Megan is also passionate about the danger to wildlife of barbed wire fencing. Replace please. Electrocution on power lines can be reduced by cutting back vegetation. One can help wildlife survival, particularly in summer, by providing food, water and shelter. And control your pets; lots of attacks occur in backyards. If you find a sick, injured or orphaned wild animal ring 03 8400 7300.

I add as a postscript that you can help WV with knitting pouches for orphaned joeys. I cannot supply a link, but on the Wildlife Victoria website you can search for 'pouches for orphaned joeys' which produces a pdf file. Or look in attachments to this newsletter.

Daphne Hards

April Speaker - Alicia Dimovski - The Dark Side of Energy Efficient Lighting

Alicia is a PhD student at La Trobe University studying the effects of artificial light on wildlife.

The threat urbanisation poses to wildlife is well known. However light pollution is a factor that is often overlooked. Artificial light in urban environments is increasing and modern energy efficiency LEDs emit blue light that is more likely to be disruptive. Effects of light pollution on wildlife include changes to sleep cycles, disturbances to navigation, alterations to the timing of breeding, and changes to predator/prey interactions. 80% of marsupials are nocturnal so light pollution is a particularly important consideration in Australia.

The research group that Alicia works with studied Tamar wallabies which usually breed in late January/early February. They found that a population exposed to artificial light from an naval base delayed reproduction by about 4 weeks. Shifting light to amber largely protected wallabies

from the hormonal changes that delay their reproduction. Wallabies cannot see red light well so further research investigated the Fat-tailed Dunnart, a seasonally breeding marsupial that can see red light. Amber light delayed breeding in the Dunnart, but to a lesser extent than blue light. These studies show that using amber street lights may reduce disruption to wildlife. Shielding to reduce light spill is also good practice.

Alicia is currently investigating artificial lighting and Sugar Gliders. She noted that gliders sometimes take advantage of lights to hunt disoriented insects. The influence of artificial light on their behaviour and breeding will be determined.

The examples that Alicia discussed are very relevant as we consider the design of the North East Link road and ways to reduce the impact of associated street lighting.

James Deane

March 2019

Anthea showed slides taken at Banyule Flats:

- Pink-eared Ducks with their second brood of 3 ducklings,
- A Little Raven clearing up some fast food refuse in the car-park,
- A Kangaroo with her young one on the banks of the Swamp,
- A White-faced Heron perched in a dead wattt (its mate was flying nearby)
- A pair of Yellow-billed Spoonbills,
- A Great Egret flying away.

Anthea's friend saw a young Hare through the wire fence of the Simpson Army Barracks.

Roly - Kookaburra, Currawong and Noisy miner interacting

Michelle - Currawong in CBD

Doug - group of 7 Gangs Gang Cockatoos at the north end of Salt Creek

Dianne - group of 10 Gang Gangs on Banyule Flats escarpment

Lene - possum (probably ring tail) in clump of leaves

Helen - Red-bellied black snake near Kinglake

Daphne - 2 wedge tail eagles flying over frog bog at Banyule Flats,

Royal and Yellow Spoon bills at Banyule swamp

Chris Goddard - Tawny Frogmouths, European wasps, Indian (Common) Mynas.

Lynn Easton - Fox at Banyule Swamp (right)



April 2019

Gianna Romano - Wedge-tailed Eagles in Viewbank

Doug McNaughton – Wedge-tailed Eagle at Rosanna Parklands

Daphne Hards – Crimson Rosella, New Holland Honey-eater, Fox at Wilson Reserve

Lene – 2 insectivorous bats

Jane Crone – Eastern Spinebills

Celia – Tawny Frogmouths, Yellow Robin

Anthea Fleming

- 25th March Fox at Banyule Flats
- Studley Park Gum (Swamp gum and Redgum hybrid) *Eucalyptus X studleyensis* in Eaglemont on the Boulevard. A smaller tree with buds slightly beaked but not like Red Gum (see below). Fruit slightly raised valves. Another near Eaglemont. Station.
- Shovelers at Banyule Swamp suzzling. Royal Spoonbill, White Ibis, Pink-eared ducks.



Nature Notes

April 2019 cont.

James Deane— Honeybee combs in fallen River Red Gum in Banyule Billabong (below).



WCS Annual Subscriptions

WCS subscriptions due July 2019

WCS membership subscriptions for 2019/2020 are due in July. These are used for the costs of running the Society that include hall hire, insurance, and postage. Subscriptions can be paid to the Treasurer Daphne Hards at a meeting or planting, or a cheque can be sent by mail using the form below. Subscriptions can also be paid electronically directly into the

Society's bank account using the following information:

Account Name: Warringal Conservation Society

BSB: 633108 Account No: 143918613

Be sure to identify yourself as the depositor. To be certain, you can email warringal3084@gmail.com that your deposit has been made.

Warringal Conservation Society Annual Subscription

Membership application/renewal (for July 2019-June 2020)

Name:

Address:

Email:

Phone:

Mobile:

Special area of interest:

Annual subscription type:

☐ **Single \$20**

☐ **Family \$25**

☐ **Concession (seniors, students etc) \$15**

☐ **Life subscription \$200**

Donations always welcome

Please send this form and subscription (cheque or money order) to:

Warringal Conservation Society PO Box 64 Rosanna 3084 VIC

(Or come to our monthly meeting and see treasurer Daphne Hards)

Nature Notes

April 2019 cont.

James Deane

1. Gang Gang Cockatoos in Viewbank
2. Pink-eared Duck nesting depression in drowned tree on Banyule Swamp
3. Sugar Gliders in nest boxes in Banyule Flats South Paddock (During box monitoring)
4. Fox at Banyule Swamp (at night with motion activated camera)



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