



WINTER 2007 NEWSLETTER

**THE CARDINIA ENVIRONMENT COALITION INC (CEC)** is an umbrella group comprising 25 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. We have recently adopted a new structure to better reflect our work. The work has been split into six portfolio areas as outlined in the diagram below.



## New Home for the CEC

The CEC will be moving into new premises in July. The Cardinia Shire Council has kindly provided the CEC with a house on the corner of Snodgrass and Main Street, Pakenham. The lease is for an initial period of 12-18 months.

Please note that our mailing address of PO Box 875, Pakenham, 3810 will remain the same both during and after the move.

The Committee has developed a concept plan outlining a proposed Pakenham Sustainability Precinct on vacant land adjoining the house site.

The concept plan has been presented to Cardinia Shire. The CEC committee believes that the precinct would provide a unique and invaluable educational resource for the general public and school groups. It would include examples of low water indigenous gardens, displays of energy efficient products, and lots of practical ideas for households on how they can live more sustainably.

The proposal has been endorsed by the Andrews Foundation. The trustees have indicated their interest in potentially supporting the project if it is endorsed by the Cardinia Shire. Copies of the plan are available at the CEC office.

## CEC AGM

**23 AUGUST 2007  
PAKENHAM HALL**

CNR JOHN & HENRY STS, PAKENHAM  
(MELWAYS REF 317 E8)

The Annual General Meeting of the Cardinia Environment Coalition Inc. will be held on Thursday 23rd August, 2007 from 7pm at Pakenham Hall.

Member groups will shortly be receiving an information pack about the AGM

## CEC ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

### CALLING FOR NOMINATIONS

The Cardinia Environment Coalition Inc is pleased to announce nominations for our inaugural CEC Achievement Awards. NOMINATION FORMS are available from Lucy at the CEC office and need to be submitted by 14th August, 2007.

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## CONTACT US

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## Private Land Management

### Western Port Catchment Landcare Network – Central Region

June 2007 saw the exciting milestone of the assessment of the 600th Western Port Catchment Landcare Network project on private land since its inception in 1999. Requests from landholders continue to flow in to the WPCLN office for land management advice, fencing, revegetation and weed control. The effects of the drought this year has made people realize the importance of protecting stock, soil & pastures from the hot and drying conditions in summer. Those who had shelterbelts planted several years ago are now enjoying the benefits and have found that pasture grass was able to hang on in the shaded areas and regenerate quickly with first rains. Monitoring by the WPCLN over the summer showed that temperatures in unprotected paddocks soared to 20 degrees C above the temperatures in the paddocks protected by the shelterbelts.



Areas of interest in 2007 will focus on undertaking works to implement the Biolinks or vegetation corridors mapped last year. This will eventually connect up across the catchment and a new soil health demonstration will be conducted at Bunyip. The project will test different methods of improving soil by encouraging soil micro-flora in a farm situation. The

demonstration will run for a year and field days will be held to allow those interested to see the results at each stage.

Other field days to be held include direct seed demonstrations and the installation of test wells to monitor groundwater levels at the WPCLN salinity hotspots. Landholders interested in attending any of these workshops and/or applying for WPCLN projects can call the CEC office on 5941 8446. **[Julie Weatherhead]**

#### AGRICULTURE EMISSIONS PROJECT

The Agriculture Emissions Project is an exciting program funded by the Victorian Government's Sustainability Fund. It is a 3 year program run in partnerships with the Western Port Greenhouse Alliance and the Bass Coast Landcare Network. Five farmers are participating in 2007 from our catchment and another 10 farms will participate in both 2008 and 2009. Participants will receive funding for large scale revegetation projects via tubestock & direct seed.

All farms are large commercial farms will also receive a Greenhouse audit by an independent auditor. This audit will provide a range of information including levels of greenhouse gasses emitted from their property and the levels of gasses that are sequestered on their property. Landholders will also receive advice regarding the management and reduction of their emissions.

#### SALINITY

The Salinity Alert project is funded through the National Landcare Program. The project provides funding for landholders to undertake salinity management works. It also includes a salinity monitoring program. Findings to date include increased salinity readings in dams & creeks etc, due to the high evaporation rates and low inflows from rainfall. Further results obtained through monitoring salt levels in soil reveal a significant increase in salinity in the top 10cm when compared with samples from a depth of 40cm. This is due to evaporation & possibly applications of fertilisers that are high in sodium.

#### BEEF AND DAIRY

The Beef & Dairy Sustainable Farming Systems Project has been funded through the National Landcare Program. This highly successful project continues to grow & attract an increasing number of farmers mainly from the Labertouche, Longwarry, Lardner, Jindivick & Bunyip areas. Over 25 farmers recently completed land management training and there is a current waiting list for farmers wishing to participate in the Beef & Dairy program. Highlights in the past year have included the soil health workshops (attracted approx 100 participants from most of the Landcare groups), several field days, soil health training nights and the ongoing success of direct seeding (in 2006 over 9.5km of shelterbelts were sown on 12 properties).

**[Peter Ronalds]**



## Public Land Management

### Beaconsfield Nature Conservation Reserve News



The CEC manages this beautiful reserve on the site of the former Beaconsfield Reservoir. A management plan for the BNCR is being compiled and should be in draft stage by September 2007. Forty members of the Berwick and Maroondah groups of the Australian Plants Society visited the BNCR on April 29th. During the 2 hour guided walk, visitors observed natural bush land, with evidence of wildfires, cool burns, grasses and orchids along the western firebreak, changes in vegetation along the

shoreline and the wildflower displays on exposed gravel banks. Orchids have apparently been hard to find this autumn, so enthusiasts were prepared to travel many kilometres when they heard that orchid sightings were guaranteed at the B.N.C.R. During their May 12th visit, members of the Orchid Society identified 8 species, bringing the progressive total to about 30. **[Ian Chisholm]**



View from the outlet tower at BNCR



## Communication Strategy

The CEC engaged a consultant to create a Communications Strategy. This strategy has now been completed and presented to the CEC Committee. The main outcome of the strategy will be to improve both internal and external communications and improve public awareness of the CEC. Now that this work is complete the CEC Committee, Staff and the Communications Coordinator will begin the implementation of this strategy.



## Sustainability, Planning & Environmental Advocacy

Currently the CEC receives a fortnightly planning permit application list from the Cardinia Shire. Of concern to the CEC is the illegal clearing of vegetation and understorey, and illegal or excessive use and developments of land. Council has been very positive in responding to queries this year. However, Council relies on public reports to trigger investigations so if you have any local concerns, please contact them. If you are not satisfied with the outcome, please write to your Councillor and request more resources be spent on this vital area. The CEC also made recent comment on the public submission regarding the Port of Hastings Development.



## Businesses

### Yanggai Ecological Services Pty Ltd

Yanggai Ecological Services (YES) Pty Ltd commenced operation in 2006. As a not-for-profit company owned by the CEC Inc Yanggai aims to provide a range of environmental management and restoration services. All profits are returned to the CEC to continue our vital work in the local area. The Yanggai staff are Dan Robertson, Natural Resource Project Officer and Tara Bryant, Natural Resource Project Officer Trainee.



Yanggai has enjoyed great success in its first year and continues to grow. Although Yanggai is still in its infancy it has won a number of contracts from local councils, private landholders and government agencies. Work undertaken to date by the Yanggai team includes planting, weed control and ranger duties at the B.N.C.R and Bandicoot Corner. If you are interested in contracting Yanggai to undertake work please contact the CEC office ph 5941 8446 or email [cec@dcsi.net.au](mailto:cec@dcsi.net.au).

### Indigenous Nursery & Seedbank

The CEC Indigenous nursery in Tynong North is based on the ethical production of indigenous plants and focuses on local seed provenance (therefore it is very different to that of a commercial nursery). Plants are distributed to landholders who undertake Landcare projects through the Western Port Catchment Landcare Network. Other local indigenous nurseries are also involved in the process of providing plants for particular areas. The nursery offers educational experience to volunteers / students to gain knowledge and work experience on the operations of an indigenous plant nursery. The Direct Seed Bank is coordinated by the Nursery Manager, Adele Richardson, and is similar in ethics and distribution.



A Yanggai planting project in 2007.

To date 45,685 plants have been potted / direct sown (to 1.6.07). The nursery attracts many hard working volunteers who are at present working on compiling an identification kit comprised of botanical pressings and seed pods samples. Volunteers also assist with many other jobs for example the seed cleaning day on the 11th May, 2007. In addition to the volunteers the CEC nursery also participates in the Work for The Dole Scheme. A new "work for the Dole" person started on 10th May.

## MEMBER GROUP UPDATES - a sample of the work undertaken by local groups

### Lardner and District Landcare Group

A new and enthusiastic Landcare group has been formed at Lardner. Operating since late last year, thirteen keen members have joined up.

The first major event held this year was a bushwalk, plant identification day on Di Bellham's property at Hallora. All were impressed by the pristine, untouched nature of the bush. A barbeque at the event allowed for much socialising and discussion.

In May, Lardner and District Landcare held its first major tree planting on a road easement adjacent to Rob and Carol Tylee's property in Cobbledick Road, Drouin South. On a beautiful autumn day one thousand trees were planted by members and a number of welcome guests. Again a highlight was the lunchtime barbeque, not to mention the great afternoon tea put on by Carol. A couple more tree plantings are planned in the next few months along with Waterwatch training. **[Mike Sayer]**

### Jindivick Landcare Group

The Jindivick Landcare group is well into its 2007 planting program, with around 4500 trees being planted by the group to date. Individual members are planning on planting a further 4000 to 5000 trees in the coming months. The group has about 25 active members, and typically gets 25 to 35 people at plantings days, and has well developed planting processes. Usually 750 trees are planted and guarded in 2 to 3 hours, followed by a barbecue lunch.

There will be a Planet Ark Day planting on July 27 and 29 at Kidd Park Reserve. This is a community planting involving the local primary school and other community groups, and is part of a 2 year program to plant a 1 hectare area of Kidd Park Reserve, the local sports ground. **[Peter Ronalds]**

### Upper Beaconsfield Conservation Group

The Upper Beaconsfield Conservation Group was formed in 1983. Currently there are eleven financial members. The pool of

prospective members is stressed by demand from thirty-six other organizations in Upper Beaconsfield.

Members of the group assisted the Shire with evaluation of roadsides in relation to the quality of surviving native vegetation. This project covered the whole of the present Cardinia Shire. Assistance was also given with mammal surveys undertaken in Critchley Parker Jnr Reserve, Chambers Reserves and E. A. Owen Conservation Reserve. Walking trail pamphlets for the last two were produced.

UBCG has published two books: 'Upper Beaconsfield, our bushland environment' and 'Wildflowers of the Dandenong Ranges'. A third publication is almost ready for printing. It contains photographs and descriptions of local insects and other very small critters, a part of our fauna that has been previously neglected.

Voluntary consultation services are also provided to the Shire for works in Upper Beaconsfield and surrounds. This includes indigenous plant lists and weed location.

Members of the UBCG were involved with the Ranges Ward weed identification and mapping project earlier this year.

[**Laura Levens**]

### **Bunyip Landcare Group**

The need for a Landcare Group became apparent when the push for a wetland sanctuary was opposed by some members of the then Progress Association. An initial meeting in 1994 attracted over 30 people and a steering committee was formed with Simon Gallon the Chairman.

The priority for the new group was noxious weed control. It was hoped that we could attract mainstream farmers with this non-contentious approach.

After a few years we decided to get together with Labertouche and Cannibal Creek groups to apply for grants made available by Federal and State Governments. This was the start of the Bunyip River Catchment Landcare Project (BRCLP) which then became the Bunyip Catchment Landcare Project (BCLP) and is now known as the Western Port Catchment Landcare Network (WPCLN). There are now 12 Landcare Groups in this network under the umbrella of the Cardinia Environment Coalition.

Towards the end of 2006 Tamara Griffiths suggested she would like to set up an urban sector under Bunyip Landcare Group Inc. Bunyip Urban Landcare Group (BULG) is now up and running with a demonstration site for weed control and replanting set up in A'Beckett Street, Bunyip.

We are continuing to work on projects with WPCLN and several more planting days will occur on completed fencing projects. Spraying weeds on roadsides in conjunction with the relevant landholders has been another project. Headed by Roz McNaught, we now have several areas where this has been carried out and hopefully more to come later this year. [**Andrew Troedel**]

### **Fishers Loop Action and Awareness Group**

This group has been formed by people interested in reinstating the Fishers Loop Track to its former glory in the Gembrook State Forest. The book "100 best walks around Melbourne" by Glenn Tempest describes the Loop. The group plans on holding another working bee soon, and has already developed a brochure in conjunction with the Upper Bunyip Action Group. The idea is to encourage others to use the track and enjoy the surrounding beauty whilst acknowledging the constant threat to the area by clear fell logging.

[**Kelly Brooks-MacMillan**]

### **Cardinia and Surrounds Trust for Nature (TfN) Covenanters Group**

The members of this group have been meeting informally for many years now. The group would like to promote what they do in the area of private land conservation, and join forces with the CEC and member groups in the objective of enhancing and protecting the environment. The entire group meets once per year at a selected property with the TfN staff. Some do voluntary maintenance on the TfN owned property Harbury at Pakenham Upper. It would be ideal to link the TfN mapping with the CEC Biolinks mapping.

### **Southern Victoria Community Action Group**

This group has its own website <http://www.svcag.org/> and is extremely concerned about the quality of environmental and social input into the 8,750 Acre development of the Port of Hastings. This includes a 4 km expansion of the wharf in Western Port Bay and associated rail links. The group has been working very hard this year to raise community awareness of this large-scale project. [**Kelly Brooks-MacMillan**]

### **Tarago Water Monitoring Group**

Formed in October 2004 the Tarago Water Monitoring Group is made-up of a small group (4) of volunteers. The purpose of this group is to monitor the health of the West and East branches of the Tarago River. With advice, encouragement and support of Julie Weatherhead and Anthony Hooper, we joined the Western Port Catchment Water Monitoring Network. Without the CEC and the Water Monitoring Network's help, we would not have been able to continue. We now have good equipment and regular training to ensure the longevity of the group. We monitor monthly at 6 sites testing 12 parameters. For any further information please feel free to contact Betty Tromp on 5628 4418. [**Betty Tromp**]

### **Back Creek Landcare Group**

For a number of years we have been alarmed by the damage done to our Landcare plantings and other vegetation by the deer. From the early days, we have been in contact with John Miller of the Australian Deer Association who has been very helpful in advising us about deer.

In 2005 we had a public meeting in Maryknoll to discuss the deer problem and find out the extent of the damage on

surrounding properties. From this meeting, we encouraged responsible culling through the Australian Deer Association.

Despite culling in rural areas around Maryknoll we have not been able to reduce or eliminate the problem.

Recently, we have carried out a deer survey to ascertain the extent of the problem in 2007. Our next step is to have a private meeting with the public authorities to show them a map with properties affected by deer and to inform them the extent of the problem. [**Vivien Clarke**]



Peter Ronalds Sustainable Agriculture Project Officer with helpers at a recent landcare planting.

#### **CEC STAFF UPDATE**

Three new staff members have commenced at the CEC in 2006-07. Tara Bryant (employed since September, 2006) is a Natural Resource Officer Trainee employed by Yanggai Ecological Services Pty Ltd. Tara works most days with Dan Robertson or Adele Richardson at the CEC Nursery. Tara is nearing completion of a Diploma in Conservation Land Management and is also undertaking her Cert 4 in Horticulture Parks and Gardens.

In January 2007 Lucy Harding joined the CEC team filling the role of Office and Communications Coordinator. Lucy has completed her Master of Science degree in Palaeontology and her undergraduate degree focused on environmental science.

The CEC has recently appointed a new Book Keeper, Carol Hoskins. We are very fortunate to have Carol with us as she has extensive experience working with community based organisations. Carol has taken over from Rose Tickle and we would like to thank Rose and wish her good luck in her future endeavours.

All of the new staff have settled in well and are enjoying the diversity involved with working at the CEC.