

WINTER 2010 NEWSLETTER

New CEC Members Welcome

CEC AGM 23rd September 2010

The CEC has 25 member groups, which includes 13 Landcare Groups, which make up the Westernport catchment Landcare Network.

The CEC provides member groups with the opportunity to collectively make a difference within the environment, through the provision of information gathered from various sources, general meetings input, web site information, assistance and advice on advocacy issues, displays and event presence promoting biodiversity and environmental change, access to local indigenous nursery for plants and seed, ability to have input and promote upcoming events, access to a wide network of volunteers for projects, plus many more non-tangible benefits of belonging to a wider community network of like minded environmentalists.

The CEC AGM is coming up September 23rd this year, and will be held in the Bunyip Hall – we encourage all present, past and possible future member groups to be represented – and join the CEC again to further our network into the future – all with the one aligned vision of biodiversity protection.

For more information on becoming a CEC Member, please contact the office on (03) 5941 8446 or cec@dcsi.net.au

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CARDINIA ENVIRONMENT COALITION

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THE CARDINIA ENVIRONMENT COALITION INC (CEC) is an umbrella group comprising over 25 local Friends, Landcare and conservation groups. The CEC Newsletter presents 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 here in the diagram.



Sister Projects Across the Sea - Sarah Maclagan

The Friends of the National Parks Foundation (FNPF) is a not-for-profit organisation working to preserve Indonesia's wildlife and its habitat. The CEC is a not-for-profit organisation working to preserve wildlife, natural habitats and promote sustainable farming practices in the Western Port region of south-east Australia. Recognising the parallels between our two organisations, FNPF founder Dr. Bayu Wirayudha and his colleague Dr. Sari Nindhia spent a day visiting the CEC during their tour of Australia in October last year. In November, I was lucky enough to spend three days touring one of their major project areas in Bali – the island of

introduced Bayu to us) and myself gathered at the CEC offices in Pakenham to meet our Balinese visitors, Dr. Bayu and Dr. Sari. Both are Bird Veterinarians, on tour in Australia promoting their conservation work in Indonesia – particularly with the critically endangered Bali Starling. They had requested a meeting with the CEC to discuss the formation of a 'sister' relationship, through which we might learn about each others' work and perhaps gain some insight into our own issues.



The beautiful Bali Starling is critically endangered.

Our tour included Bandicoot Corner, the Bunyip Sanctuary Carbon Sink (an expansive direct-seed revegetation site) and a number of farms with Landcare plantings, some of which had been affected by February's bushfires. Despite the fine weather, when we tried to walk into the Bunyip Sanctuary, we found the ground extremely wet and muddy due to heavy rain in the preceding days. Rather than turning back, our guests pulled off their shoes and socks and continued on with a great sense of humour! Throughout the morning they showed a great deal of interest, asking many questions about the CEC and about farming, conservation and life in Australia more broadly. They were amazed by the wide open spaces and



Bayu and Sari presenting the painting to CEC President Joan Szalman in the presence of Cardinia Shire's Ian Stevenson and (past) Mayor Bill Pearson.

Nusa Penida.

It was a beautiful October day when CEC President Joan Szalman, Vice-President Elizabeth Fraser, Secretary Susan Davies, Cardinia Shire worker Ian Stevenson, Bird Veterinarian and CEC supporter Dr. Pat Macwhirter (who

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PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT

Beaconsfield Nature Conservation Reserve - BNCR

December last year, saw a "firey" community meeting in response to the need to formally develop a fire management plan, not only to ensure the safety of the community around BNCR, but to ensure biodiversity values are maintained into the future. Much work has since been done with DSE, CFA and other relevant management groups, and a draft fire management plan is nearing completion.



The DSE has awarded a small grant to BNCR for further weed control works, but really this is only a drop in the ocean of a 170ha site. We are working hard with the local council to obtain more funds for continued, required weed control work.

The outlook tower along the reservoir wall, is completed, and now provides a safe secure way to review the reservoir, and the view it provides. Toilets and storage facility will commence soon, and will pave the way to allow

the site to be open to more field days and community working bees.

For more information - please contact the CEC office.

Bandicoot Corner

Our furry friends on this 3.5ha protected parcel of land in Bayles, have certainly seen a raft of activity over the last 6 months. In January, Bandicoot Corner successfully received a Community Grant from the PPWCMA to ensure the Southern Brown bandicoot Habitat is further protected and enhanced, with much money going towards revegetation, pest plant and animal control, monitoring and maintenance programs. The DSE Bush Guardians program also awarded funds towards weed control works, so we anticipate by the middle of next year, we can just about call Bandicoot Corner "weed free".

Various field days and site visits have been held on the site, with Bayu from Indonesia, Women's on Farms, CEC Committee and Staff, and later in the year we will be holding a planting day to ensure habitat for the Bandicoots are of the highest quality. Susan Davies, the CEC Secretary, and Westernport Swamp



landcare Secretary has been working tirelessly on these various projects within the site, working with neighbors, developing "visitor notes" and general monitoring of the site.

We welcome any volunteers willing to assist in monitoring and maintenance works - please contact the CEC office for more information.

Guys Hill

Situated on the Cardinia Creek, Guys Hill has only recently been given to the CEC to manage for biodiversity values, at the moment security breaches from 4WD's are a major concern, with multiple gates and security barriers destroyed to date. Some weed control and revegetation works have been undertaken within the reserve, and we were awarded a Melbourne Water Community Grant to further maintenance works, weed control and revegetation ensuring this can become a great place to visit in the future.

For more information on how you may be able to assist this reserve area, please contact the CEC office.



MEMBER GROUP UPDATES

Landcare Group Review - Labertouche 2009-2010

Well into 2010 now, we have been enthusiastic to continue to replace the vegetation lost in the Black Saturday Bushfires. Members will continue to re-vegetate those regions which have been previously planted, but destroyed by the fires, and some new projects also exist.

The community has also been very lucky to see the generosity of the wider the community. If it was not for local school groups, other landcare groups and wonderful members of the community we would not have seen over 20,000 trees planted in the region. We had two big planting days and saw a large amount of trees go into the ground. It has been a busy year but each project has allowed Labertouche to become a little more greener.

Direct seeding is continuing to be popular for the farmers in Labertouche region and we are seeing some good success. In 2010 more direct seeding will also take place. Our hope in 2010 is for good weather, just right amount of rain and sunshine, to allow all the new plants and future plants to grow.

We also use this opportunity to thank all other landcare groups and the Cardinia Environment Coalition who have provided us with amazing support in 2009. Your time and efforts have been much appreciated.

Tammy Evans, Labertouche secretary

CEC Projects

So far in 2010, funding may have been light on, but the work load has not! The CEC successfully secured 2 PPWCMA/Melb Water community grants for public land, 2 DSE Bush Guardian Grants for Public Land, Landcare Membership recruitment grant, Administration Grant from GVEHO, support from Melbourne Water for landcare community engagement, Andrews Foundation for the new nursery site, plus have continued to work through past funding projects, including DAFF Healthy Soils, Stock and pasture, WPGA Sustainable Agriculture, PPWCMA Woodlands Protection, Land Stewardship in Westernport, Coca Cola Youth in Action, various public land projects nearing completion, including the Management plan for Guys Hill.

In the next few weeks we hope to announce we have been successful in a number of projects, including a Soil carbon testing project, Biolinks revegetation project, Bushfire recovery support project, Land Stewardship over 3 years, and more revegetation projects for Landcare.

We thank all contributors to the funding opportunities provided to the CEC and landcare, and look forward to greater opportunities in the coming financial year.

For more information, call any of our field staff:

- Peter Ronalds
– Sustainable Agriculture Project Officer
- Bridgette McCallum
– Landcare Facilitator and Project Co-Ordinator
- Geoff Boyes – NRM Project Officer



Bayu and Sari had to take off their shoes during the visit to Bunyip Sanctuary. Pictured here with CEC Vice-President and President, Elizabeth Fraser and Joan Szalman.

Sister Projects Across the Sea - Sarah Maclagan

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could not believe that the beautiful expanses of cheerful yellow flowers (Capeweed) were actually weeds!

The tour was followed by a lovely lunch with Mayor Bill Pearson at the Cardinia Cultural Centre. After our guests' bellies were extremely full (Australian portions are much larger than Indonesian ones, we learned), Bayu and Sari presented the CEC with a beautiful traditional Balinese painting depicting the Bali Starling, a major focus of their conservation work back home. This painting now hangs in the CEC's meeting room in Pakenham.

Read in the next CEC Newsletter about Sarah's exciting visit to Bali to the these efforts to save the Bali Starling.



SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

Indigenous Nursery & Seedbank – Works are well underway!

A wild and windy day on April 28th, saw staff and volunteers blown off their feet as they pulled, stretched, nailed and managed to put up shade cloth, and lay



down weed mat within the erected shade house frame for the Nursery. This meant that plants were able to be immediately located on this site, in preparation for the upcoming planting season.

Thanks to funding secured from the Andrews Foundation, work now is well underway in the final planning stages of erecting a office and potting bay shed.

Many thanks must go to the tireless efforts of all volunteers and staff assisting this project getting to an end—Adele will be SO glad to be able to have all plants in one location very soon.

Seed Collection – Vital to Biodiversity

More than ever the Indigenous Nursery and Seed Bank are of importance as we are constantly reminded of the diminishing diversity within the ecosystems, which leads to unbalanced natural resources and degradation of the land.

The CEC Nursery will be a reasonably central facility for the central Westernport Catchment. Activities are required to collect, process and store

seed of diverse genetic type. Until one day, someone can use this seed to restore what has been lost.

As a seed collector of 20 years, I see changes every year (or two...) in the positioning of vegetation. Some plants that I have collected from are no longer available in certain areas. Good-bye to that gene pool! Soon, certain plants will not be able to reproduce.

Further study (a lot of data is already collected) and recording is vital as to how each plant species pollinate successfully and how each of these species should be linked in the landscape; such as the distance required for

insects to transfer genetically diverse material which ensures strong viable seed. Large breaks void of particular species reliant on insects will fragment, isolate and cause the gradual decline of 'plants' that are adaptable to a wide range of environmental conditions. For example, how can plants adapt and maintain drought / salt tolerance several kilometres from the coast if the vegetation doesn't link up? This is the reason why the biolinks are so important. Especially with the uncertainty of how the landscape / water levels may change with climate change. For these reasons every planting and remnant site is different and needs careful consideration and planning.

Coca Cola Foundation—Youth in Action in Westernport

Via a tax deductible donation into the CEC Biolinks Environment Fund from the Coca Cola Foundation, Alison

Livermore has been working with an outstanding group of students from Drouin Secondary College to start changing attitudes and lift the awareness of the environmental needs of our area.



The past 6 months has seen the students learn and participate in seed collecting, propagating, assessing sites,

and now the final planting. The culmination of this program saw Arron Wood do a special presentation at Drouin Secondary College, followed by 1000 trees being planted in a Labertouche fire effected property.

This Youth In Action has been a valuable program to encourage youth within the region into action - and hope we see future support for similar programs into the future.

For more information on such programs, please contact the office

Yanggai Projects Make real Impact

Yanggai Ecological Services has been busy this year with Cardinia Shire 4 Towns weed control along road side reserves program in full swing – with more than 20 sites attacked around Beaconsfield, targeting blackberry, ragwort and pittostrium. This programs has been operational over 3 years, so a dramatic drop in weed cover has been visible along these road sides.

Bunyip Sanctuary Stage 3 Carbon sink had a direct seed program undertaken in late 2009, and already successful strike rates are evident. Work was undertaken for Casey City Council

for Leachate Pond Stevenson's Rd Land-fill, where more than 4000 plants were planted within this site. DSE employed Yanggai to undertake more blackberry control works along the Bunyip River. SPAusnet had some revegetation requirements under some powerlines they had cleared, and have also employed Yanggai to plant around the substation at Officer, more than 3000 plants.



Weed control works – Bunyip River

Overall, Yanggai has been moving along nicely, and welcome Landcare members or other general community members who may need weed control works, to contact Yanggai for a free quote. Unfortunately Erland resigned from Yanggai last month and we are currently in the process of employing a new field manager. We thank Erland for his tireless efforts and input into Yanggai over his time and wish him well into the future.

Graeme Robertson - VALE

Graeme Robertson peacefully passed away on June 6th after a battle with cancer. Graeme joined the Cardinia Catchment Landcare Group at its inception in 2000 and was a very active landcare member at planting days & meetings, inspecting sites and volunteering at the Upper Beaconsfield Indigenous Nursery. Graeme built the shade house and the tables to hold the plants at the nursery and helped build the planting trailer. Graeme was a quiet, unassuming and committed member of the CCLG and a caring environmentalist. He upgraded his property in Upper Beaconsfield with planting and weed control and was always willing to help with any and all projects and plantings. While we will miss Graeme dearly, his contribution to the CCLG in particular and the environment in general has been invaluable over the years and his quiet nature will always be remembered.

Our thoughts are with Graeme's family, especially his wife Lorraine.



PRIVATE LAND MANAGEMENT

Western Port Catchment Landcare Network - Central Region Chairperson's Report

The last 12 to 18 months has been a hectic time for many with the bushfire recovery process still underway—re-planting and building construction. WPCNLN and CEC have played a significant role in securing funding, and have provided access to field staff such as Peter and Bridgette to assist in the organization and efforts within this re-recovery process.

The 2010 planting season, though is now upon us, with over 30,000 plants ready to go into the ground. Current funding of projects whilst limited, all groups

need to focus on activities that can be done with limited funds—such as weed control, such as Patterson Curse and Ragwort, not to mention the forever coming blackberry—for those that attended the Black Berry Field day in February—time to be prepared now for the upcoming eradication season.

Volunteers are always required to assist in various weed control works within the CEC public land portfolio, so if any groups want to organize a working party—please contact the CEC office.

For further information contact Jim Armstrong 5628 7777



National Landcare Forum – Attendee Perspective

“Celebrate, communicate, invigorate” was the theme for the National Landcare Forum held in Adelaide this year from March 23 to 25. These words rang true for Ian and me and the six hundred and forty delegates from around the country and overseas who attended the three days at the Morphettville Racecourse.

The program was diverse and full, and the opportunities for networking were great. At the start of the conference with the deep, spiritual sounds of the didgeridoo, the clapping of sticks and the beat of bare feet conjuring up the ancient relationship of kangaroos and emus with the land, the aboriginal welcome had a very grounding effect.

The Hon. Tony Burke MP, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry endorsed the role of Landcare in Food Security including landcare as the best method of foreign aid. He emphasised Landcare's role in adaptation to climate change and improved soil carbon sequestration, and he was enthusiastic about the volunteer outcomes in Landcare. He pointed out that Landcare needs to concentrate on outcomes and short term projects to attract volunteers in the younger generations rather than concentrating on process. He acknowledged that funding needed to move back to the community more than it had recently.

Kim Chance, Chair of the Australian Landcare Council talked of a National framework to give clarity, flexibility and continuity to the Landcare movement. Remarkably an enormous workshop was held the following day when we all gathered in groups of ten or so to go through the summary of submissions to date for the framework. Ideas were collected from the delegates and there was opportunity to voice these and record them for the subcom-

mittee pulling the framework together. Watch this space.

There were many interesting scientific papers presented from a range of scientists both at the plenary sessions and again next day at one of the elective session streams. Dr Peter Cosier (try googling “Optimizing carbon in the Australian Landscape by the Wentworth group) was enthusiastic about the economic opportunities presented by putting a price on Carbon and storing carbon through healthy landscapes.

Julian Cribb, Science communicator, spoke on the global food and water crisis. He talked about the world being at or near not only peak oil and peak phosphorous but peak fish, peak land and peak water - in other words, ecological overshoot in the face of rising population. The world spends 40% more on defence than food. He saw solutions in recycling, redesigning cities, redesigning our diets and in new energy systems.

Ian and I took the opportunity at lunch time to have a tour of the racecourse wetlands which take the storm water from the surrounds and not only create a pleasant environment but actually enable water to be pumped into the aquifer to assist with Adelaide's very depleted supplies.

The end of day 1 saw 540 of us seated for a fabulous dinner, a funny and insightful speaker in Peter Lewis from Landline, good networking, and great music and dancing to follow!

The second day enabled us to choose from 8 different themes of speakers – so we went to New Science and later to cutting edge landcare farming. One particularly interesting speaker was Tony St Clair CEO of MBD Energy who spoke on using algae to convert CO² to energy, and to get oil for energy, for fuel, stockfeed,

CEC & WPCNLN Events Calendar

JULY

- 23 JUL RED ENERGY PLANTING DAY - HAREWOOD
- 26 JUL FARM PLAN 21 - WARRAGUL COMMENCEMENT

SEPTEMBER

- 23 SEP CEC AGM

OCTOBER

- 23 - 24 OCT GO-COUNTRY - LANDCARE/CEC STALL

**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO
REGISTER YOUR EVENT IN THE CALENDAR
PLEASE CONTACT THE CEC OFFICE.**



nutrochemicals, pharmaceuticals, food source particularly at present in Japan, for plastics and for fertiliser. The oil is high in Omega 3, and the algae produce twice their body weight every 24 hours using CO². They currently have an MOU with Loy Yang power station to build an algae farm for the CO² piped off from the power station.

The final day involved us going on a bus tour of a choice of 7 destinations. We went to the northern plains of Adelaide where the land level is increasingly below sea level so salinity is high. We saw some horrific examples of land and sea degradation, but some wonderful land care projects to try to address the massive problems or at least cope with them. These included a sea wall construction to protect houses in a very real rising sea level situation, mangroves adapting to stagnant water with hydrogen sulphide gas from anaerobic bacteria in an industrial and salinity affected area, monitoring of almond orchard water table where the salinity was a daily threat to the trees unless managed properly, planting of native desert species around a hydroponic horticulture business which eliminated both his weed and pest problem in stark contrast to his neighbours over a wide area, and one of several beautiful man made wetlands which are assisting with both salinity and pumping water into the aquifer.

The notes from this conference are expected to be available on the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forests (DAFF) website. Take a look – it was a great conference.

More information from Elizabeth Fraser - CEC Committee Vice President and Ian Fraser - Deep Creek Landcare member.