

### Land and Biodiversity at a Time of Climate Change White Paper

The CEC is making a submission to the State Government's Land and Biodiversity at a Time of Climate Change White Paper. This builds on the previous green paper which also contains submissions from the CEC and other groups. The Westernport Catchment Landcare Network (WPCLN), the major subcommittee of the CEC, is putting in its own submission.



All groups should consider putting in individual submissions. In your submission carefully consider any regional issues you know about. Also, common messages from all of the regions will carry more weight. As part of the CEC submission process we need to capture key issues using

good case examples that you may have. We hope that all twenty-six CEC member groups have an opportunity to contribute and that the CEC is seen as broadly represented.

We expect the CEC submission will reinforce key themes around the well established Biolinks Strategy and the development of systems and strategies to assist resilience of biodiversity to better cope with all threats including climate change. Also to keep in mind is the issue of threatened species and the implied intention of extinction of these species.

Landcare, Friends, Conservation and Action Groups are tackling similar issues but in a variety of ways. Both the State Government and the Victoria Naturally Alliance have excellent guidance on their websites including online submission forms and suggestions. Go to the following links <http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/land-whitepaper> and [www.victorianaturally.org.au](http://www.victorianaturally.org.au).

The CEC strongly suggests you to be part of these important processes. Please send your key points, issues or examples to the CEC Secretary via CEC office by June 16 for inclusion in the CEC submission.

#### CARDINIA ENVIRONMENT COALITION

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**THE CARDINIA ENVIRONMENT COALITION INC (CEC) is an umbrella group comprising 26 local Friends, Landcare and conservation groups. In this edition of our newsletter you will find lots of information about our work and our local groups.**

*The CEC works across the Central Western Port and part of the Southern Yarra Ranges catchments.*

#### OUR VISION

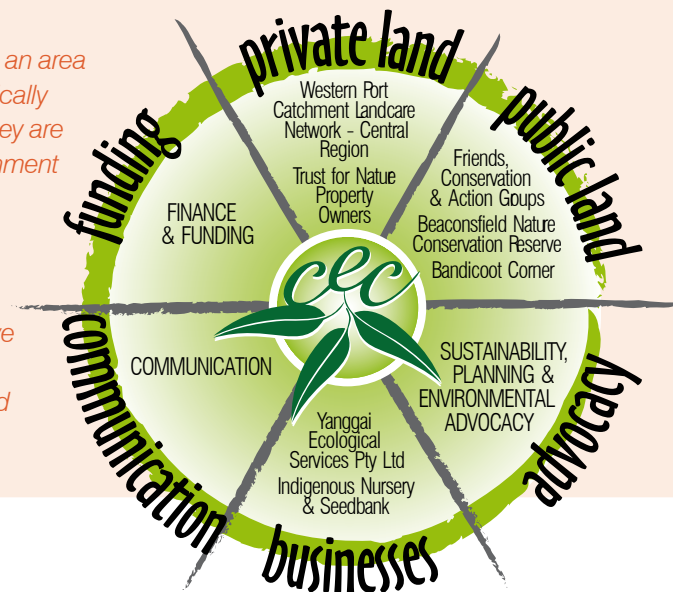
*By 2020 our catchment is an area where people live ecologically sustainably, aware that they are connected to their environment which is protected and enhanced by their action.*

#### OUR MISSION

*Leading significant positive environmental change through community based awareness and action*

#### OUR STRUCTURE

*The CEC is best reflected by the six portfolio areas shown in the diagram.*



### Update from the President

*Margaret Crompton*

As the interim President of the CEC I see myself as one of a small number of people representing the many community groups with an interest in the local environment. The member groups elect representatives onto the CEC Committee at the Annual General Meeting which is held in August.

As you can see from this Newsletter the CEC is responsible for a large range of important environmental projects through the staff it employs in the field, through management of public lands and through networking with other stakeholders at a local and regional level. It is true to say that none of this would occur without the involvement of our local groups – the participation of your group at our next AGM is critical to the future of the CEC and what it can achieve.

Landcare groups, Friends groups and others work tirelessly in their local areas but by coming together we can support a more regional approach and have a greater environmental impact.

The CEC Committee invites all groups to participate at the next AGM and put forward representatives to be on the committee and to nominate for executive positions. It is our 10th anniversary this year and we will focus on stories relating to the formation of groups and the people behind them. Anthony Hooper is a big part of this history and has been instrumental in our achievements so far. We look forward to a night of celebration in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere and encourage your involvement. The date is Thursday August 28th.

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### *Landcare Manager's Report*

2008 marks the 10th year of operation for the Cardinia Environment Coalition and the Western Port Catchment Landcare Network. A now famous saying is true for the CEC & WPCLN – 'From Little Things Big Things Grow.'

The WPCLN now has 12 Landcare Groups to nurture and the CEC now manages four parcels of Crown Land including the 170 ha of Beaconsfield Nature Conservation Reserve.

I am pleased to announce that the newest Landcare Group to be formed with the WPCLN is Pearcedale. A local team is busy getting the group started with new projects already planned.

### *Biolinks Project*

The Biolinks Project is the CEC's ambitious plan to achieve broad-scale environmental restoration throughout the Central Westernport Catchment by creating a network of "biolinks", or corridors of native vegetation.

Work on private land (revegetation and protection of existing vegetation) is a crucial aspect of the Biolinks Project. Given that private land occupies the often-extensive spaces between parks and reserves and frequently contains significant biological assets itself, its importance in broad-scale environmental restoration cannot be overemphasized. A high priority is to fill in the gaps between existing Landcare projects to form consecutive link-ages. In some areas, biolinks are already well underway with four or more Landcare properties in a row. Each property, no matter how small, forms a vital link in the chain.

To co-ordinate this process and to ensure the Biolinks Project fits in with other regional strategies, the CEC's Biodiversity Project Officer Sarah Maclagan is currently finalising an Action Plan for the Biolinks Project. This document will identify landscape-scale 'Biolink Priority Zones' to focus on in order to link up the major environmental assets of the study area (e.g., between the Bunyip State Park and the sea). The next stage of planning will be to identify biolinks at the local area scale such as vegetation corridors along roadsides, streams, and through private properties. Landcare groups and the local community will be invited to participate in this process in the second half of 2008.

The CEC has funding available for fencing and revegetation on private land, which would be done under a voluntary agreement.

To express interest in having your property included within a biolink, please contact Sarah on 5941 8446 or [smaclagan\\_cec@dcsi.net.au](mailto:smaclagan_cec@dcsi.net.au).

The 'Bring Back the Bunyip' project has been renamed the 'Spirit of the Bunyip' which continues to move forward. The main aim of the Port Phillip & Western Port Catchment Management Authority through the Spirit of the Bunyip is to create a network of biolinks across the central Western Port catchment working with the Cardinia Environment Coalition. A successful bus tour organized by the new Project manager Shane Scanlon visited a number of CEC/WPCLN sites that illustrate the benefits of connecting properties with substantial biolinks. The Spirit of the Bunyip project should create much more opportunity for creating biolinks for landholders in the Central Westernport Region.

### *Beef & Dairy Sustainable Farming Systems Project*

The Beef & Dairy program comprises 2 areas of interest for farmers they include Revegetation continuing as normal and Soil Trials.

The soil trials are going very well. We have set up demonstration plots at Alan & Mary Cole's beef farm (105 Gunn Rd Vervale) and are trialling 7 different easily sourced fertilisers matched to the soil test. A full report will be in the next edition of CEC Newsletter.

For more info on Beef & Dairy or the Agriculture Emission Projects, contact Peter Ronalds on 5941 8446 or 0402 650 382.

### *Agriculture Emission Project*

The Agriculture Emissions Project (Greenhouse program) is an exciting 3 year program focused on large beef & dairy farms. The project is funded by Sustainability Victoria. 5 farmers participated in '07. 10 farmers will participate this year & another 10 farmers in '09.

The aim of the greenhouse program is to reduce greenhouse emissions by 10%, increase water use efficiency by 15% & reduce waste



Richard Eckard presents at the field day to landfill by 10%. As part of the project, independent auditors visit each property to conduct an audit of energy usage, fertiliser applications, water, waste, revegetation activities and other farm management practices. The audit provides a benchmark from which the

A Green Corps team will be starting on May 7 with the aim of supporting previous WPCLN projects. The team will be available for site preparation, planting, weeding and guard removal. They will also be working on restoring the habitat for the CEC managed Bandicoot Corner and supporting the CEC nursery.

The Biolinks Action Plan is nearing completion and will provide a blueprint for planning the next stage of individual biolinks across each catchment in the central Western Port area.

Strong interest in restoring our landscape continues to grow as indicated by the numbers of new applications arriving at the CEC office.



auditors can develop an action plan in consultation with the farmers. The action plan provides the farmers with a range of alternative management practices that will in turn reduce greenhouse emissions but also aim to increase productivity. The WPCLN then provides funding assistance to help the farmer implement some of the actions identified in their plan.

In April we held a field day at Drouin Sth on one of the farms participating in the Greenhouse challenge. Over 60 people attended this fascinating field day. Richard Eckard (one of Australia's most experienced "Greenhouse and Agriculture" scientist spoke on the pros and cons of selling carbon from trees and soil. He also talked about methane trials that are currently being conducted at Ellinbank which are showing great promise. The research is showing that there are easy ways that farmers can reduce their cow's methane emissions and increase production. The benefits of using chook poo as a fertiliser were also discussed. Greg Hunt (from the Greenhouse Alliance) spoke on some of the different projects being conducted in the region aimed at reducing greenhouse emissions. The independent auditors also conducted a presentation which looked at the breakdown of emissions on several farms that they have audited.

### *Salinity Alert Project*

The clearing of native vegetation for grazing and cropping systems has allowed too much rainfall to leak into the groundwater systems

*Continued on page 3*



*Salinity Alert Project* from page 2

of the landscapes. This leakage causes the watertable to rise and brings saline groundwater to the land surface. The movement of salt to the land surface with rising groundwater in non-irrigated lands is known as dryland salinity.

Whilst conducting the latest round of water monitoring of saline water bodies on landholder's properties, the salinity project officer has been discussing with landowners a range of alternative management options to address salinity including: the adoption of salt tolerant pastures in combination of revegetation activities; the importance and relevance of groundwater flow systems (GFS) on their property and the surrounding area; possible locations for future plantings and/or alternative pastures species in relation to the GFS; importance of monitoring watertable depth for salinity management on their property and how the data will add benefit to the regional salinity management plan. Additionally, the participation of telling their story as part of a collection of case studies will provide new and existing Landcare members with real management options and details of the resulting benefits.

In the forthcoming months there will be two field days addressing salinity management options, the first held on the 24th of May at Pakenham Road, Pakenham will raise the awareness of ground water monitoring and provide an introduction to groundwater



Salt Scald

flow systems and revegetation in regards to salinity management. The second field day will have a number of presenters discussing salinity management options, revegetation, and pasture management for saline areas, groundwater flow systems and the hydro geological affects of the GFS in the local area. The date is still to be confirmed but it will be held in June 2008.

If you are interested in finding out more information on any of the topics mentioned in this article, or interested in accepting Landcare incentives, please contact Rebecca for further details at the CEC office on 5941 8446.

*Yanggai Ecological Services Pty Ltd*

Big changes are taking place at Yanggai Ecological Services. Dan Robertson, our first employee and natural resource officer at Yanggai has left to take up a position at MW. We have also employed six people on a casual basis to assist with the weed control, revegetation works, looking after our public land commitments such as the Beaconsfield Nature Conservation Reserve and Bandicoot Cnr and seed Collecting.

We are advertising for a replacement for Dan's position but in the meantime are continuing to undertake all of our work commitments with our diligent works team led by Erland Cazeneuve.

One of the projects we were successful in tendering for is the 4 towns weed control project conducted by the Cardinia Shire. Our works team is responsible for controlling the spread of blackberries and sweet Pittosporum in the Upper Beaconsfield township area. Yanggai is also assisting the Cardinia Catchment Landcare Group with its weed control and revegetation works at Beaconsfield Park.

As the financial year comes to a close it seems as if we will be able to return a profit back to the CEC and we look forward to another successful year growing this important part of our organisation.

*Indigenous Nursery & Seedbank*

The CEC nursery has had some great help over the summer especially from the Green corps team. Lead by Travis Scicchitano from the Conservation Volunteers Australia, the teams have attended the nursery since Christmas, and now have knowledge on the basic principles of maintaining nursery operations with little supervision required. They have made an enormous contribution to the plant stock numbers and have participated in collecting seed. Some very good future employees on offer!

Amy Evans from Tynong North has been employed casually to work at the nursery focusing on watering. Amy is a member of the Cannibal Crk Landcare group and attends Burnley College in Richmond studying Horticulture.

This year Simon Gallon from Drouin has been employed casually to collect seed. Over the busy summer seed collection period, Simon has been battling the heat and managing to catch the seed as it opens. Due to Simon's masterful experience and knowledge of species locations, we are on target with 'quality' amounts required for the Direct Seed projects this year.

Various trials being conducted with viability / germination tests are highlighting the impor-

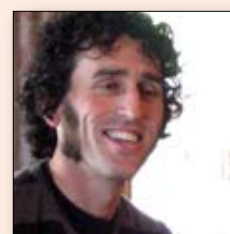


tance of collecting from a wide number of parent plants to maintain good genetic diversity and as well as keeping thorough records. We are focusing on providing a seed bank with high quality seed, not necessarily quantity. The number of plant species within a Direct Seed mix for projects is being examined and may be reduced due to the difficulty of collecting certain seed. These Direct Seed projects may be required to add additional species as tube stock at a later date to achieve the health and species diversity required of a successful project.

The use of future Seed Production Areas is also being investigated to reduce the amount of stress and over collection of plant seed in often fragmented patches of remnant vegetation throughout and surrounding the Westernport catchment. The establishment of SPA areas would also increase the genetic diversity of plants and enable them to adapt more successfully to a wide range of changing environmental conditions, such as salt levels and increasing dryness.

Volunteers are welcome at the nursery on Fridays between 10am - 12pm. Activities are varied according to each volunteer's interest.

**[Adele Richardson, Natural Resources Project Officer]**

**CEC STAFF UPDATE**

Yanggai Ecological Services says Farewell to Dan Robertson

Dan Robertson who joined

Yanggai Ecological Services as its first employee two years ago has resigned to take up a position with Melbourne Water. Dan was an integral part of the impressive growth of Yanggai. He was instrumental in building the organisation from the initial idea two years ago to an organisation that now employs a small team of people undertaking seed collection, weed control and revegetation works on both public and private land across the region.

Dan's passion for the environment, friendly and outgoing personality and sense of humour will be sorely missed. A farewell luncheon was held at the Caldermeade Café on his last day and the high level of attendance by landcare property owners, council officers and staff was testament to the high regard in which he is held. We wish him the best in his new endeavours.

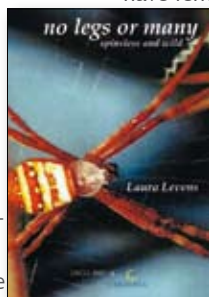
## MEMBER GROUP UPDATES

### Upper Beaconsfield Conservation Group

The Upper Beaconsfield Conservation Group launched the booklet *No Legs or Many* on April 9th at the Upper Beaconsfield Community Centre in front of about fifty people. The booklet and extensive photographs were authored by Laura Levens, well known in the community for her conservation and education efforts over the years.

Both Crs Legge and Chatwin were present and admired Laura's longevity in pursuing environmental and community environmental education interests and for the fantastic role model she is to everyone. This is Laura's third book on conservation and environment for the region, and is the result of over 25 years of observation and photographic skills. Laura thanks the entomologists who assisted her to identify the large range of local invertebrates; Cardinia Shire Council for funding the booklet; Sarah Binks from the Council's Environment and Heritage Department for her assistance and Ian Stevenson, Manager, for driving the project. The booklet will be sent free in the mail to those at the Upper Beaconsfield and Guys Hill post codes. The booklet is for sale to others at \$8 plus postage and will assist the Upper Beaconsfield Conservation Group to fund other activities in line with their key objectives including community environmental education.

For purchases please contact Laura on 5944 3828 or [laural@melbpc.org.au](mailto:laural@melbpc.org.au)



*No Legs or Many*  
by Laura Levens

### Back Creek Landcare Group

The Back Creek Landcare Group operates in the catchment of Back Creek which runs through the township of Maryknoll and on to Nar Nar Goon.

In 2007 we had two planting days on Steve and Sarah Davis's property. Steve and Sarah have fenced off a large area of moist and dry land which will be future habitat for frogs and wetland birds. Already the swamp hen is in the area and this will provide a wonderful refuge for this bird.

John and Kathy Paterson have planted out an extensive shelterbelt on the northern side of their property. A number of large radiata pine trees were removed sometime ago and the removal of these trees has enabled this planting to occur.

Many of our landcare members have undertaken plantings on their own. Lucy and Gary Andrews have planted out a salt scar and a couple of shelterbelts. Helen and Ian Ward have planted out an extensive shelterbelt on the southern edge of their property. Many of our members have replaced plants lost in the summer drought of 2007.

On our books so far for 2008 is a planting on Rob and Raylene Newham's property and continuing the shelterbelt on Kathy & John Paterson's land.



*Trust for Nature day*  
participants

### Cardinia Trust for Nature Covenant Group

A conservation covenant is a voluntary agreement made between the landowner and Trust for Nature. The purpose of the covenant is to permanently protect the natural, cultural or scientific values of the land. In order to do this, the covenant is registered on the Certificate of Title to the land and must then be observed by all future owners. Unlike common law covenants and planning schemes, Trust for Nature conservation covenants are entered into under the Victorian Conservation Trust Act 1972 and are legally binding.

The annual get together of property owners within the Shire of Cardinia who have protected their native bushland with 'Trust for Nature Conservation Covenants' was held on Sunday 27th April at "Cherry Ridge" Barnes Drive, Guys Hill. Any landowner wishing to learn about the Trust's work and the Cardinia Shire's Rate Reduction and Biodiversity Incentive Scheme for Covenanted properties are welcome to attend these events.

Trust for Nature focuses on landscape scale conservation using land purchase, conservation covenants and a Revolving Fund. Trust for Nature is a non-profit organization which works to protect remnant bushland - forever.

For further information contact Neil McDonald on 5944 3782 or [neilmcd@cyberspace.net.au](mailto:neilmcd@cyberspace.net.au)

## PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT

### Bandicoot Corner

So far 2008 has been a very exciting year down at

Bandicoot Corner! Following the completion of the predator-proof fence in 2007, six specialised bandicoot tunnels have been installed with the intention of allowing bandicoots (but not cats!) in and out. Sand pads have been put in on both sides of these tunnels so that we can monitor for footprints and see if bandicoots are actually using them. They are also good for looking for the footprints of other animals such as cats, foxes and dogs that have somehow breached the fence. If you are interested in helping to monitor the sand pads on a regular basis please contact the CEC office ASAP.

Other exciting news is that we received a DSE Facilities Grant to put in a small sensitively designed building (with tank attached) that will incorporate a composting toilet (with enclosed chamber), a shelter with signage about the reserve and a small amount of storage space.



This will improve accessibility and enable increased community use of the reserve, as well as allowing storage of maintenance equipment on site.

All of this work was very well rewarded when we recently started seeing real live bandicoots within the reserve for the first time in years!

A range of interesting field days and events are planned for Bandicoot Corner this year. To make sure you hear about them, please contact the CEC and have your name placed on the Bandicoot Corner Contact List.

### Beaconsfield Nature Conservation Reserve

The vision for the BNCR is for it to be a 'first class nature conservation reserve that is managed by the Cardinia Environment Coalition to provide permanent protection and enhancement of the unique natural, cultural and industrial heritage values of the site. The reserve is situated on O'Neil Rd Beaconsfield and covers 170 hectares.

The CEC plans to soon release some cluster

chapters of its draft management plan to the BNCR Supporters Group for comment before the entire plan is released for broad consultation.

The supporters group meets Bi monthly to help plan and implement activities within the reserve which is managed by the CEC.

Last term the supporters group met to have a bush walk around the reserve and learnt more about the history of the aqueduct which once carried water from the Tarago Reservoir to the Beaconsfield reservoir. We also had a weeding day to help eradicate some pest weeds such as pittosporum.

The supporters group is an active group incorporating people of all ages who are interested in local environmental issues. The BNCR has a lot to offer the community and you can be part of this.



If you would like to know more about the Supporters group or the reserve please call Kerrie on 5942 7078 or the CEC on 5941 8446