



Warringal  
Conservation  
Society

50 YEARS OF CONSERVATION IN BANYULE

Vol 50/four July/August 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

COVID-19 restrictions have changed the way we are operating. Check [www.warringal.org.au](http://www.warringal.org.au) or [www.facebook.com/WarringalConservationSociety](https://www.facebook.com/WarringalConservationSociety) for updates on our activities.

## JULY MEETING (ONLINE)

### **Online Nature Notes**

Current restriction preclude holding our regular general meetings so we are going online. On 2nd of July we will hold an online meeting (via ZOOM) for members to report nature observations. We look forward to hearing what you have seen lately. Details in News and Events.

## AUGUST MEETING\*

### **Environmental Conservation and Restoration**

Mark Bachmann is the Principal Ecologist and Manager of Nature Glenelg Trust, a not-for-profit organisation that does environmental surveys, consulting and restoration work. He will speak about small mammal ecology, private land conservation, wetland restoration, and the design/implementation of novel conservation programs.

*\*dependent on easing of restrictions on indoor gatherings*

## SEPTEMBER MEETING

### **The Superb Lyrebird as an Ecosystem Engineer**

Alex Maisey from La Trobe University will speak about the role of the Superb Lyrebird in the ecology of Victoria's tall forests.

#### **When operating normally:**

**Meetings on first Thursday of the month from 7.30 pm at the Old Shire Offices, 60 Beverley Road, Heidelberg. Enter from Buckingham Drive near the Banyule Theatre**

## AT A GLANCE

### July

**Thurs 2nd:** Online Nature Notes\*

### August

**Sun 2nd:** National Tree day (**CANCELLED**)

**Thurs 6th:** General meeting planned. Conservation & restoration.

### September

**Thurs 3rd:** General meeting planned. Lyrebirds

\*See News and Events for more details

## Message from the President

Hello dear members. I hope that you are well in body and soul and pushing through these unusual times. I feel we are secure here on our island continent as long as we city folk do not drop our guard. WCS is beginning to think of resuming work-bees and safe gatherings; we shall let you know and hope to see you soon.

Many thanks to all those who completed our survey. Your replies will give us confidence in making decisions around our 50th Anniversary celebration, and you will be pleased to know that a commemorative planting was already in train. Watch out for September 13th this year if it is allowed to go ahead. Please pencil it in.

The North East Link is rumbling ahead through Early Works although we are still pushing for better outcomes – see Michelle’s report. WCS made a submission to the Draft Yarra Strategic Plan and commented on Banyule Council’s report, Greening Banyule Update & Tree Canopy Coverage in Banyule, both attached.

I have just spent three weeks in Castlemaine while my bathroom is being renovated – social distancing. On my way home yesterday I had a lightbulb moment. Something had been bothering me about the streetscapes, gardens and countryside in and around Castlemaine, and I realised that it’s the predominance of European vegetation, with plentiful blackberry thickets and flowering gorse. How the early settlers stripped the native vegetation! Returning past Calder Raceway magnificent gums stood tall and gladdened my heart. It made me so proud of what WCS has helped to achieve in Banyule particularly at Banyule Flats. Well done all; but we must remain alert to prevent tree canopy loss.

*Daphne Hards*

## News & Events

### Online Nature Notes

Thursday 2nd July at 7.30pm

We will hold an online Nature Notes using Zoom software (available for free at <https://zoom.us/>) A meeting code will be emailed to members prior to the meeting. If you get a hardcopy newsletter and would like to join the meeting, email or phone us for the code.

### National Tree Day Cancelled

Our National Tree day planting (Sun 2nd August) has been cancelled due to restrictions on outdoor

gatherings and public safety concerns. We will be back planting when the situation allows. Check [www.facebook.com/WarringalConservationSociety](http://www.facebook.com/WarringalConservationSociety) for updates

### Soccer Fields proposed for Yarra River Floodplains in Bulleen

Soccer facilities are being planned on the Yarra River floodplains to accommodate clubs displaced by the North East Link. The site of the proposed development is currently occupied by the Bulleen Driving Range. From Banyule Flats this area is

## Who we are and how to contact us

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**Planting Coordinator:** Heather Smith

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

## News & Events cont.

across the river just upstream of the windmill. The development will involve filling in part of the Yarra floodplain, removal of native trees and more intensive use of an area adjacent to high quality wildlife habitat along the river. To view the proposal and make comments go to:

<https://engage.vic.gov.au/north-east-link/templestowe-road-soccer-facilities>

*Submission close Tuesday 21st July 5pm*

### **Rodent Poison is killing Birds of Prey**

Mouse and rat bait containing anticoagulant poisons can harm owls, kites and other birds of prey that eat rodents. In Banyule this is likely to be a problem for Boobook and Barn Owls. The newer second generation of these poisons break down slower in the body meaning that there is greater potential for birds of prey to get a lethal dose. These products are tightly regulated in many countries, but are available at the supermarket in Australia. The use of second generation anticoagulant poisons is currently being reviewed. For more information and details of how to make a submission to the review:

<https://www.actforbirds.org/ratpoison>

<https://apvma.gov.au/node/65686>

*Submission close 17th July*

### **50th Anniversary WCS T-Shirts for sale**

This is your chance to be part of WCS history with your own very own LIMITED EDITION 50th Anniversary t-shirt! Dark bottle green with fluoro yellow graphics. Adults \$25 and kids \$15.

Email [warringal3084@gmail.com](mailto:warringal3084@gmail.com) and we will organise payment/delivery details.



### **Welcome to New Members**

We extend a warm welcome to Alida McKern and family, and trust that their membership will be rewarding.

## WCS Member Survey

### **During the lockdown your committee has been busy considering the future of the Society and the second 50 years of WCS needs a plan!**

As you know, WCS depends heavily on volunteer effort and we need to know where this energy is best spent. A simple survey was developed to help us understand what you, the member feels is important, which will help guide the direction for future WCS work and activities. The survey was sent to all members – emailed to 116 (23 responses) and mailed to 16 (4 responses). This is a return rate of about 20%, with 33% being the general average of similar surveys.

### **Did we get what we wanted?**

Members are the sustaining life blood of the Society. Knowing how people heard about WCS and why they joined gives us an idea of where to focus our ‘advertising’ energy, and how to tailor our messages to attract and hold them. It appears most responders found the Society through local means – the local paper; friends and neighbours; the libraries; through events like Breakfast with the Birds; online through BCC website or internet searches; coming across the

newsletter, or ‘walking past’ general meetings and plantings. Naturally enough all had joined for wildlife and natural environment reasons, although meeting like-minded people was a close second. Of all WCS activities, advocacy for local environmental issues was considered the most important. The monthly general meetings came next, then planting/working bees, meeting like-minded people and connection to place all about the same, with the annual field trip coming up behind.

### **Celebrating the 50th Anniversary?**

There were plenty of inspiring suggestions on how to celebrate the anniversary. Popular ideas included hosting a celebratory meal, with a ‘trip down memory lane’ type slide show; a mega planting to involve community and leave a legacy; an activity to acknowledge everyone's recent or long-term contribution, including the partnership with Council, to 50 years of repairing the local land. Other good proposals included publishing a booklet on Banyule Flats and its wildlife; displaying photos along walking paths to show progress made and the species returned. This idea was extended to online,

## WCS Membership Survey cont.

libraries and other places to remind everyone of the history and importance of local groups in protecting our past and present.

### **Are you interested in being involved?**

WCS members are a very busy, committed group of people. They are time poor – looking after family and aged parents, volunteering with other groups and on committees. For some health and mobility are a barrier. However - just over 52% of respondents said they would be interested in becoming more involved. This is hopeful news for the ongoing viability of the Society. To continue the work of advocating for local environmental issues and its other activities, it is important that the Society is able to call on members for help. Many hands make light work and just occasional involvement like helping at a general meeting, participating in a special issue working group or putting up web/social media posts can help.

### **Format and timing of activities?**

Lastly, we asked about the present schedule of the

monthly evening meetings. The committee is considering replacing alternate meetings with family-friendly outings to Banyule's local parks and places of interest. Many thought this a good idea, making it more inclusive to families and children. Suggestions included summer evening gatherings with BYO picnic; winter morning or afternoon activities with tea and cake. Sixty percent still preferred the weekend over weekdays but all responses will give the committee the chance to offer a variety of activities [within their capacity] at different times.

### **Thanks to all members who participated in the survey.**

If you would like to add your voice/thoughts to the future direction of the Society please speak to a committee member. We would love to hear from you.

*Heather Smith*

## Have we got a job (or two) for you!

More than skills, volunteers also bring interest, enthusiasm and new ideas. Which is what WCS needs to take it forward for the next 50 years.

At the AGM in October all committee positions will be declared open. These are the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer and the general members (presently there's five). Apart from the specific tasks of each formal position, the Committee works together identifying any issues that are relevant to the wellbeing of the Banyule Flats and larger Banyule area, and sometimes including any state and national related environment issues. This can be as varied as writing submissions against NEL, supporting (or not) Council policies for better environmental management, applying for funding for projects like signage at the Banyule Flats, or organising speakers for the monthly meetings.

Other more specific or defined roles outside of the above include managing the membership data base, researching the annual field trip destination, updating the WCS web and/or Facebook pages, helping with events or writing newsletter articles. There is a lot of interest and diversity in the work and it is a great to learn new skills. All can be job shared.

However – my absolute favourite role has been

Planting Coordinator. You get to liaise with the Bush Management Crew who support WCS every month for our working bees (they bring the plants, tools and morning tea). Of course, there is a bit more involved than that but it's a great way to get to know more about the local plants, the wetlands, and of course enjoy the company. What's not to like about a Sunday morning out in the parkland, up to your ears in tube stock? It may be the perfect role for you.

There are a lot of things the Society needs a helping hand with. You may like to join the committee or perhaps a special interest working group? What things would you like to do? You don't have to do everything and it's not forever. So have a think about it – have a chat to a committee member before October. The Society needs you.

*Heather Smith*



## Can we make 2020 the last year for Duck Shooting in Victoria?

Despite the worst environmental conditions ever recorded, and a continued significant decline in native waterbird numbers, the Victorian Government announced a 2020 recreational duck shooting season from May 13th to June 8th. This year, the number of shooters was at an all-time low. The number of volunteer wildlife rescuers was also smaller this year. The wetlands they targeted were closer to Melbourne due to the coronavirus restrictions, and Lake Connewarre near Geelong was the main focus of rescue activity. Smaller teams of rescuers also went to other locations in the State to monitor shooters.

As has been reported every year by people opposed to duck shooting for more than 35 years, many duck shooters behave badly. Reported behaviours this year included shooting outside legal times, shooting over the bag limit, failing to retrieve shot birds before targeting other birds, drug taking, shooting in the dark and in fog, littering, causing terror and suffering to birds, breaching coronavirus regulations, trespassing, shooting up signs, removing EPA PFAS warning signs. These incidences of non-compliance are likely to be the tip of the iceberg

because most of Victoria's 20,000 wetlands are not monitored during the hunting season.

Victoria has an appalling rate of species loss into which there is now a parliamentary inquiry. It is not surprising we have a biodiversity problem when hunting native species like ducks is still allowed in this State. Surely, if sustainability was really high on the Government's agenda, this year's duck shooting season would not have gone ahead.

WCS members are encouraged to help make this the very last duck shooting season in Victoria. Even if you have acted many times before, please politely remind your local Labor MP again that you want duck shooting banned, and send a polite reminder as well to:

Premier Daniel Andrews –  
daniel.andrews@parliament.vic.gov.au  
Environment Minister Lily D'Ambrosio –  
lily.dambrosio@parliament.vic.gov.au  
Agriculture Minister Jaclyn Symes –  
jaclyn.symes@parliament.vic.gov.au

*Celia Smith*



*An image projected onto scaffolding outside Victoria's Parliament House after the opening of the duck shooting season this year*

## North East Link Project Update

The NELP Early Works Site Establishment began at Borlase Reserve on the 18<sup>th</sup> May. The Early Works involve moving infrastructure such as the relocation of main truck sewers and water mains and the barrelling of Banyule Creek, north of Lower Plenty Rd in preparation for the establishment of the Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) launch site here. The TBM and its associated infrastructure, including high voltage electrical substations will actually extend into the Simpson Army Barracks land. Works here are expected to start soon.

These works which will destroy Borlase Reserve and significant parts of the Simpson Army Barracks

land is all occurring before a final bid and project design has been decided on. These Early Works lock in damage and potentially a poor design that adversely impacts nearby residents' amenity, wellbeing and access and our precious environment.

Meanwhile, NELP have re-established the Community Liaison Group (North) for this area (and for the project North of Manningham Rd /Yarra area). This CLG includes an "independent Chairman" Mike Marasco, NELP and CPB Contractors (the Early Works Contractors), Vic Roads, a Banyule City Council Officer Rachel Kamath and various community members, including

## North East Link Project Update cont.

myself, Katie George, Sarah McGuire (Watsonia Traders Association) and other Community representatives. The CLG met for the first time via Zoom on Friday 25th May – after site establishment works had begun.

This meeting was disappointing and both NELP & CPB declined and have refused to provide crucial documentation to the CLG members such as the Water Management Plan, Spoil Management Plan, Matted Flax Lily Translocation plan etc. We were advised that the Planning Minister Richard Wynne sees these documents after they have been reviewed

and approved by the independent Environmental Auditor – Nation Partners. And we should be content with that.

The next meeting of the CLG is scheduled for Friday 10<sup>th</sup> July, if there are any issues or questions you want raised at the meeting please contact me Michelle Giovas on 0409179121 or email michellegiovas@gmail.com

*Michelle Giovas*

## Memberships dues - due this month!

Membership dollars are an important financial boost for the Society but it's the members themselves, with their interest and enthusiasm that keeps the Society strong, vibrant and a force to be reckoned with.

From the very first plantings 50 years ago, where people turned up with their own tools and a handful of native plants, members can be enormously proud of the transformation of what was bare cow paddocks into vibrant wetlands. The Society is made up of many people, over many years developing a connection to this local area.

WCS life member Margaret (now living in Ballarat) told us "I was asked what I missed about Melbourne and I replied the bush in Banyule. 'What's wrong with the bush around Ballarat?' they asked and I explained that I feel a connection with

the bush around Banyule because I had helped nurture it for more than 20 years."

Local member, Lene, also feels this connection, saying... "I like watching the trees and plants grow in the parklands, remembering the many planting events...some that my children attended...and soon my grandchildren will be old enough to come along."

What is your connection? Be part of the ongoing transformation of the Banyule Flats area and enjoy what WCS has to offer along the way. Membership fees are due now. Please renew by going to our website membership page or returning the coupon below.

*Heather Smith*

### **Warringal Conservation Society Annual Subscription**

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

**Name:**

**Address:**

**Email:**

**Phone:**

**Mobile:**

**Special area of interest:**

**Where did you hear about us?:**

**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)**

## Work Experience with the Banyule Bush Crew

In June this year I joined the Banyule Bush Crew for Year 10 Work Experience. I learnt how the Bush Crew maintain our parks. I worked with Kylie and Warwick at Andrew Yandel Reserve in Greensborough and Banyule Flats in Viewbank. Kylie pointed out rare plants including orchids at Yandel Reserve. We did hand weeding and burning to prepare for planting. Burning is an effective way to get rid of weeds and winter is a safe time to do it. We also checked the parks to see if there were any problems like vandalism and rubbish. I had to adjust to getting up earlier to start work at 7.30am. Thanks to Kylie and Warwick for having me at the Bush Crew.

*William Deane*



## Nature Notes - May/June 2020

### May

Anthea Fleming - White-winged Choughs at Banyule Flats. In Ivanhoe a male Brown Goshawk sailing about - perched in a gum, then flew off, accompanied by loud complaint from Indian Mynahs, Noisy Miners and Rainbow Lorikeets.

### June

Dianne Williamson - 19th June, 4 White-winged Choughs at Banyule Flats

Celia Smith - Two King Parrots and large flock of Little Corellas at Warringal Parklands.

Gianna, William, Robert and James - Wombats at Banyule Flats. Gang Gang Cockatoos eating Hawthorn berries on the escarpment next to the main Yarra trail. Crimson and Eastern Rosellas. A flock of about 30 Little Corellas in Viewbank eating Plane Tree seed capsules and playing on the power lines. Fungi and Greenhood Orchids at Yandel Reserve in Greensborough.



## Nature Notes cont.

Daphne Hards enjoyed a visit to Kathleen Johnson's bush block near Nagambie. Following Denise and Anthony's tips tiny Gnat Orchids, plus developing greenhoods and spider orchids were identified. Rain had refreshed a parched habitat.

Heather Smith - Platypus in the Yarra seen from suspension bridge near Odyssey House. 7 kangaroos resting in the reeds near Banyule Creek entry into Banyule Swamp.

Anthea Fleming - In Ivanhoe garden: a large lively earthworm and a Tiger Worm (terrestrial flatworm, or planarian that hunts earth-worms)

Robert Bender (as reported in Friends of Wilson Reserve Newsletter) - A Yellow Robin (below, left) at Wilson Reserve, Ivanhoe that was banded as an adult in 2012 making it at least 9 years old.

James Deane - A pair of Rainbow Lorikeets (below, right) nesting in a burrow in the ground underneath a hollow log.



### From the Archives - Banyule Swamp Winter 1980

Fourteen Pelicans were regularly seen on Banyule Billabong - as reported by our late member Howard Jarman. Also Swans, Grey Teal and Black Ducks, Great Egret and a White-necked Heron. They could have been seen from the car-park, because this was long before our 1989 plantings went in. The Billabong was kept fairly high, providing water for the cattle which still roamed the paddocks.

*Anthea Fleming*

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