



Warringal
Conservation
Society

DEEP WINTER NEWSLETTER

Volume 49/four July/August 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 WCS.

Newsletter printed courtesy of Kate Thwaites MP, Member for Jagajaga

JULY MEETING

Midwinter Soup night - 6.15pm

The July meeting will be preceded by our Midwinter Soup Night starting at 6.15pm. Food is from Foodworks Ivanhoe. A donation of \$10 kids, \$15 adults is invited to subsidise operating costs and the Warringal Prize. Fruit juice and soft drink provided, BYO beer & wine. Meeting follows at 7.30pm.

Speaker: Vern Steele - La Trobe Wildlife Sanctuary – 50 years of bushland generation & community engagement

Vern is the Operations Manager of the La Trobe Wildlife Sanctuary which is part of the La Trobe University Bundoora Campus. Conservation of the site was commenced when the campus was laid out back in the late 60's and overtime there have been many changes. Vern will tell some of the back story to the sanctuary over the years and will then outline current priorities and future directions.

AUGUST SPEAKER

Andrew Skeoch - What can we learn from listening to nature?

Andrew is a naturalist, bioacoustic researcher, musician and nature sound recordist. The sounds of our natural environment are comprised of birdsong, frog choruses, insect choirs, and mammal calls. Andrew will discuss: how these animal repertoires evolved, what we can learn by studying them, how the noise of our modern world effects nature's sonic balance, and how the songs of nature influence our own species.

**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. All Welcome**

AT A GLANCE

Jul

Thurs 4th: Midwinter Soup night starting 6.15pm & General meeting at 7.30pm - La Trobe Wildlife Sanctuary

Sun 28th: National Tree Day planting (See News & Events)

August

Thurs 1st: General meeting at 7.30pm - Listening to Nature

Sun 11th: Planting at *studleyensis* site (See News & Events)

Message from the President

Firstly, a big thank you to all members and concerned citizens who have made a submission to the North East Link EES. It was a tough task so Bravo! Your committee made submissions to both the Public Environment Requirements (federal) and the Environment Effects Statement (state), and now we are preparing a presentation for the upcoming public hearings detailed elsewhere in this newsletter.

Thank you to all those who have sent in their annual subscriptions early. The renewal date is July 1st, and necessary information for sending annual membership fees is on the last page of the newsletter. We are delighted to welcome 6 new members/families. We hope your membership is fun and rewarding.

Long-time member Dorothy Davies is getting her strength back after some health issues and we wish her well. As we wish good health to all.

PS The Swamp is full again after drying out and birds returned pronto. Even the Pink-eared Ducks.

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

July - Sunday 28th: National Tree Day

Planting at Warringal Swamp South. Infill planting at last year's NTD site/ new planting across the path near Possum Hollow.

August, - Sunday 11th

Planting at *studleyensis* site near Somerset Drive carpark – infill of previous planting area

September, - Sunday 8th

Planting at Frog Bog – across from Tawny Pond, entry from Somerset Drive carpark via Billabong / *studleyensis* gate. Part of Spring Outdoors program.

Caltex Redgun wins National Trust's Tree of the Year 2019

Many WCS members and friends campaigned for the 'Caltex Tree' in the annual National Trust's 'Tree of the Year' vote. The 300+ year old River Red Gum on the corner of Bridge Street and Manningham Road is a registered Heritage Overlay Place. Located at the eastern gateway to Banyule the tree is an icon of our area. Although dismissed in the North East Link's Environmental Effects Statement as of no Aboriginal Cultural Heritage value, it is of considerable social value to the wider community. This is evidenced by Manningham Council's commitment to protecting the tree and to the recent announcement that it is the National Trust's 2019 Victorian Tree of the Year, receiving an impressive 28.5% of the votes.

The tree is considered to be an important Songline marker, and sister to the 'Yingabeal' scar tree located nearby at Heide. The proposed written, oral

Who we are and how to contact us

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www.facebook.com/WarringalConservationSociety

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Committee: Anthea Fleming, Celia Smith, Daphne Hards, Dianne Williamson, Doug McNaughton, James Deane, Heather Smith, Michelle Giovias.

and photographic records are no compensation for the loss of this valued tree. We are calling for alternative designs for the North East Link's Manningham Road interchange so that the tree can be protected.



Tree of the year 2019 - the River Red Gum near the intersection of Manningham Rd and Bridge St

North East Link Project - Inquiry and Advisory Committee

A total of 856 submissions were made to the Independent Advisory Committee (IAC) for consideration at the NELP Environment Effects Statement (EES) hearing. We thank all those members and friends who made submissions, and the experts who helped us interpret the enormity of the EES documentation.

Our task to minimise environmental damage of construction and operation of the NELP continues. The IAC Directions hearing is on Friday 21 June. This is an administrative process to establish the conduct of the hearing and to prepare a schedule of presentations.

Public hearings will commence on 25 July and are expected to continue for 6 weeks. The venue is the Veneto Club in Bulleen and we welcome members to join us in the gallery. Community groups such as WCS and individuals will be heard towards the end

of the hearing, after the NELP, Government departments & agencies and local Councils. We will let members know when the schedule is available.

To find out more about the process and to see the submissions visit the website: <https://engage.vic.gov.au/north-east-link-project> As the hearing progresses reports from expert witnesses and other presenters will be added to this website and you will also be able to listen to audio recordings of each day's proceedings.

Dianne Williamson

Planting reports

The May planting at Tawny Pond drew a sizable group of regulars who soon got busy on a lovely fresh morning, successfully planting many understory plants including lilies and ground covers in among last year's plants.



Our June planting at Warringal Swamp was originally planned to be under the *Eucalyptus studleyensis*. The working bee was relocated to the north eastern edge of the swamp. Started earlier in the week, this large area was already well populated with plants put in by Banyule staff as part of a team building event. About 18 members and friends, planted roughly 360 tube stock to complete the project. We were interested in the new tree guards – made from thick waxed card.



Have your say

Future of our forests – Regional Forest Agreements

1. The Wilderness Society are requesting support for their campaign on Regional Forest Agreements.

You can complete their on-line survey at: https://www.wilderness.org.au/news-events/survey-help-improve-how-victorias-forests-are-managed?utm_source=breaking_news&utm_medium=email&utm_content=link1

2. The Department of Environment Land, Water and Planning are running a community consultation on logging. Submissions are due on 30 June. The *Independent Consultation Paper on the Victorian RFAs* and information about submissions can be accessed at:

<https://www2.delwp.vic.gov.au/futureforests/get-involved/joint-rfa-consultation-with-commonwealth/independent-consultation-paper>

Healthy Waterways

The draft Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement Framework will be released on the Melbourne Water website soon consultation closing 28 July via the [Yoursay website](#).

Banyule City Council Electoral Structure Review

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) is reviewing the electoral structure of Banyule City Council and is seeking community input.

Submissions close 24 July.

More information

at <https://www.vec.vic.gov.au/reviews/Banyulerr.html>

Coming events

Wetland Plant Identification Course

Observe the changing seasons and water depths of the stunning Reedy Lagoon, Gunbower Island, over a 6 month period. 3 days: October, December & March Further information and registration:

www.rakali.com.au

Have your say on air pollution standards

This year, state and territory environment ministers are reviewing outdated national standards for some of the worst air pollutants, including toxic pollutants from coal-fired power stations. Environmental Justice Australia are hosting a forum for community members, health experts and local campaign groups to connect and participate in the review of Australian air pollution standards so you can have your say on what ends up in the air we breathe. July 2, 6.30-8.30pm

Info & registration: <https://www.envirojustice.org.au/event/air-pollution-forum-melbourne/>

Taking care of nature: Linking backyards to bush

A joint workshop with Gardens for Wildlife Victoria and the Victorian Environment Friends Network. Hear fascinating stories of people caring for nature in diverse places, from schools to suburban gardens, creeks and nature reserves. How can this work transform a landscape? How do you start? Be inspired, learn what you can do, network and get involved! July 6 from 9.30am

Information and registration: <https://rsv.org.au/events/backyards-to-bush/>

Twilight Tour of La Trobe Wildlife Sanctuary

Interested in animals? A high proportion of Australia's unique wildlife is nocturnal and emerges only at night. So if you want to see them you'll need to venture out into the dark. During the tour your guide will use a spotlight to point out some of our night-time creatures. Come and learn more about one of the longest running ecological restoration projects in Australia. The area now known as the La Trobe Wildlife Sanctuary has experienced a dramatic transformation to become what it is today. July 11, 5.45-7.15pm

Information and registration: <https://www.latrobe.edu.au/events/all/twilight-tour-of-la-trobe-wildlife-sanctuary21>

Heidelberg Theatre Company Dates for 2019

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

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

Welcome to new members

We extend a warm welcome to new WCS members:

Justine Harland

Xavier Harvey

Linda Marks

Andrew Mellor & family

Bill Smith

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.



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 at the back of this newsletter. Subscriptions can also be paid electroni-

cally 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.

Committee report - May 2019

Committee business

Submissions have been made to:

The Banyule Council regarding: the 2019/20 budget and Council plan, and fox control; The Future of our Forests survey. WCS representatives attended the Melbourne Water Yarra Catchment Plan Implementation meeting.

North East Link Project

The NEL Tree planting facts sheet (April 2019) paints a misleading picture of environmental stewardship. Reality is the loss of the 300+ year old

Caltex Redgum in Bulleen, destruction of a large proportion of the best remaining stand of the endangered Studley Park Gum, and translocation of a significant proportion of the endangered Matted Flax-lily population to yet to be determined sites. Responses to the NEL Public Environmental Report and Environmental Effects Statement are being prepared by a WCS working group. Members also encouraged to submit as individuals.

James Deane

Committee report -June 2019

Committee business

Our tree won! The Committee and members ran a campaign to vote for the 'Caltex' River Red Gum, on the corner of Bridge Street and Manningham Road as the National Trust's Victorian 2019 Tree of the Year. The provides this valued tree with recognition which may go some way to preserving it from removal for the NEL Manningham Road Interchange. Although located in Manningham it does mark the eastern gateway to Banyule.

A VCAT Tribunal has determined to refuse a

permit for the multi-townhouse development proposed for 69 & 71 Banyule Road. Individual WCS members, FOB and the WCS Committee were all parties to this VCAT case which required removal of vegetation, and abutted Creek Bend Reserve. Another VCAT win!

North East Link Project

A subcommittee comprising Daphne, James, John, Michelle, Dianne and Dennis has been working tirelessly since the announcement of the NEL. In the

Committee report -June 2019 cont.

last few weeks they met or communicated with: Environmental Justice Australia, Melbourne Water, Banyule Council, Environment Victoria, Native Fish Australia, Birdlife Australia, Reconciliation Manningham, Yarra Riverkeepers Association, Friends of Banyule, Friends of the Earth, Ecology, noise and hydrology experts

The subcommittee has completed and submitted comments to both the Commonwealth's Public Environment Review and the Victorian DWELP Environmental Effects Panel. The Directions Hearing for submitters who wish to present to the panel is June 21 at the Veneto Club. We will advise you of the date and location of the panel hearings, commencing in late July and we invite you to sit in the gallery and provide support to WCS, FOB, BCC and other community groups and individuals who are opposing the development and seeking to minimise negative environmental impacts, should the Project proceed.

Draft Yarra River - Bulleen Precinct Plan Land Use Framework Plan

Members of the Committee attended public consultation workshops on the proposed Precinct last year and overall we are very supportive of the Plan. The Plan includes a walk or walk/cycle path along the eastern side of the river from Heide to beyond

Birrarung Park, a footbridge from Birrarung Park to the Main Yarra Trail, and a set-back residential development at the Yarra Valley Country Club site.

We made a submission to the Independent Advisory Committee noting support for positive aspects of the Plan:

- Acquisition of riparian zone of YV Country club
- Walk/cycle access paths along eastern side of Yarra north to beyond Birrarung Park
- Rehabilitation of riparian zones and billabongs
- Walk/cycle bridges to link Birrarung Park with Main Yarra Trail

And calling for:

- a fauna and flora survey on the Eastern side of the Yarra
- construction works to be timed to avoid powerful owl breeding season
- the footbridge across the Yarra between Birrarung Park and Banyule Flats/Main Yarra Trail to avoid platypus dens and powerful owl sites
- no relaxation of building controls for residential development of the Country Club site

The public hearing will be held after conclusion of the NELP EES hearing.

Dianne Williamson

May Speaker - Lawrence Pope - Grey-headed Flying-fox in Melbourne

Australia has a diverse range of bats, from tiny insectivorous bats to large vegetarian fruit bats or Flying Fox. They are all important parts of the ecosystem. Insectivorous bats can eat up to half their weight in insects each night. Flying Fox are important pollinators and dispersers of seed that help keep native forest healthy.

The fruit bats we see in Melbourne are Grey-headed Flying-fox. Unfortunately Grey-headed Flying Fox have been unfairly maligned because they seek refuge in suburban parks as their natural habitat is lost to development and agriculture. The fact that they roost in large colonies has led to the claims that they are breeding out of control. This is not the case and it is estimated that Grey-headed

Flying Fox numbers have dropped by 95% since 1900. They are listed as vulnerable in Victoria and are not prolific breeders, beginning to breed at two years old and only having one pup per year.

Threats to Grey-headed Flying Fox include: habitat loss, shooting when they feed on crops, entanglement in fruit tree netting, and heat stress as summers become hotter. Fruit tree netting is a hazard that kills lots of fruit bats. Lawrence noted that Grey-headed Flying Fox rely on suburban fruit trees. He suggested taking great care when using nets. Netting should be taut, secured to the ground, and the mesh diameter needs to be small enough that you can't poke a finger through the holes. He also suggests leaving some fruit uncovered for the bats.

June Speaker - Ian Endersby - Corridors and Sugar Gliders

Ian moved to Montmorency over 50 years ago and has witnessed a decline in wildlife, particularly birds, as habitat has been removed and fragmented.

Concerned community members sought to reestablish and reconnect habitat by promoting planting in reserves and on private property. Sugar

June Speaker cont.

gliders were chosen as a visible and appealing species that could be used to measure the success of revegetation efforts, and to promote further work. Sugar glider boxes were designed to exclude other species and installed throughout Montmorency. Installing and monitoring boxes is not simple because it involves working at heights. Proper training and safety equipment is essential. Ian explained that they now have a stable population of about 20 gliders that use most of the boxes available.

After the talk we were treated to some video footage of sugar gliders taken by an audience member who has installed boxes with monitoring cameras.

Gliders are occasionally seen at Banyule Flats and the Banyule Bush Crew has installed boxes to accommodate them. The first gliders were seen in

these boxes earlier this year (photo below). It was very encouraging to hear Ian's success story and we hope similar things can be achieved in our area.



Nature Notes

May 2019

Helen Boak - Butcher Bird in Viewbank

Daphne Hards - Pied Currawongs attacking a blackbird

Anthea Fleming Ravens soaking bread in bird bath, Kapok vine, a slime mould, False Ivy at Plenty River Footbridge, Grey and White cat out stalking in the evening at Banyule Flats (also seen by Helen Boak and James Deane)

Heather Smith also observed Ravens soaking bread in her pond

Dianne Williamson - Gang Gang Cockatoos at Banyule Flats

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

June 2019

James Deane reported seeing a Sugar Glider in the ancient Redgum at the west gate of Banyule Billabong.

Daphne Hards reported a Spinebill in her garden - and less happily, the remains of a Ringtail Possum under her car, probably a cat's victim.

Jane Crone's garden had Spinebills, Silvereyes, and Grey Fantails and also a Crimson Rosella.

From Wilson Reserve, Robert Bender reported two frog species, the Smooth Froglet and the Southern Brown Tree-frog. He showed photos of a Little Pied Cormorant, a Yellow Robin, a pair of Frogmouths which have occupied the same tree for the last three years, and a Common Bronzewing. A new Wombat burrow was discovered - Stanley Barker put up a wildlife camera which showed the owner going out and coming back in, and also a Fox inspecting another burrow by the Horseshoe Billabong. Robert also showed pictures of fungi - *Gymnopilus junonia* (yellow) and *Mycena austrofilipes* on a thread-like stalk - and also the introduced *Favolaschia*, now very common.

Anthea Fleming – Cattle Egret with kangaroos, Bronzewing, Land Rail at Grotty Pond, Silver eyes, Mistletoe birds, White-eared Honey-eater, Galah, Grey Butcher Bird, in garden – Red Wattle Bird and Little Wattle bird fighting over plant.

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than a paper copy in the regular mail**

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If not delivered return to: PO Box 64, Rosanna 3084



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The Battle to save Leadbeater's Possum

The David and Goliath battle between the tiny conservation group Friends of Leadbeater's Possum, and the State Government backed loggers VicForests, opened on June 3rd. in the Federal Court in Melbourne. In the three week hearing, Environmental Justice Australia (EJA) acted for the Forests. The stakes could not be higher for the forest wildlife at the heart of this important case: in particular the Leadbeater's Possum and the Greater Glider – both of which are facing extinction in our lifetimes.

The Leadbeater's Possum is Victoria's faunal emblem. After a nearly two year review by a scientific committee, the Federal Environment Minister Susan Ley recently announced that it will keep its "critically endangered" listing. For twenty years, logging in its forest home has been allowed under dodgy logging deals called Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs). Success in winning this current Federal Court case could lead to a review of native forest logging under the nine other Regional Forest Agreements across Australia.

The first two days in the Hearing were taken up with opening statements outlining the arguments to come on behalf of the parties. This was followed by evidence from several witnesses, whose affidavits and reports were already before the judge. A significant win for the conservation group early on came with the admission of three 2019 affidavits that VicForests had lodged objections to.

The Judge was taken on a tour of the forest to see for herself many of the coupes in the case. A range of forest types was shown including habitat, agreed by the experts to be "as good as it gets," that was scheduled to be logged. Several logged coupes were shown. They included Castella Quarry that was partly logged using a number of "adaptive silvicultural methods" that VicForests sought to rely on in their defence. The hearing ended with brief

oral closing statements on behalf of the parties, and discussion for further clarification on a number of issues. The Judge then made orders for written Closing Submissions to be filed by 2nd August, and Submissions in Reply by 30th August.

Updates for the case are posted on the Friends of Leadbeater's website under "News". The Court site where documents for the case are available is: <https://www.fedcourt.gov.au/.../friends-of-leadbeaters-possum>. Costs of the legal team for the conservation group are minimal thanks to the extraordinary generosity of EJA and the barristers. But mounting an important legal challenge like this one still incurs considerable expense including court fees, and the travel and accommodation costs of expert witnesses. Donations are welcome through Chuffed - <https://chuffed.org/project/possums-case>. Tax deductible donations to the legal team at Environment Justice Australia can be made at www.envirojustice.org.au/donate/

Further Action by close of June 30th- The Government wants to hear from people like you about what should happen with the RFAs. It has set up a survey to get your response. This is your chance to tell the government why you care about our endangered wildlife and why you want logging in high conservation value native forests stopped, and the Regional Forest Agreements scrapped or at the very least radically improved. The survey closes on June 30th. Go to: <https://engage.vic.gov.au/future-of-our-forests>.

The Wilderness Society website has more information about the campaign to protect Victoria's forests and also some discussion on the survey questions that can help with your answers. Go to: <https://www.wilderness.org.au/work/victorias-forests>

Celia Smith

