



Warringal
Conservation
Society

HIGH SUMMER NEWSLETTER

Volume 50/one

Jan/Feb 2020

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 Kate Thwaites MP, Member for Jagajaga

FEBRUARY MEETING

First Meeting of the year buffet style dinner 6.15pm

The February meeting will be preceded by a buffet style dinner so that everyone can catch up after the holiday break. Dinner will be provided by the Committee from 6.15pm. A donation of \$10 kids, \$15 adults is invited to subsidise operating costs and the Warringal Prize. Fruit juice & soft drink provided, BYO beer & wine. Meeting follows at 7.30pm.

Speaker: Jim Poulter – Mapping Aboriginal Land Use in Banyule

Jim is a local historian and member of Reconciliation Manningham. His forebears first settled in Wurundjeri country in 1840 and established close relationships with the local Aboriginal people. Jim has authored 25 books on Aboriginal history and cultural practices, and will speak about Aboriginal land use in Banyule.

MARCH 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. Melways map 32:D3. All Welcome**

AT A GLANCE

February

Thurs 6th: Dinner 6.15pm, General meeting at 7.30pm - Aboriginal Land Use

Sat 15th: Banyule Flats Night Walk (see News and Events pg 2)

March

Sun 1st: Clean Up Australia Day

Thurs 5th: General meeting at 7.30pm - Listening to Nature

Message from the President and Treasurer

Very best wishes for a brand New Year, and what a year it is for Warringal Conservation Society. Formed in 1970, in 2020 we celebrate 50 years of continuous advocacy for Banyule's environment. Bravo!! We are planning to go into the Banyule Grande Parade down Burgundy Street on March 15th 2020; and if anyone is willing to help us prepare banners and participate we would be so happy to hear from you.

Later in the year we shall be having a celebration to mark the inaugural meeting of the Society which was held in August 1970.

We are immensely sad for the communities who have had their lives challenged and their environments destroyed by the bushfires. What a disaster, and we hope all those affected get all the help they need. And the wildlife.

Please remember your trees as we travel through our crazy weather. They also need a drink. I noticed two large shrubs in my garden dropping leaves, so dug a shallow trench between them and I fill this with water occasionally. Hey presto, shrubs happy. My trees get the same treatment.

As reported elsewhere the North East Link rolls on. Can we save trees that may be challenged by groundwater drawdown, at Banyule Flats or River Gum Walk for example? Please adopt a favourite tree and take regular photos in order to illustrate any downward trend. Save Banyule's diminishing tree cover.

Daphne Hards

News & Events

Banyule Flats Twilight/Night Walk - Sat 15th February

WCS is running a night walk for members, family and friends. Meet at 8.15pm at entrance to Somerset Drive carpark, Viewbank. If the carpark is closed for sealing works, park in Somerset Drive. BYO light covered with red cellophane so as not to disturb the wildlife, wear sturdy shoes and bring insect repellent. Returning approximately 10pm.

WCS Activities for 2020

See WCS Facebook and website for further details and updates throughout the year.

Feb - Sat 15th Night walk

March - Sunday 1st - Clean Up Australia Day

April - Sun 5th - Woody wood removal

May - Sun 17th - Planting Banyule Native Gardens

June - Sun 14th - Planting at Tawny Pond

August - Sun 2nd - Nat. Tree day at Frog Bog

Sept - Sun 13th - WCS 50th Anniv. Planting

Oct - Sun 11th - Banyule Friends Group Celebration

Nov - End of year field trip

Heidelberg Theatre Company Dates for 2020

The 2020 program of plays is available to purchase through WCS as charity tickets, cost \$20 each, where \$10 comes to the Society. It is great that HTC support local charities in this way and it is a well attended night. Every little bit helps so please consider purchasing your tickets through us. To purchase tickets see Doug McNaughton at a meeting or email : warringal3084@gmail.com

Who we are and how to contact us

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

Gaslight by Patrick Hamilton

Wednesday 19th February

Three Little Words by Joanna Murray-Smith

Wednesday 29th April

And A Nightingale Sang by C.P. Taylor

Wednesday 8th July

The Beauty Queen of Leenane by Martin McDonagh

Wednesday 9th September

The Lady Killers by Graham Lineham

Wednesday 19th November

Report - Breakfast with the Birds Oct 26th 2019

“BREAKFAST WITH THE BIRDS” has been a significant part of Banyule City Council's Spring program for many years. Guides from Birdlife Australia's Melbourne Branch lead groups of people around Banyule Flats and Warrigal Park, pointing out birds and identifying them. WCS members have always assisted, some as guides – of course many of us are also Birdlife members. After early morning walks, starting at 7.30 am, participants return to base in the Old Shire Hall for a breakfast of fruit and pastries provided by the council.

On Sunday 26 October the weather was fine and the birds co-operative. As usual, the telescopes by the Swamp were popular with herons, ducks and grebes in view. The number of species seen was lower than previous years – probably because of prevailing drought conditions – but an influx from further north of White-winged Trillers, with striking black and white males (see photo below), pleased many who had not seen them before.



*A Male White-winged Triller at Banyule Flats
(Photo: Anthea Fleming)*

Those who followed the riverbank track to the Plenty and beyond could see the nest of a Brown Goshawk pair, built on a high branch over-hanging the Yarra. A telescope gave excellent views of the four small chicks in the nest.

Back at the Hall, we provided a display of photos and posters of birds, scenery and WCS activities. While the bird count was being totted up, I spoke briefly about WCS and its history of action in the area, and our resistance to the NELP motorway program in the Yarra Valley.

Many thanks to Janet Hand, now retiring as the Birdlife Melbourne's Education Organiser, and to Council Staff. Between them they provided an enjoyable morning.

Anthea Fleming

Report - November 2019 End of year field trip to Organ Pipes National Park

Our thanks to Friends of Organ Pipes Robert Irvine and Robert Bender for generously spending the day and leading us on a very interesting tour of the park on our November Field trip.

FOOPs is the one of oldest friends' group in Australia, supporting a wide variety of research projects in the park, as well as the ongoing rehabilitation of the indigenous flora and fauna. Encompassing 121 hectares, the park is important to the whole region as a centre for education about the geology, flora and fauna of the Keilor Plains. Both men have been involved with the group for many years and had many enlightening experiences to share with us. Robert Irvine spoke of revegetation projects pioneering the use of 'planting zones' for different plant species. Robert Bender described solid research facts and stats distilled from his long running bat box project begun over 20 years ago.

The park was green and welcoming. We walked around most of it – following the brimming Jacksons Creek to visit the iconic Organ Pipes, Rosetta Rock and the Tessellated Pavement. A lovely picnic area for lunch topped off a really illuminating, relaxing outing. Thanks again to Banyule Bush Management for supplying the bus and our intrepid driver – Dave.

Heather Smith



*Above: Robert Irvine explains the landscape.
Left: Robert Bender and Don Stokes admire the Organ Pipes.*

North East Link Protests

In December 2019 WCS and Friends of Banyule members attended North East Link protests at Borlase Reserve and Anthony Carbines' office. These events are part of a continuing campaign pushing for a rethink of the current version of the North East Link. An important part of this campaign is to make residents aware of the massive scale and severe local impacts of the project. An expert panel appointed by Victorian State Government determined that the impacts of the current design are unacceptable and recommended major design changes. The Minister for Planning Richard Wynne chose to ignore this advice (see discussion below). If this sounds unreasonable to you, get in touch with the Planning Minister, your local State Government representative and the Premier.



Kapok Vine Removal at Banyule Flats

Daphne Hards, Anthea Fleming, Don Stokes, William Deane, Robert Deane and James Deane spent a Friday morning in January cutting and poisoning a patch of Kapok Vine (*Araujia sericifera*) on the Windmill Track near Banyule Billabong. This weed forms tangled masses and has milky irritating sap. It produces large fruit full of fluffy seeds that disperse readily.



For details of Kapok Vine and other locally important weeds see the "Weeds in Banyule" booklet from the Banyule City Council.
<https://www.banyule.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/about-us/documents-reports-plans/weeds-in-banyule-booklet.pdf>

James Deane

Welcome to New Members

We extend a warm welcome to Jacinta Humphrey, David Herbert, Leonor Jolley, Ann Butler, Andrew Doherty and family, Mary Goodman, Dani Vidler and family and David Draffin.

North East Link Hearing Wrap up

Expert panel recommends design changes to protect the environment, but the Planning Minister doesn't listen

The North East Link panel hearing finished in mid September 2019 after 8 weeks of submissions and discussion. See our previous report for a summary of how the hearing unfolded <https://warringal.org.au/latest-news/59-north-east-link-panel-hearing-summary>. The Expert Panel's report and recommendations, and Planning Minister Richard Wynne's assessment were released to the

public on the 3rd December 2019.

The expert panel made a range of recommendations of varying magnitude. Key recommendations aiming to reduce impacts involved significant changes to the current reference design. With respect to the environment, the expert panel determined that cut and cover works in the Simpson Barracks would have an unacceptable impact on significant ecological values, including the endangered Matted Flax-lily and Studley Park Gum. It was recommended that the Simpson Barracks be

North East Link Hearing Wrap up cont.

designated a “no-go zone” and the North East Link Project be redesigned with an extended drilled tunnel north of Lower Plenty Road. This extended tunnel approach was also recommended to reduce social impacts. An additional “no-go zone” was also recommended near Macleod Station to protect habitat for the critically endangered Swift Parrot.

Disappointingly, Minister Wynne rejected these key recommendations. The Minister’s assessment indicates that the Victorian State Government is not willing to modify the reference design in any meaningful manner, even in the face of expert advice

that it should do so.

The Warringal Conservation Society is satisfied that the expert panel members were diligent and capable. Their report vindicates many of our concerns and makes clear recommendations for improvements to reduce unacceptable environmental impacts. Warringal Conservation Society members, and many others who devoted countless hours to the panel hearing, have every right to feel dissatisfied with the cursory manner in which Minister Wynne dismissed community opinion and expert advice.

James Deane

Get off the Main Trail Movie

In June 2019 I took part in two weekend training sessions organised by the Victorian Environmental Friends Network on how to make and edit small videos that could be used to highlight Friends groups’ activities and achievements. We learnt the basics of filming using our iPhones and then manipulated the footage in Filmora editing program - cutting, splicing, adding photos and sound tracks.

However, the most important thing to start with is a strong, succinct story. We had to keep asking – why do I need to tell this story? After some thought about the various aspects of the society, I realised

that although WE love this area, there were many locals who do not know about the Banyule Flats at all. Many just followed the Main Yarra Trail through the Flats and parkland – not stopping to appreciate its special places. I came up with the theme of ‘Get off the main trail’ and interviewed three WCS members about their ‘special’ place and why they loved it. If you would like to see the results go to the YouTube channel at the link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_cvkNkCW9qo

Let us know what you think.

Heather Smith

November 2019 Speaker - David Sykes, Victoria’s Population Boom

David Sykes is a demographer who works in the State Government Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning. He noted that the Victorian population is a hot topic in the media. Population data indicates Victoria is currently growing at a rate of approximately 150,000 people a year, faster than ever before, and is expected to hit 7 million by 2022. Planning for this growth requires understanding how and where it is likely to occur.

For tens of thousands of years, the indigenous population would have been low and stable. After European colonisation, Victoria’s population growth has fluctuated. Gold rushes and land speculation in the 1800s saw influxes of people. A financial depression in the 1890s and the departure of soldiers to World War 1 caused population decreases. After World War 2 more children were born and population growth has continued since. Current growth comes mainly from overseas migration, with some also coming from interstate.

Melbourne continues to be a popular destination for people coming to Victoria to study and work, and

is where most growth occurs. Victoria currently has good numbers of workers in their 20s and 30s who will be in the workforce for several more decades.

A downside of population growth is the ever increasing size of Melbourne, which is already a large city by international standards. In the 1850s transport in Melbourne was dominated by trains, but from the 1950s cars started to take over. Current development strategy typically prioritises roads over public transport. In the not too distant future, Melbourne will reach a limit where population growth at its fringes is no longer practical and the only option for growth will be increased density and multistorey. This will see more families living in apartments. Our own area (Banyule and Nillumbik) has less growth than most other areas and infill is likely to account for most population increases.

In response to a question, David noted that there is currently no strategy to achieve a stable population. Governments consider population growth a sign of success and are happy to see it continue.

James Deane

Committee Report - November 2019

Committee Business

Your WCS Committee has participated in Environment Justice Australia (EJA) workshops on Wetlands and Waterways. We have also attended BCC meetings and commented on important issues that included the BCC Biodiversity Plan and the proposed Tree Tops Facility. We have made a successful application to the Port Phillip & Westernport CMA for their Victorian Landcare Grants Program for \$500.

WCS is continuing to lobby on wildlife and environmental issues. We are particularly concerned about the ongoing logging in our forests, Climate Action, Victoria's emission reduction targets, the Extinction Crisis and EPBC ten year review, and a ban on duck shooting.

The book on the History of WCS is being prepared to coincide with celebrations marking our 50th anniversary. Committee members are reviewing its drafts, format, design, and funding source. Finally, our Speaker program for 2020 is being finalised but still has some vacancies and we welcome members' suggestions.

Events of Interest

The WCS end of year excursion to Organ Pipes National Park in Keilor took place on Sunday 10th November and was a great success. It is reported upon elsewhere in this newsletter.

On the 14th November Kate Thwaites MP, Federal Member for Jagajaga and Mark Butler MP, Shadow Minister for Climate Change and Energy held a Q &

A discussion about how we can advance climate policy agenda that addresses the threat posed by dangerous climate change. This was well attended and the discussion a lively one. Similar further events are planned.

At lunchtime on the 28th November several environment groups including VNPA, VEFN, and Environment Victoria held a Nature for Life Rally to demand bold action to protect our forests, rivers, beaches, oceans and wildlife. They emphasised that as biodiversity continues to rapidly decline, habitats become more stressed, species become more threatened and the climate crisis escalates. They said we cannot waste any more time.

In the evening of the 28th November Friends of Banyule held their AGM. Andrew Kelly from Yarra Riverkeepers Association spoke about conservation and protection of the Yarra and its environs. There was also a chance to hear about FOB's activities and campaigns, particularly the North East Link Project and the Environmental Effects Statement Process. Further news about the North East Link is given elsewhere in this newsletter.

WCS turns 50 in 2020.

The Committee is now planning for speakers, catering, participants and guests, budget, a plaque, and plantings on the embankment between the ovals and the swamp at Banyule Flats. We will keep you posted as the plans develop.

Celia Smith

Committee Report - December 2019

Committee Business

- A letter calling for an end to recreational duck shooting was sent to Tim Pallas (Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development), The Premier and several other politicians.
- Attendance at Banyule City Council's North East Link update session on Tuesday 26th November
- Daphne Hards attended an on site meeting regarding the proposed Yarra Flats tree top zipline project

Events

The end of year bus trip to the Organ Pipes (Sunday 10th November) was a great success. Thanks to Heather Smith for organising, Robert Irvine and Robert Bender for acting as guides, and Dave from the Bush Crew for driving the bus.

North East Link

The Inquiry and Advisory Committee report and Ministers assessment are available. Very disappointing that the minister has ignored the expert panel's suggestions for a "no go zone" to protect the Simpson Barracks and a longer drilled tunnel to the north.

Yarra River – Bulleen Precinct Plan

Involves potential relocation of sports fields displaced by the North East Link to Yarra Valley Country Club and Driving range sites in Bulleen. Investigations are already occurring in sensitive habitat close to the Yarra River .

James Deane

Nature Notes

November 2019

David Sykes– Tawny frogmouths near Dandenongs

Daphne Hards – 2 Gang Gangs in garden – Ironbark in bloom and cypress pine,

Don Stokes – Spotted Pardalote, Ravens vandalising stuff/fruit and leaves

William Deane – Two blue tongues, Flying fox, Swamp wallabies at Banyule Flats

Michelle Giovas, Dianne Williamson – Blue tongues

David Herbert – Fox at swamp viewing seat. New fence at swamp to stop dogs but a wombat has dug a hole under it. All water in the Banyule billabong is gone

Liz Evans – Tawny Frogmouths in garden and one young

Anthea – White-winged Trillers – one eating a caterpillar, male and female (see Breakfast with the Birds report on pg 2). Local bottle brush, cockatoos digging to get some unknown thing in ground.

Robert Deane – Grey pine cone, and a small bunya cone

James Deane – 3 Freckled Ducks on Banyule Swamp. Tiger snakes on main Yarra trail and other small tracks.



WCS Annual Subscriptions

WCS subscriptions due July 2020

WCS membership subscriptions for 2020/2021 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

Name:

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Special area of interest:

Annual subscription type:

☐ **Single \$20**

☐ **Family \$25**

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

☐ **Life subscription \$200**

Membership application/renewal (for July 2020-June 2021)

Donations always welcome

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

Warringal Conservation Society PO Box 64 Rosanna 3084 VIC

Nature Notes

December 2019

Daphne Hards – Matted Flax-lily in Price Park – about 4 patches in total, Silver Eyes, Rainbow Lorieet in Ironbark

James Deane – Large patch of Matted Flax-lily in Candlebark Park

Denise Fernando – King Parrot in garden feeding on Dodonea

Dianne Williamson - King Parrots and a Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike, Lewins Rail near new swamp seat

Anthea Fleming – Day of last comm. Meeting – Blue Tongues mating in garden. Brown Goshawk babies now with some feathers, Barley grass, Bell miner, Coot chick, Cranbourne dead leaf grasshopper, Dusky Wood Swallow

Gianna, William, Robert and James - Just prior to Christmas - Boobook Owls (2 adults and 3 owlets) in Viewbank



January 2020

James Deane - Echidna at Banyule Flats

Gianna, William, Robert and James - Sugar Gliders and Wombats at Banyule Flats

Would you like to receive your newsletter by email rather than a paper copy in the regular mail

Save paper and see the photos in colour. Contact us at warringal3084@gmail.com

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