Warringal Conservation Society

EARLY WINTER NEWSLETTER Volume 53/3 MAY/JUNE 2022

Warringal Conservation Society is a local community organisation caring for the environment in Banyule.

Formed in 1970, the Society is an active and productive steward of Banyule's environmental heritage.

Articles and photographs for the newsletter are welcome. Note we may edit for space or legal reasons. Opinions expressed in guest material are not necessarily those of the Society.

Keep up to date on WCS, local and not so local environmental news by visiting our Facebook page or our website www.warringal.org.au

Join us!

WCS has a lot to offer: Planting events and monthly meetings with guest speakers from a wide range of disciplines and interests. Membership forms and details in this newsletter or go to the web page.

Newsletter printed courtesy of Kate Thwaites MP, Member for Jagajaja.

MAY MEETING

TOM CRAWSHAW Senior Ranger: Darebin Grasslands

A Park Ranger along the Darebin Creek at Banyule for over six years, Tom spends most of his time in the Banyule Northern Grassland Reserve which contains the largest remnants of pre-European vegetation along Banyule's stretch of the Darebin Creek. However, large sections of the reserve have been highly degraded due to post-European land use. Tom will be sharing some of the management techniques with a focus on their largest direct seed restoration project which has been around eight years in the making. (See page 3 for his Grasslands Tour in October).

JUNE MEETING

VIRGINIA TRESCOWTHICK Environmental Justice Australia

Virginia is a Lawyer who works with environmental groups and local communities across Victoria, providing advice and representation to safeguard health, protect nature and tackle climate change.

AT A GLANCE

MAY

Thursday 5: General meeting from 7.30pm

Sunday 15: Planting at Tawny Pond 10am.
**50th Anniversary celebration from 11.30am (details page 2)

JUNE

Thursday 2: General meeting from 7.30pm

Sunday 19: Planting at Banyule Swamp - East end 10am.

Meetings are the first Thursday of the month from 7.30pm

Please note that the MARCH meeting will be face-to-face 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**

Photo: M Giovas

FoB, WCS members and Stilt Man show how much longer the NEL tunnel should have been.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

We have now had two consecutive face to face general meetings at the Old Shire Offices and participated in Clean Up Australia Day. It has been great to see everyone in 3D. There is plenty of catching up to do on the planting front and, fingers crossed, we should be finally be able to gather and celebrate the 50 years of WCS after our May planting on Sunday 15 May.

The Yarra Strategic Plan has recently been released in its final form. WCS made comments and a submission while the strategy was being drafted. The strategy is a large document that sets out targets for the entire Yarra River corridor over the next 10 years. Local sites nominated by the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as being significant / requiring protection include: Yarra Flats, the confluence of the Plenty and Yarra Rivers, Banyule Flats, Bolin Bolin and nearby billabongs. There is also a requirement that actions and policies affecting the Yarra should result in a net environmental gain. There are some encouraging sentiments and targets in the Strategic Plan and hopefully these translate into better protection for the Yarra River and its floodplains and tributaries.

James Deane

FROM THE TREASURER

PASSING ON THE BATON

Dear Members, it is time to pass on the baton of the Treasurer position to someone else.

It will be 11 years in October this year since I relieved Geoff Baker, our previous treasurer. While Treasurer I am also responsible for managing Membership. In addition, between 2017 and 2020, I held the position of WCS President. No regrets, far from it! From a career in medical research to a new life in ecology and conservation, it was exciting. I have learnt so much but I would be delighted now to relax, and let someone else have a go. Today I am just sowing the seed. It would be ideal to pass the baton on at the next AGM in October 2022, so please give it thought. Our finances are in great shape!! For more information please contact me or the committee on email: warringal3084@gmail.com

Daphne Hards

URGENT ACTION REQUIRED

"It would appear that VicForests is pushing over trees, in order to claim that they were storm damaged."

VicForests have launched into a large timber harvesting operation in the Wombat Forest in an area that Dan Andrews recently announced would become National Park.

FOLLOW THE LINK TO VNPA'S campaign page on this:

https://vnpa.org.au/news/theyre-logging-your-promised-national-park

50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION: ITS ON!!

It's official - our delayed 50th Anniversary celebration will be on Sunday 15 May.

The morning will start at 10am with a planting at Tawny Pond, located next to Somerset Drive car park in Viewbank.

From 11.30am we will gather around the nearby anniversary plaque rock for a light morning tea and a few speakers. Anyone wishing to stay and mingle after 12noon may wish to BYO their lunch.

All present and past members and WCS friends are very welcome. If you are intending to come from a distance, or have questions, please email the committee on warringal3084@gmail.com

Keep an eye out for more details via email and Facebook closer to the date.

Bird-friendly rodent control

If you must use poisons on rats - here is a guide from Birdlife Australia on what to look for. Please don't use products that will also kill wildlife like owls and tawny frogmouths that eat dead rats. Why not ask the supplier not to stock the others and join the Birdlife campaign. There is lots of great info on bird friendly gardening at Birdlife too!

https://birdlife.org.au/rodent-control

THE WCS TEAM AND HOW TO CONTACT US

Warringal Conservations Society Inc
PO Box 64 Rosanna 3084
Email: warringal3084@gmail.com
Web: www.warringal.org.au
FB: www.facebook.com/WarringalConservationSociety

President: James Deane. Telephone: 8060 8983

Vice President: John D'Aloia

Treasurer: Daphne Hards. Telephone: 9497 4831

Planting Coordinator: Rob Granter

Committee: Anthea Fleming, Daphne Hards, Doug McNaughton, James Deane, John D'Aloia, Michelle Giovas and Rob Granter.

Newsletter: Editor: Heather Smith 0423 191 977
Email: wcs.editor@gmail.com

NEWS UPDATES

91 Days of violence in our regional wetlands

Despite the attempt by Coalition Against Duck Shooting (CADS) to stop the 2022 duck shooting season with a Federal Court injunction, all hell broke loose on Victorian wetlands on 16th March. Many species simply flew away, but the unfortunate swans with cygnets too young to fly had to choose between abandoning their young (or eggs) or saving themselves and flying off.

THE LEGALISED VIOLENCE OF DUCK SHOOTING HAS NO PLACE IN 2022

Please email: Premier Daniel Andrews - *daniel.andrews@parliament.vic.gov.au*

Heidelberg Park Master Plan

Recently WCS and a number of members put submissions into the draft Heidelberg Park plan. It seems that they HAVE used the feedback to guide the development. It is back on the table for further comment and we were advised at the April meeting (by someone who has read it) that among all the exotic zones and built up areas, there is some good news re weed management (environmental weeds get a mention), bolstering the existing remnant vegetation communities and wildlife corridors with revegetation. Check it out at:
https://shaping.banyule.vic.gov.au/HeidelbergPark/draft-heidelberg-park-master-plan

WELLBEING FESTIVAL AT MALAHANG

An Extra 120,000 vehicles = more air pollution!!

That was one of our messages to festival goers at the Wellbeing Festival at Malahang Reserve in March. Michelle was delighted to share it with Mayor Cr Nealy, Banyule Community Health, and various BCC councillors including Cr Peter Castaldo (Griffin) and Cr Tom Melican (Ibbott). A wonderful joint effort with Warringal Conservation Society and Stop North East Link Alliance.

THANK YOU to our volunteers!!

Michelle Giovas

Minister announces funding for Annulius

On 25 March the Shadow Federal Minister for Environment and Water and Member for Griffiths, Terri Butler and Kate Thwaites announced a federal election commitment to provide $1.7m of funding for the Annulius Billabong - to restore more natural flooding regimes to the billabong and bring it back to health. At the announcement, made alongside the Billabong at Yarra Flats, Terri Butler said this would be part of the $200M urban waterways program that Labor is planning to roll out.

Around 30 people attended showing the importance of the park to the local community, including the champions of this work - Andrew Lees and all the members of Friends of Yarra Flats Park. A small WCS contingent, headed by President James Deane, also attended.

Photo:H Smith

Andrew Lees with Shadow Federal Ministers Terri Butler, Kate Thwaites

City Nature Challenge: April 29th to May 2nd

Banyule is teaming up with 20 other local Councils to compete in this years City Nature Challenge, which is an annual event that sees how many natural observations can be made over the challenge dates, April 29th to May 2nd.

Any natural observation of plants, animals, fungi and insects counts. Get out and about exploring our amazing natural spaces. Photograph anything natural you see. The upload your photos into iNaturalist to make your observations count.

Most importantly - beyond the challenge, sightings of our flora and fauna will continue to input valuable data into Banyule's ongoing Biodiversity Monitoring Program in which Citizen Science plays an important role.

More information go to:
www.banyule.vic.gov.au/Events-activities/Whats-on/Community-events/City-Nature-Challenge-2022

Banyule Northern Grassland Wildflower Walk

May guest speaker Tom has organised a Wildflower walk for WCS members to see the Grasslands on Sunday 30th October, 10am-12pm. More details closer to date.

WORKING BEES 2022

2022 Working Bee Calendar

Get involved - we'd love to see you! Put the dates below into your calendars, then watch the newsletter, emails and Facebook for up-to-date details. All start at 10am and finish around 12noon.

May

Sunday 15: Planting at Tawny Pond
AND 50th Birthday Celebration - *more details closer to day.*

June

Sunday 19: Planting at Banyule Swamp East

July

Sunday 10: Planting at Native Gardens - entry bed 1

August

Sunday 14: Planting at Native Gardens - entry bed 2

September

Sunday 11: Woody weed removal OR Hand weeding TBA

October

Sunday 9: Hand weeding TBA
Sunday 30: Banyule Grasslands Wildflower Walk

November

End of Year Field Trip, organised by WCS

APRIL GUEST SPEAKER REPORT

PETA McDONALD > Slime Moulds

Slime Mould is the name given to a diverse group of organisms called Protists that can live freely as single cells and then come together to form complex fruiting bodies with spores. They are intricate and beautiful when seen through a microscope.

Peta is a Primary School Science Teacher with a degree in Biological Sciences (Hons Botany/Mycology). She has been identifying, photographing and cataloguing slime moulds from the bush and gardens around Melbourne for years They grow in similar conditions to fungi with a four-stage life cycle being spores > amoeba > plasmodia > fruit. There are many shapes, often changing colour as they develop. They eat by phagocytosis, ingesting bacteria, rather than being a decomposer. Lots of things like mites and beetles eat the fruiting body. Slime moulds help to release nutrients back into environment. They can be found any where there is organic matter, coming out after rain. As they are often very small, so forceps and magnifying glass are very helpful tools.

Pete showed photos of various examples: *Diachea* with its white calcium carbonate stalks and an internal structure of branches. *Trichia* has spirals on threads, *Lamproderma* with its iridescent fruit. *Cribraria* has a cage around its spores, while *Elaeomyxa* is found only in Australia and NZ, in very wet environments.

Peta collects, dries and labels her specimens before lodging them in the National Herbarium of Victoria. She has added twenty species to their collection so far. You can grow your own from organic matter (spores lay dormant in many environments), drying them on a piece of card board in matchbox. Peta showed us an example growing on nectarine stone. A very interesting talk that had an inspired crowd asking questions well into the tea break.

Resources: Sarah Lloyd's book *Where the slime mould creeps:*
Peta's own: *A key to Common Genera of Slime Moulds.*
See more at *www.facebook.com/groups/SlimeMold*

WCS ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL JULY 2021 - JUNE 2022

Name:

Address:

Email:

Telephone: Mobile:

Special areas of interest: *This helps us when arranging speakers and events.*

Subscription types:

☐ Single $20 ☐ Concession $15 (seniors/students etc)
☐ Family $25 ☐ Life subscription $200

There are three ways to renew:

1. Renew online at:
www.warringal.org.au/about-us/membership

2. Pay by direct debit:
Acc name: Warringal Conservation Society
BSB: 633 108 Acc no: 143918613
(Be sure to identify yourself as the depositor.)

3. By mail: Fill in this form and mail with your cheque or money order to:
PO Box 64 Rosanna 3084 Victoria.

Any queries email: warringal3084@gmail.com

☐ I would like to receive my newsletter by email.
☐ Yes - put me on the Plantings notification list.

NORTH EAST LINK ENDANGERED PLANT TRANSLOCATION TRIBULATIONS

The North East Link will destroy bushland at the Simpson Army Barracks which is some of the best remaining habitat for the Matted Flax-lily and contains the last viable population of the Studley Park Gum. Both plants are considered to be critically endangered in the **Victorian 2021 Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 - Threatened List**. The Matted Flax-lily also has endangered status under the federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act. Despite a redesign of the project featuring a longer northern tunnel, the relocation of an interchange means that **habitat for Matted Flax-lily and the Studley Park Gum will still be lost**. The solution proposed to address this unacceptable environmental impact is to relocate the affected endangered plants (translocation). Doubts were raised about the viability of this approach during an **expert advisory panel hearing** in 2019, but the Minister for Planning approved the project and its translocation strategies regardless. The initial outcomes of these translocation projects have been underwhelming.

More impact on the Matted Flax-lily than expected

In 2019 the North East Link Project was granted permission to translocate 95 Matted Flax-lily detected within the project area. This was a big deal because it represented a significant proportion of the 1400-2500 Matted Flax-lily thought to remain and previous translocation projects involving this species have generally not been very successful. Since the original approval, 44 additional Matted Flax-lily have been detected within the project area and approval has been extended to allow them to be translocated as well. This occurred via two variations to the original approval signed off on by bureaucrats in Canberra, apparently without any reassessment of environmental impact. Details of the variations can be found by searching for project 2018/8142 on the **EPBC Act - Public notices website**. This expansion of the translocation project means that it now puts 139 Matted Flax-lily at risk representing approximately 5-10% of the total remaining population.

Poor survival rates for Studley Park Gum plantings

To compensate for the loss of 52 large and medium sized Studley Park Gum at the Simpson Barracks, the North East Link Project has planted 300 Studley Park Gum seedlings in fenced plots. Two of these plots in Westerfolds Park should contain 210 plants according a North East Link **Studley Park Gum tree planting program Fact Sheet (April 2021)**. The plots are now covered with long grass due to the exclusion of herbivores and most of the Studley Park Gum seedlings that were planted do not appear to have survived. The photos at right show the site in September 2021 and February 2022 for comparison. A visual survey from the periphery of the plots with binoculars (J. Deane, 21 Feb 2022) suggested that only 34 of the original 210 plants remain (an 84% death rate) after less than a year. This high death rate raises questions about the suitability of the site and the methods used. The North East Link Project has made a commitment to replace dead seedlings for up to 10 years. However, considering poor survival rates so far, it is possible that the population will simply peter out once annual replacement ceases. This contrasts with the Simpson Barracks site where young Studley Park Gum seedlings readily establish naturally to maintain a healthy population.

Westerfolds Park Studley Park Gum planting site in September 2021

Westerfolds Park Studley Park Gum planting site in February 2022 showing grass and a lack of trees

Conclusions

Problems have emerged with the translocation projects established to compensate for the loss of key Matted Flax-lily and Studley Park Gum habitat. This should not come as a surprise because the limitations of translocation were discussed at length at the North East Link Project expert advisory panel hearing in 2019. A much better approach would have been to reconfigure the project to preserve the habitat these plants require. However, an opportunity to do exactly this appears to have been missed during a recent project redesign. It is also disappointing that federal and/or state laws have not adequately protected the Matted Flax-lily and the Studley Park Gum, even when recent assessments indicate that they are critically endangered.

James Deane

WORKING BEES

MARCH > Clean up Australia Day

Here's some of the great volunteers who joined the call to **"Step Up to Clean Up** Australia". With the support of Bushcrew Ranger, Warwick (and his family) we gathered at the edge of Banyule Flats Reserve and then walked around for what felt like kilometres to pick up rubbish ranging from the very common 711 Slurpee drink cups/tops and straws through to chairs and high vis road bollards.

Above: Heather, Robert, Warwick and Family, Christine, James and Rob at the sign in table.s
Masters of the pickup tool: Below left: Allison and Jennifer, and at right: Anthea (with Warwick)

Photos: R. Granter

APRIL > Woody Weeds Removal

Our annual combined working bee with Friends of Salt Creek for the working bee at the of Salt Creek and Yarra River. We were cutting and painting woody weeds. Kylie and Emma, our BCC bushland rangers also brought along the electric chainsaw to chop down the larger woody weeds that were too big for hand saws. We dragged the cut material into the lawn area for the Bushland crew to dispose of it the following week. Thanks to all who came and helped out.

Photo: J. Chellew

Heather, Kylie, Rob, Doug, Jennifer and Louise refresh themselves in front of a massive pile f woody weeds removed from the banks of Salt Creek near the Yarra River confluence.

WCS 50+ YEARS!

History Photo Key:
(for page 7, left to right, top down)

Banyule Oval tree maintenance. Unloading mulch from the City of Heidelberg trailer. January 1981. Keith Holywell labelling trees at Price Park, March 1978. Same event with a young Doug Western at right. Others unidentified.

Howard Jarman. Reg Johnson, Mark Birrell, Sheryl Garbutt and George Paras. Mont Park Rally, August 1991. Carol James (Toomey), Mary and John Hook. Banyule Flats – south paddock ephemeral wetland planting, September 1996.

Beryl Jarman and Reg Johnson, Badger Weir field trip, 2009. Reg and Kathleen Johnson. WCS 25th Anniversary dinner at Ivanhoe Town Hall. Jane Westman working at the WCS 25th Anniversary planting. Sue Haymes at same event.

Geoff Baker and Sue Course. WCS 35th Anniversary planting beside the Old Shire Offices, 2005. Brian Fleming at the same event. Carol James (Toomey), Rosemary Pearce and grandson. Rivergum Walk 2002.

Denise and Anthony Fernando. WCS Western Treatment Plant field trip, 2010. Dorothy Davies, WCS 40th Anniversary planting, 2011. Meredith Sherlock, Royal Botanic Gardens: Cranbourne field trip, 2008. Pat Vaughan, Banyule Environmental Officer.

WARRINGAL
CONSERVATION SOCIETY
COVERING THE CITY OF HEIDELBERG

An early WCS logo design

50 + YEARS AND STILL GOING STRONG

WCS was all set to celebrate our extensive and inspiring history in 2020 when COVID hit! We were all ready for the Arty Farty Festival street parade with our giant numbers, with other events like an anniversary lunch, walks and talks planned. Over this and the next newsletter we will include various historical images and notes.

NATURE NOTES

APRIL 2022

George Paras reported that a Swift Parrot had visited their bird-bath on 23rd March. He had also seen two fly overhead in Macleod.

Jane Crone reported finding a dead Tawny Frogmouth in The Panorama. We fear it was a victim of rodent poison. Frogmouths will take mice as prey, and possibly small rats. George Paras told us that Wildlife Surveillance at Melbourne University Veterinary School will check dead specimens for poisons. She also reported of flock of Thornbills which had been enjoying her birdbath – she filmed them on her mobile through the kitchen window.

Daphne Hards had seen Crimson Rosellas and Rainbow Lorikeets taking seeds from her neighbour's Golden Ash.

James Deane showed photos of the Montmorency Billabong, now dry. Some boys had dug a deep hole in it, trapping a Bluetongue lizard – which he rescued. He had also photographed a female Wombat and her well-grown young, near the Plenty footbridge. Unfortunately, both seemed to have mange. We discussed the possibility of fitting a treatment device to their burrow. James had also seen a white Grey Goshawk when cycling near Bonds Road.

While walking recently, **Lyn Easton** had counted 465 large brown pupal cases from the large Swift or Rain Moths. Autumn rains have brought them out.

Anthea Fleming showed some local bird photos: Grey Butcherbird, Kookaburra and a White-faced Heron. And some waders on Flinders Back Beach: Red-necked Stints (probably about to migrate back to Siberia), Double-banded Plover newly arrived from the mountains of New Zealand, and the endangered Hooded Plover, which live on our beaches all year round. This pair of birds had a young bird with them, having bred successfully. Also recently seen and heard a Spotted Pardalote in her pomegranate tree.

Anthea Fleming

Photos right and middle bottom: J Deane

Photos middle top and left: A Fleming

If not delivered return to: PO Box 64 Rosanna 3084

Warringal Conservation Society