



Barrabool Hills Landcare Newsletter

June 2019

Attendees at the water field day and a woolly local watching the action.

barraboolhillslandcare@gmail.com

What's On.

June/July Date to be confirmed – Planting days to reinstate ephemeral wetland

August 21st – AGM Guest speaker Kenneth Harrison AM, MBA, BBus, FCPA, FAICD Chairman of the Board of the Royal Botanic Gardens and local member of the Barrabool Hills Landcare group



Some of the interim committee members of the Friends of the Barwon group, at the launch on the 17th of May, from L-R Cameron Steele, Andrea Montgomery, Sarah Brien, Tim Trottier, Kaye Rodden, Lach Gordon, Angie Poole.

Kindly printed and supported by

DARREN CHEESEMAN MP - Member for South Barwon

If you need help with a State Government matter please call me on 03 5243 5222 or

email Darren.Cheeseman@parliament.vic.gov.au

For community updates follow me on FaceBook.

"Funded from Parliamentary Budget"

What do we love more - our pet cats or our native fauna?

I remember reading about a unique species of flightless perching wren that lived on Stephens Island, which is just above the South Island of New Zealand.



Stephens Island flightless wren.

The new lighthouse keeper brought his pet cat for company and of course he let it wander the small island at will. He began to notice small dead birds left on his doorstep and eventually sent a sample away to be identified. Ornithologists were ecstatic because he had found a new species of wren unique to Stephens Island. Delight turned to disbelief when they discovered that the lighthouse keeper's cat had singlehandedly wiped them all out.

Recently we have all been shocked to hear that over a million of the world's species (that's 12.5%) are threatened with extinction. This same report is pretty damning of Australia where over 100 flora and fauna have gone extinct since European settlement. If you don't like bad news then look away now, because more than 1,770 of our species are currently listed as threatened or endangered. Yes, you guessed it, our captivating and unique marsupials are in serious trouble and the three main culprits are;

- Loss of habitat and
- Predation by cats & foxes.

Predator cat with bird.

Cats are the single biggest threat to Australian mammals. They hunt, kill and eat bilbies, numbats, quokkas, quolls, bandicoots, birds, lizards and frogs in every corner of the



country. The official government source states that 'there are millions of feral cats in Australia, killing many millions of native animals every day'.

If you feel uncomfortable reading this then you're not alone. I hate bad news but bad news about the environment also makes me feel powerless. It seems like a problem that's too big to understand let alone fix. Though doing something positive can be very empowering and from 'little things big things grow' to quote Paul Kelly.

A large feral cat in the Hills, pictured marking on an ineffective homemade cat trap.



What can we do?

I think as a nation we have to ask the hard question, which do we love more our pet cats or our native fauna?

I hope the answer is a resounding vote for our native fauna.

How good would it be if every Australian family agreed to keep their pet cat inside at night? The Australian Government is taking action, aiming to cull 2 million feral cats by 2020 but we all have to do our bit.

We can learn from the experience of the Stephens Island lighthouse keeper – cats are silent super predators and they are busy while we sleep. Keeping our pet cats in at night and tackling feral cats will make native habitat on our farms safe for our vulnerable species.

Creating high quality wildlife habitat on farms is a critical part of the solution. For ideas on how to design great habitat for wildlife, have a look at the last edition of this newsletter and Google 'Revegetation – mimicking nature' on the recreating the country website.

We can learn from the tragedy on Stephens Island and take action to protect our native fauna before it's too late.

Stephen Murphy

Sustainable Biorich Landscapes

www.recreatingthecountry.com.au/blog

Friends of the Barwon (FOTB)



Friends of the
BARWON

"A healthy, flowing and life sustaining Barwon River system is both our goal and our obligation to the generations to come."

There was an excited buzz in the air at Provenance Wines, Fyansford on Friday 17th May, and it wasn't because of the pending federal election the next day!

A gathering of 150 "friends" and partners met to

celebrate the launch of the new community group, "Friends of the Barwon" and also the book compiled by Jennifer Morrow and Peter Greig, which documents the trek over 4 years of the intrepid walkers/kayakers/floaters who traversed the entire length of the Barwon from its source to the sea.



L-R Lach Gordon FOTB, Vaughan Lamb Bendigo Bank, Peter Greig FOTB at the launch.

Financial support for the launch was received from the Bendigo Bank, the CCMA, Surf Coast Shire and Golden Plains Shire and the Upper Barwon Landcare Network, Geelong Landcare Network and our own group.

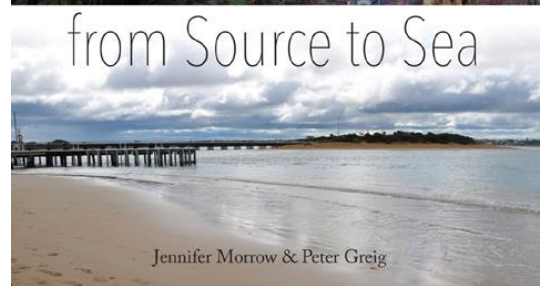
We have previously covered the emergence of the friends group over the last couple of years, and in fact some representatives attended our last AGM to enlist our communities help to grow the organisation. The Executive of the Barrabool Hills Landcare group also at its last meeting agreed to provide \$500 sponsorship towards holding the launch.

The Friends group has been established to make the case for greater investment into securing the health and wellbeing of the Barwon and its tributaries, the Moorabool and Leigh.

The key objectives of the group are:

- To develop and promote an independent voice to advocate for restoration and protection of the Barwon River system through coordinated, effective, sound, and environmentally focused, water and land-use policy.
 - To build and maintain relationships with all those who care for the Barwon River system including government, non-government groups and organisations, commercial, residential and recreational.
 - To establish a sustainable funding base and resources that can support group activity and without compromising our commitment to strong, independent advocacy.
 - To advocate for clearly documented and scientifically supported baseline for measuring the overall health of the Barwon River catchment based upon environmental stream flow, water quality, riparian vegetation and overall ecological health.
 - To facilitate and advocate for resourcing to develop and make publicly available educational materials and programs which provide information about the state of the Barwon catchment and promote the ecological, social and indigenous values of the river and the importance of improving its overall health. Copies of the beautiful coffee table style book, **Walking the Barwon "From Source to Sea"**, are available from friendsofthebarwon@gmail.com All profits will be going to the new Friends of the Barwon organisation.
- The group is now open for membership and if you are interested in joining the group, please also contact Sarah Brien on the above email address.

**Kaye
Rodden**



FERAL FEAST

The wonderful rabbit recipe book compiled by the group and published in 2016 is now into its third reprint after a run of orders from across the nation following the ABC Country Hour report and ABC Rural Facebook post, noted in our April Newsletter. The Executive Group at its last meeting approved the printing of another 500 copies, which brings to

900 that have now been produced. It looks like the decision has already paid off with the National Trust purchasing some of the new print run to stock at Barwon Park.

Copies of the book are also available from Geoff and Joan Anson's Barwon Ridge Winery and the Maze on Merrawarp Road, Barrabool and of course, from the group itself. (barraboolhillslandcare@gmail.com).

Equipment for loan to members

The following equipment is owned by the Barrabool Hills Landcare Group and is available for use by members:

- 400 litre spray unit trailer mounted
- 2 Kidney tree buckets
- 1 Potti Putki Tree planters
- 2 Hamilton Tree planters
- 1 60 litre motorbike mounted spray unit
- 1 Rabbit Smoker (not for culinary purposes)



Rabbit smoking impacts rabbit health, haha.

Members are requested to return all equipment to Trevor promptly after use.

Contact Trevor Jones on 0407 009 855.

Water for your farm. What are your options? Field day Report



The presenters talking water, at the field day.

Everything was as dry as chips, and so the discussions about how to manage water across a range of farming operations was more than relevant

at a Field Day we hosted at Murnong Farming in late April. Little did we know that a week later the *break* would come, and we would all collectively sigh with relief as the landscape greened and water trickled into our dams and waterways!

The field day was a real partnership between the many different players in water management and gave a real integrated insight into all the factors that need to be considered when deciding on how to plan for the many competing demands for water on your farm.

Of course, we need to start with Josh Walter, the manager of Murnong Farming, who has to juggle the water use of a free range piggery with the demands of his sheep breeding and fattening operations. Then there was Clem Sturmfels from Ag Vic (Ararat) who is an authority on managing water infrastructure on farms, including dam construction and siting. Clem also emphasised the importance of water quality on animal health and production, a point which was reinforced by Jim Seager whose practical experience in the Barrabool Hills was very valuable in the following discussions. Angus Ramsay from Southern Rural Water talked about the legalities of collecting/harvesting water and Tony Byrne from the CCMA discussed the funding opportunities available for fencing and revegetation of stream sides. A number of those attending were eager to have their dam water tested by Deidre Murphy from the Waterwatch team, who also discussed how we could become more involved as Citizen Scientists, in monitoring the health of our river systems.

Once again our amazing "catering team" headed by

Christa Jones provided a wonderful spread of food during the day, which was most appreciated as we all needed something to help us stay warm on what was probably the first cold day this year.

Over 35 members attended the field day, and the feedback was very positive, many commenting that what they had learned would change the way they managed their scarce farm water supplies in the future. So, a very successful event.

Our thanks to Nerissa Lovric from AG Vic Colac for helping to organise the day, and of course to Josh Walter and Murnong Farming for generously hosting the event. *Kaye Rodden*



A magnificent perspective looking from the southern boundary of the ephemeral wetland site due north towards Mt Pollock, photo - Kaye Rodden.

10,000 plants for the Brolgas Ephemeral Wetland Project – Taking shape.

The steering committee of Stephen Murphy, Jim Seager, Kaye Rodden and Maddie Steel, from the Barrabool Hills Landcare group, met on 8th May to plan for the busy planting schedule on the site for later in the year.

A pair of Brolgas at the site last year, photo - Andrew Steel.

The owners of the property have already made significant progress, fencing the site of 9 hectares and discing the outer perimeter where the larger trees and shrubs are to be planted.



There was also considerable excitement with further observations of a brolga pair in the region, so our planting of what will be over 10,000 indigenous trees, shrubs and grasses to re-establish this wetland, is truly justified.

The steering committee created some photo points so that we can monitor and document the change in the site over time.

We will be putting a call out for volunteers in about a months time to start planting some of the silver tussock in the centre of the site. The remaining plants will be going in in July/August and it will then be “all hands on deck”!

If you would like to register to help now, so that we can start to organise planting teams and their time availability, that would be very helpful. We will need many hands to plant, guard, carry provisions and just support the crews. If you think that you may be able to garner some help from your workmates, what a great idea!!! A great way for a company to establish some green credits!

Please contact Kaye Rodden for further details or to register.

Kaye Rodden

Victorian Rabbit Action Network receives UN Award!

The Victorian Rabbit Action Network (VRAN) initiative has received a UN Public Service Award for ‘delivering more inclusive and equitable services to leave no one behind’.

This award is internationally competitive, and the most prestigious international recognition of excellence in public service. VRAN was up against Western Europe and the United States, United Kingdom, New Zealand and Canada. Whilst this is an award for VRAN, this achievement reflects the significant effort that was committed to the application by Mike Reid, Program Manager of Biosecurity & Agriculture Services at Agriculture Victoria and his associates.

Congratulations to the team, the steering committee and importantly the community who have embraced this program with such enthusiasm.

Kaye Rodden

What bird is this?

Ric Walter guessed the identity of the bird in the April BHLG newsletter correctly, well done Ric. The bird was an Australasian pipit (*Anthus novaeseelandiae*) formerly called Richard's pipit, a well-camouflaged ground-dwelling bird found in open country and a range of habitats from wet heaths to dry shrublands and open woodland clearings. Australasian Pipits forage in a jerky, darting motion, stopping to perch on low stones or shrubs, wagging their tails up and down and feed on insects, their larvae and seeds. Australasian Pipits form breeding pairs after an elaborate courtship ritual and form their nest in a depression in the ground, sometimes sheltered by a grass tussock and lined with grasses and hairs. This issues mystery bird lives in woodlands & shrublands in the Hills and is one of Australia's finest songsters, it is very curious and likes to have a good stare a humans passing by. The pictured bird is the female of the species and is significantly different to the male in colouration. Email the newsletter editor with your 'what bird is this?' answer, the first person

to answer correctly will have their name published in the next newsletter. *Tim Harte*

Contact us.

President	Kaye Rodden	0438 317 499
	nidgee@reachnet.com.au	
Vice President	Jim Seager	0409 935 700
	ejimseager@bigpond.com	
Secretary	Joan Anson	0407 305 966
	joan.e.anson@gmail.com	
Treasurer	Anthony Jones	0419 894 098
	anthony@bjc.id.au	
Newsletter	Tim Harte	0431 601 529
	balletcadet@gmail.com	
GIS mapping	Geoff Anson	0418 324 632
	geoffanson@mac.com	
Equipment	Trevor Jones	0407 009 855
	Email: barraboolhillslandcare@gmail.com	
	Facebook: barraboolhillslandcare	
	Instagram: barraboolhillslandcaregroup	
	Web site: www.barraboolhillslandcare.org.au	



Let your fellow members know what is happening in the Barrabool Hills. Contributions to the newsletter are welcomed. Send articles and photos to Tim Harte (*balletcadet@gmail.com*), deadline for next issue is 17/07/19

Members are able to advertise their Barrabool Hills business in the newsletter @ \$30 per issue (space allowing). Ads. are approximately 50 mm x 70 mm, and will be printed provided there is space. A special thanks goes to the Leigh family for distributing the newsletter.