Warringal Conservation Society

SUMMER 2025 Volume 56/6 DECEMBER

Since 1970 Warringal Conservation Society has been an active and effective steward of Banyule's environmental heritage.

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung as traditional custodians of the land on which we live and meet, and pay respect to past, present and future elders.

Keep up to date on our activities by visiting our Facebook page or website: www.warringal.org.au

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

General meetings are now bi-monthly.

February, April, June, August, October and December.

Meetings are the first Thursday from 7.30pm at the Old Shire Offices, 60 Beverley Rd, Heidelberg. Enter from Beverley Road. **All Welcome**

NEW MEMBERS

The Society is pleased to welcome new members **Jai Haddock** and **Family, Oliver Gole, Richard Webb** and **Soo MacMillan.** We look forward to meeting you all at a meeting or working bee soon.

Is your membership up to date? You can renew online, by PayID or by Direct Debit.

THANK YOU

A sincere thanks to our generous donors Jane Crone and Alison Cox who have made a welcome donation to the Society.

If you would like to make a donation you can do so online, by PayID or by Direct Debit. Details inside pages.

DECEMBER MEETING

Jennifer Chellew: Iceland's Ring Road

Wondrous waterfalls, lunar landscapes and the cutting cold. WCS member Jen Chellew will showcase her two-week exploration of glaciers, wildlife, thermal activity and pools, mountains, weird land formations, Northern Lights and waterfalls as seen from the island's Ring Road in October 2024. No food pictures - promise.

Following Jen's talk and 'Nature Notes we invite all to stay for supper to finish another year.

COMING UP

DECEMBER

Thursday 4: General Meeting
from 7.30pm at the Old Shire Offices

Sunday 14: Mulch Moving Working Bee
from 10am at the end of Yellow Box Terrace, Heidelberg. More details on socials closer to date.

WCS ON FACEBOOK
facebook.com/WarringalConservationSociety

WCS ON INSTAGRAM
@warringalconservationsociety

THE WCS TEAM AND HOW TO CONTACT US

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

President: James Deane

Treasurer: Leonie Pope

Newsletter: Heather Smith

Planting Coordinator: Rob Granter

Committee: Anthea Fleming, Michelle Giovas, Doug McNaughton, George Paras and Judith Venables.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

At our October AGM we welcomed Judith Venables to the committee. Judith is a wildlife carer and organised a hollows acceleration project funded by the Banyule Council. She is a great addition to our committee. Returning members are Anthea, Leonie, George, Michelle, Rob, and myself for another year. Heather left the committee and we are extremely grateful for her organisational skills and the great work she has done for WCS over many years.

2025 saw a new model of operation for WCS with general meetings held every second month instead of monthly. This model allowed the committee breathing space, more time to promote meetings and resulted in very good turn outs to see our excellent guest speakers. Plantings and weeding working bees have also been well attended.

We still have a general meeting and a pre-Christmas working bee in December. Make sure to come along to one of these events and celebrate another successful year for the Warringal Conservation Society.

James Deane

AGM RESULTS

At the AGM members voted on the proposal to raise the membership fees and remove the Life Membership category.

1. APPROVED: $5 increase to the annual membership fees commencing July 2026. New annual membership fees will be: Concession $20, Individual $25, and Family $30. These increases will help cover rising administrative costs and a lack of traditional income.

2. APPROVED: Removing the Life Membership category. The cost to provide member benefits is now exceeding the initial revenue generated from Life Memberships, which is leading to financial strain on the organisation.
**Note that this decision will not affect current Life members.*

FINANCIAL /AUDITOR STATEMENTS

If you wish to receive a copy of these, please email the Treasurer at warringal3084@gmail.com.

SUPPORTING GREAT LOCAL EVENTS AROUND BANYULE

LITORIA IS A GROWLING SUCCESS

Litoria and her wetland friends' is children's book with a wonderful story and delightful illustrations about a Growling Grass Frog, her wetland friends and how our actions may affect their homes. Our congratulations to author Teisha Sloane and illustrator Katie Howard. The launch was a very enjoyable event with frog calls, frogs in ponds, a frog walk (thanks James/committee members) and frog-friendly plants to enjoy.

The book will make a wonderful Christmas present and can be purchased by going to: https://campsite.bio/litoriabook

Photo: Supplied

Author Teisha Sloane (left) and illustrator Katie Howard.

SPRING = BREAKFAST WITH THE BIRDS!

About 120 people enjoyed a wonderful morning of bird watching on a brisk walk around the Flats and Yarra River corridor, followed by talks and morning tea. WCS committee members had the display up by 7am. James, with Eliza led one of the groups. Other folks involved included BCC's Paul, Jared and Sam, local bird experts and others. An excellent morning as usual.
An annual event that continues to be inspiring and educational.

NATIVE FISH PROJECT CATCHES A GRANT

Congratulations to our friend **Michele Gierck**, of *Gladys and Stripey* fame who has won another Banyule Council Environmental grant to develop another creative project promoting and educating about native fish species and the invader species.

COMMUNITY ACTION WIN PROTECTS DAREBIN CREEK

In October Banyule Council passed the recommendation for a 10-year agreement with Darebin Creek Management Committee. Thanks to everyone who got involved and made their voices heard over the last 2 years.

YOUR ADVOCACY MADE ALL THE DIFFERENCE!!

GUEST SPEAKER REPORT

OCTOBER> DR PETER GRIFFIOEN: Wildlife call recognition using artificial intelligence

Peter works at the Arthur Rylah Institute and came to talk about his work using artificial intelligence (AI) to rapidly identify wildlife calls. His background is in developing custom satellite image and map grid processing software to provide maps of species habitat distributions, land cover and land use maps. He also curates the large in-house ecological datasets which include extensive flora and fauna records.

So, when this opportunity came up to apply his skills to developing software to aid the identification of species from acoustic field recordings he jumped at the challenge.

Acoustic monitoring using small recording devices is now routinely used to survey for wildlife. Hundreds of hours of audio data can easily be gathered, however manually analysing recordings to identify wildlife calls rapidly becomes impractical. Listening is time consuming: the current process ties up scientists for many days/weeks. Also, some of the current automatic processing (e.g. bats) is not very accurate, and more importantly, the data is unlikely to be reused.

Peter has developed the software ARISA that can be trained to listen to recordings and rapidly identify the calls of frogs, birds, bats and other mammals. This technology is making acoustic monitoring more cost-effective, allowing for larger areas to be surveyed and new species to be detected from existing recordings. It can:

- rapidly identify animal calls of birds, frogs, bats and other mammal species in enormous datasets of real-world audio recordings.
- make significant findings from new and old datasets, including new detections of critically endangered species, and allows rapid review of rare or unusual calls.
- ARISA can process one year of audio in just 24 hours using custom, species-specific recognisers for many bird, frog, bat and other mammal species.

Researchers are using the software to detect and monitor species across Victoria, including the threatened Eastern Bristlebird, Bats, Eastern Ground Parrots, Koalas, and Australasian Bitterns.

Some initial effort is required to train and validate the model for each target species, though once this is done the software dramatically increases processing accuracy and efficiency. It can be trained to listen out for many species, even common birds and animals add to the sophistication of the data collected.

Peter loves his work. He sees it as a huge legacy for the future. Recordings made now will allow researchers in the future to have a real time record of what was in that space and how it compares to the same space their time. He spoke about recording before and after bushfires – what is gone, what comes back, when. Now through technology like Starlink (satellite internet) isolated recorders can hear and then send text back to researchers. The possibilities of sound are endless!

Heather Smith

CASE STUDY

After the 2019-20 Black Summer Bushfires, critically endangered Eastern Bristlebirds were translocated to several new sites in Wilsons Promontory.

The species is difficult to survey for because it inhabits thick vegetation close to the ground and is well camouflaged. Acoustic monitoring offered a more practical survey method to track the population's survival.

After training the AI on confirmed bristlebird calls, it successfully detected its call amongst all the other birdsong and background sounds.

Links for more information:

www.ari.vic.gov.au/research/technology-and-skills/monitoring-techniques/wildlife-call-recognition-using-artificial-intelligence

www.youtube.com/watch?v=awAWGBaIloE

NORTH EAST LINK PROJECT UPDATE

I attended the latest North East Link Project Community Liaison Group meeting 31 October.

It was an informative meeting and a number of emerging environmental and health issues were raised;

- As a result of the 5000L spill of bright blue liquid acrylic solution, caused by a contractor cleaning out a 10,000 L storage tank to stormwater drains in the Lower Plenty Rd work site, four NELP contractor companies received a $10,000 fine each from EPA Victoria. This is a manifestly inadequate penalty considering the negligence, failure of controls, procedures and training. This highly flammable pollutant is an eye and skin irritant, can cause respiratory issues and is harmful if ingested, and requires those handling the liquid to wear personal protective equipment.

- Vibration and noise impacts from the tunnel boring operations along River Gum Walk has resulted in some residents being temporarily relocated.

- There are four permanent air monitoring stations for Particulate Matter Pollution PM 10 and PM 2.5 located at the northern NELP works:
  - St Marys Greensborough
  - Between Winsor Reserve and Happy Valley Early Learning Centre Macleod
  - Edward St, Macleod and
  - Kaye Court, Yallambie

- Incredibly no air pollution exceedances have been reported at the Winsor Reserve monitoring station despite B-double diesel truck movements in and out of Winsor Reserve every 90 seconds and the very significant diesel truck and car movements on Greensborough Highway

- NELP M80 interchange and road widening works are causing significant sediment pollution occurrences every time heavy rainfall events happen and this has been the case for over 12 months. Sediment runoff occurs to the Yando Street Drain/Creek, which ultimately discharges to the Yarra River via Kalparrin Garden lakes and the Plenty River.

These sediment discharges smother plant and animal life and also cause a drop in dissolved oxygen levels. The situation is so bad that a sediment mound is now forming in the Yarra River at its confluence with the Plenty River.

ABOVE: At the Yarra and Plenty River confluence showing the growing mound of sediment under the water.

BELOW: Yando Street Creek 27 October 2025.

Photos: M Giovas

- NELP advised that there will be significant drainage works occurring at Lower Plenty Road. This is also the location where NELP are expected to provide an underground wildlife crossing as per the *Urban Design and Landscape Plan Community Consultation Report Feb 2023*. At the meeting it appeared that NELP were planning to renege on this undertaking and have only planned to build a wildlife crossing ladder!

I am hoping this serious and deliberate omission will be rectified. NELP have undertaken to report back to me on this.

Michelle Giovas

NATURE NOTES

OCTOBER 2025

Heather Smith reported the constant night time calling of Boo Book owls looking for mates.

Diane Williamson had witnessed Magpies making other birds' calls and noises. Apparently, they are known for their mimicry.

Daphne Hards delighted to see Tawny frogmouths in her garden. She now has a cat cage from the Council, for night use. Trapping food also supplied.

James Dean saw Samba Deer near the windmill. They are in Banyule Flats, and also around Montpellier Billabong. Reported hearing the sound of antlers being rubbed on trees.

Andrew Lee added that at last year's survey there were 28 deer, moving between Bourke Road and Fitzsimmons Lane.

Robert Bender reported on a range of observations briefly recorded here: mating Tiger snakes; Scorpions; six species of birds and a Frog. Spoke on Eastern Broad-nosed Bats which can live for 12 years and breed annually. He recommended two very interesting books on bees. *Honeybee Democracy* by Thomas D Seeley and *The Mind of a Bee* by Lars Chittka.

Anthea Fleming also narrated a range of images including Lemon Wasp Gall and how to treat an infected tree; Eastern Rosellas; Red and Little Wattlebirds and New Holland honeyeaters flocking to and enjoying her flowering WA Banksia. **>>>^^**

Anthea had also observed four Common Bronzewing Pigeons walking out in the open on her local oval. She believed this is a significant behaviour change to when they first arrived.

Heather Smith

SUGAR GLIDER SURVEY: THE RESULTS!

The October Sugar (Krefft's) Glider Census was a great success. With the help of about 50 community volunteers, 351 boxes were checked resulting in an estimate of 185 gliders, including several juveniles, were sighted in boxes, which is a greater number than in previous years.

Exceptional coordinating by Jennifer Chellew, her team and the Montmorency biodiversity Group.

If you'd like to find out more, go to:
https://youtu.be/jvu8S6OnVMY

Photo: Sugar Glider Project

WILDLIFE FOSTER CARE…MORE THAN 'WARM AND FUZZY'

I'm a wildlife foster carer, registered with DEECA. Every foster carer is under the supervision of a more experienced Carer/Mentor. Many of the birds I look after have already been checked over and stabilised in terms of their food and care and then I take over their routine. I also occasionally get birds from Wildlife Victoria, particularly if I need to find companions for animals I've already got.

At the moment I am caring for these two nestling Tawny frogmouths. They came to me when they were a few weeks old. They had been found and brought to a vet who passed them on to my mentor.

I feed them chicken hearts coated in an insectivore powder and some calcium powder. As they get older, they will move to half a mouse each (best to cut them up frozen!) and then a whole dead mouse. I love to watch them, sitting contemplatively with the tail hanging rakishly from the corner of their beaks.

I also hang a small blue light bug zapper in their aviary at night - with the elements covered, to attract insects so they can practice their hunting skills in preparation for their release around eight weeks old.

I'm also raising some magpies, ringtail possums and wood ducks. I love the work but managing life around multiple feeding times over a 24-hour period takes some organising.

Judith Venables

Photo: J Venables

Your ongoing support enables the Society to actively advocate and protect wildlife and the biodiversity of our local natural places.

Show your love for the Society by becoming a member or making a donation.

MEMBERSHIP/ RENEWAL JULY 25– JUNE 26

THERE ARE THREE WAYS TO BECOME A MEMBER OR TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

1. **Online through our website:**
   www.warringal.org.au/about us/membership
2. **Direct Debit:**
   Account name: Warringal Conservation Society.
   BSB: 633 108. Account no: 143918613
3. **PayID:**
   Account name: Warringal Conservation Society.
   ID number: 88059344924

WEBSITE ANALYTICS REPORT

In 2024 funding was provided by the Bendigo Bank for a redesign of the WCS website. This was complemented by a Banyule Council Training grant which paid for CMS training.

Recently an analytics report was provided on the website performance between January and October of this year. The analysis reveals significant growth trends, peak usage patterns and content preferences.

Interestingly, visitors from the US ranked second of the cohorts (11,780) who viewed the Society's site. Visitors from Australia viewed the site 32,442 times. The United Kingdom, China, Singapore, Ireland and Canada were also represented in audience numbers.

The most popular page was the events page with 50.8% of the total views.

The most downloaded resource was *Banyule Flats Reserve: A Hidden Treasure* (map). Other downloads included the WCS Newsletters, the *Warringal Parklands and Banyule Flats Ecological and Conservation Values Assessment* and policy documents.

This report provides us with valuable information of the interests of not only our current members but of prospective members and will guide us in our planning for 2026.

Leonie Pope

LIKE TO PLAY A MORE ACTIVE ROLE?

The Society depends on fresh ideas, skills and enthusiasm to take it into the future. WCS needs people with time and skills in web content management, social media and newsletter production. No need to be on the committee! If you're interested and would like to become involved, please email warringal3084@gmail.com and one of the committee members will contact you.

If not delivered return to: PO Box 64 Rosanna 3084

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