



WARRINGAL CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Late Summer Newsletter

Volume 48/two

March/April 2018

Warringal Conservation Society is a local, not-for-profit, community organisation caring for the environment in Banyule.

Formed in 1970, the Society is an active and productive steward of Banyule's environmental heritage.

Join us!!

Warringal Conservation Society is not just a local environment group: it is stimulating, fun and companionable and takes an active role in the wider community.

Single \$20
Family \$25
Pension/student/
unemployed \$15
Life \$200

Articles and photographs for the newsletter are welcome. We may edit for legal, space or other reasons. Opinions expressed in articles are not necessarily those of the Warringal Conservation Society.

Newsletter printed courtesy of Jenny Macklin MP.

MARCH MEETING

Lincoln Kern - Assessment of the ecological values of Banyule Flats and Warringal Parklands.

Lincoln is an ecologist and the managing director of Practical Ecology Pty Ltd . He will report on the assessment of the ecological values of Banyule Flats and Warringal Parkland, completed in 2017 for Banyule City Council, a study based on extended monitoring over two years.

APRIL MEETING

Gary Presland - The Place for a Village: How Nature Has Shaped the City of Melbourne

Dr Gary Presland is an archaeologist, historian and author. His principal interests are in the landscapes and Aboriginal culture of pre-European Melbourne. Gary will talk about how natural landscapes have influenced the contours of the city and how we, in turn, have altered them. He draws on both historical and scientific sources to create a detailed and fascinating picture of diverse landscapes, supporting an enormous range of flora and fauna.

**Meetings on first Thursday of the month*
from 7.30 pm at the Old Shire Offices,
60 Beverley Road.**

**Enter from Buckingham Drive near the Banyule Theatre and
Greening Australia. Melways map 32:D3. All Welcome**

AT A GLANCE

March

Thursday 1st: General meeting at 7.30pm - Banyule Flats and Warringal Parklands

Sunday 4h: Clean Up Australia Day (See news and Events)

April

Thurs 5h: General meeting at 7.30pm - The Place for a Village

Sun 8th - Myna project (See news and Events)

News & Events

Clean Up Australia Day

Sunday March 4th. Time: 10am to 12noon

Meeting Point: Meet on lawn area between Possum Hollow Playground and Beverley Road Wetland. The Banyule Bushland Management four wheel drive will be our base. Wear sturdy shoes and definitely bring gloves and a hat in case it is sunny. A water bottle is good too. Take a minute to register on the official web site - then we will have an idea of who is coming, and the Bush Crew will have a record of participation!

<https://cleanupaustaliaday.org.au/Warringal+Parklands>

More details: Heather 0423 191 977

Indian Myna Project (Darebin)

Sunday 8th April. Time: 10am to 12noon [please arrive at 9.45am so we are ready to commence at 10am]

Meeting Point: Darebin Parklands - actual location TBC

We will learn about the Darebin Parkland's Indian Myna eradication program.

More details closer to the day.

Check WCS Facebook

Event report: February Twilight walk

WCS usually begins the year with a twilight walk and this year we decided to start with a bit of bird watching at the Banyule Swamp. So at 7pm about 25 people gathered at the swamp seats to watch the birds come home, some having a chance to view the birds through Daphne's telescope.

It was a perfect evening for the activity – still and quiet with some cloud cover. After a short history of the WCS and its work in the area, George led the

group (now 36) around the perimeter of the Banyule Flats area.

At the edge of the Banyule Billabong we stopped by the largest remnant river gum to just listen – it was quiet enough to hear the insects coming out from under the bark, and other creatures stirring.

All torches had red filters or cellophane covers over the lenses. George explained that while the animals may be a bit disturbed by the red light, they will continue with their activities, while a white light stuns and blinds them - so they sit motionless and you don't have the benefit of observing their movements and behaviour.

We spotted quite a few Ringtail and Brushtail possums, and two Tawny Frogmouths sat for a while in a low tree for us to admire. Some heard Sugar Glider calls, and we had a chance to taste the ripe, cream coloured berries of the Tree Violet.

Our thanks to George for generously sharing his knowledge and time to make the walk such a success.

Heather Smith



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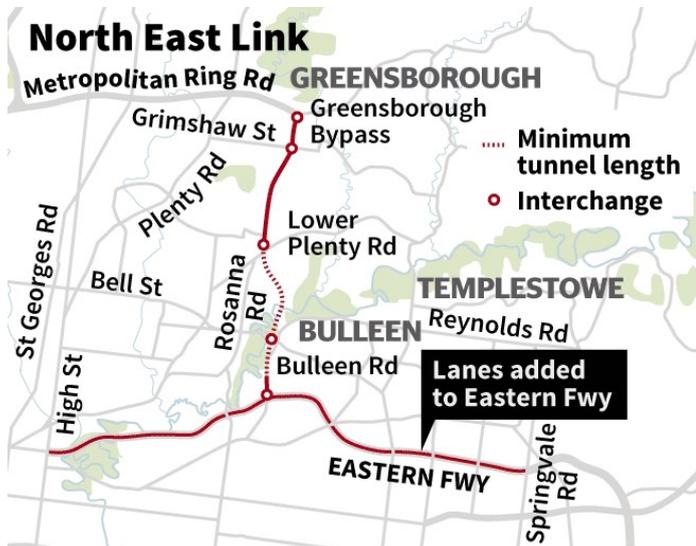
Committee: Anthea Fleming, Celia Smith, Daphne Hards, Dianne Williamson, Doug McNaughton, James Deane, Don Stokes, Michelle Giovas.

News & Events cont.

Environmental impact of North East Link toll road revealed

By Clay Lucas

The Age, 18th February 2018



Construction of tunnels for the North East Link could cause "stress and degradation" to parts of the Yarra River and its tributaries, the Andrews government has conceded.

And at least two creeks are in danger of becoming concrete drains in sections because of the road works.

The potential impact of the toll road has been revealed for the first time in documents filed by the Andrews government with the federal environmental department.

The North East Link is the most expensive toll road project Victoria has ever embarked on, at an expected cost of \$16.5 billion. It includes a widening of the Eastern Freeway from Springvale Road to Hoddle Street, and twin tunnels under housing in Heidelberg, the Yarra River, and the Heide Museum of Modern Art in Bulleen. The project also includes an open-cut surface road and flyovers through Bulleen, and new interchanges on the Metropolitan Ring Road and at Greensborough.

As part of the approvals that must be granted by the federal Department of the Environment and Energy before the road can proceed, the Andrews government has submitted a detailed application including nine separate reports on the impact on the area's hydrology and ecology. The size of the project is made clear in almost 400 pages of application documents. They show the toll road's entire project

area takes up 900 hectares and what is termed the project's "permanent footprint" approximately 190 hectares.

The project's tunnels have been designed to "travel beneath the most ecologically sensitive portion of the referred project area, including the Yarra River, avoiding surface impacts through this area", the application says. While the surface will be undisturbed in the key areas, the tunnelling will have its own impacts, the documents show, because the top of the tunnel will be 24 metres below the bottom of the Yarra River.

One hydrology report found that the tunnel under the Yarra and the Banyule wetlands had the potential to disturb groundwater substantially. This could reduce the water available for smaller tributaries into the Yarra, and to billabongs connected directly with groundwater. That hydrology report also says that, in all, five creeks or rivers will be affected by the project: the Yarra and Plenty rivers and the Merri, Banyule and Koonung creeks.

An assessment of the existing waterway conditions of the Plenty River and the Merri and Koonung creeks found that they were in a "very poor" state, while the Yarra River and Banyule Creek had "moderate" conditions. One report said that the Banyule Creek functioned in some parts as "an urban drain", and that during the project it would be converted permanently from open creek to a culvert (a concrete drain) in Yallambie. Koonung Creek would also be "covered with new structures or converted from open creek to culverts", the same report says.

The Merri Creek in Abbotsford would also be affected, by "a new bridge structure ... to support the [Eastern] freeway widening for dedicated bus lanes". But the application points out that this bridge would "span the waterways, avoiding structures within these water courses".

The Simpsons Barracks army land in Yallambie would, the reports say, have the "real chance or possibility" of undergoing "medium or large-scale native vegetation clearance".

Around 15 per cent of the open space at Simpsons Barracks would be directly affected by the project, the documents say.

The documents list the likely start date for construction of the road as October 2019, and its likely completion date as March 2027.

February report from the Committee

North East Link

During December and January the Committee has been busy with matters related to the NEL, including attendance at three NELA community information events, to talk with NELA staff and community members. James Deane has been talking with residents in Yallambie about the impact of planned works in that area. Several of our members attended two round table discussions hosted by Samantha Dunn. Information has been provided to Leader and Age journalists, and Dennis O'Connell had an excellent letter criticising the lack of medium and long term public transport planning to the Editor published in The Age. Presentations expressing our concerns and appreciation for the Council's stance against the NEL have been made at BCC meetings. We have met with two experts who provided good advice on engineering and environmental aspects of freeway design and also with Environmental Justice Australia. Queries on tunnels, cyclone fencing, and public transport have been sent to NELA. Further meetings are planned with politicians and environment related organisations.

Considerable time has been spent reviewing NELA's 'Referral' to the Commonwealth Minister, a requirement under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act. The Committee submitted a formal statement on the Referral documentation under the public review

provisions of this process. NELA have called for nominations for their Community liaison panels and we will be supporting applications from several members.

Members are encouraged to attend a Protest against inappropriate freeways on 6 February on the steps of Parliament House.

Wildlife and environmental issues

We have sent letters to several politicians expression concern about platypus by-catch in yabby nets.

Other projects

Work is continuing with a contractor on the re-development of the WCS website, and also on the projects for signage at Banyule Flats and the interpretive map of Banyule Flats. We will be participating with an information marquee at this year's Kids Arty-Farty Festival on 18 March at Sills Bend, and hope that members will volunteer to assist on the day.

Planning for speakers at meetings, and for our monthly planting events are well underway and 2018 promises to be an interesting and active year for members.

*Dianne Williamson
1 February 2018*

Environmental Assessment processes for the North East Link – Report on presentation by NELA staff

A special WCS Members' meeting was held on 15 February with speakers from the North East Link Authority.

Katie Watt (Director, Land Planning and Environment) explained the formal management and reporting relationship for NELA, through the Office of the Coordinator General to the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, and then to the Premier via Ministers Donnellan and Allan. She also spoke about the structure and role of the Land, Planning and Environment team and NELA's governance structure.

An overview of the complex assessment and approvals for the NEL was provided by David Hyett (EES Lead, GDH+AECOM Technical Advisor). Key environmental assessments are required by:

Commonwealth Government under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. The 'Referral' to the Minister has

been submitted and there was a 10 day period for public review.

Note: Both WCS and FOB made formal statements as part of this process. No decision has been made by the Minister at 20 Feb. NELA's documentation identified listed species of fauna and flora known to be currently or previously within Corridor A and how the NEL would need to avoid the areas (eg Bolin Bolin Billabong and the Flying Fox camp at Yarra Bend), translocate plants (ie the Matted Flax-Lily at the Army Barracks) and compensate for removal of other vegetation.

Victorian Government under the Environment Effects Act. The Minister determined on 2 February that a full Environmental Effects Statement is required.

Note: the EES will be available for public display in early 2019, followed by formal panel hearings. Individuals and organisations can make submissions

NEL Environmental Assessment cont.

and can appear before the panel, engaging expert witnesses if desired.

Additional Victorian approvals are required under the: Planning and Environment Act; Aboriginal Heritage Act; and the Environment Protection Act. Further consent and compliance are required under the: Water Act; Road Management Act; Heritage Act; and Major Transport Projects Facilitation Act.

David described the extensive processes involved with preparing the Environmental Effects Statement (EES). It will be possible for WCS to make comment on the scope of the EES in the coming months. The assessment process will include: existing conditions studies; risk and impact assessment; and specialist report drafting and reviews. A Technical Reference Group will be appointed by DELWP. After the EES is released and the process of public review and panel assessment a decision will be made by the Minister on whether the environmental effects are/are not acceptable, or whether major modifications for further investigations are required.

Monique Roser (Manager Environment, Social and Planning, GHD+AECOM Technical Advisor)

explained the strategies for avoiding environmental impact, or for minimising the impact by reduction, mitigation and offset. ‘No-go’ zones have been established where surface works would not be permitted. Banyule Flats has been identified as a ‘conditional no-go zone’ where “surface works would be avoided, with the possible exception of activities related to site investigations, relocation of minor utilities and ground improvement.” There will be continual interaction between the EES and the design process during the planning and construction phases to assess impacts and implement mitigation measures as required.

This very informative evening concluded with a Q & A session and advice on opportunities for WCS member involvement in: Community Liaison Groups; small group forums; community consultation drop in sessions; comment on the draft scoping requirements for the EES; and public comment and subsequent panel hearings on the EES.

Dianne Williamson
20 February 2018

Nature Notes - February

Anthea Fleming – December 2017 – tiger snake moving across backyard near Darebin Creek, Bladder wort at Latrobe wellow flowers carnivorous uses bladders to capture small creatures (used to grow at Warringal Swamp in shallow area) , Indian ringneck - an introduced escapee from an aivary, Gang Gang Cockatoos, Jumper Ants with yellow jaws at west end of the billabong at Banyule Flats, King Parrots feeding in Bursaria

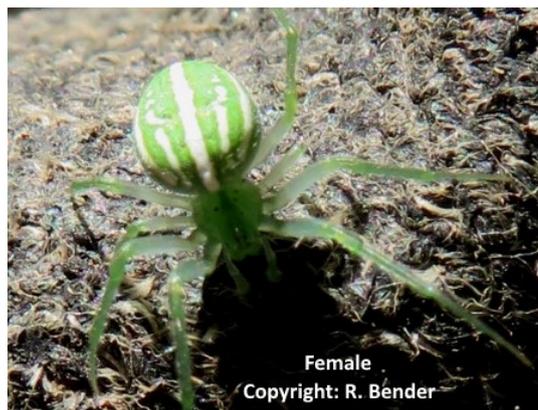
James Deane - 2 tiger snakes at Westefolds Park

Lene – Staff member at Bullen art & garden bitten by a snake

Jane Crone – Eastern Koel – wanderer from north with a distinctive call – native not introduced, silver eyes

Celia Smith – 101 kangaroos between Plenty River and Odyssey House in Weserfolds Park. Wombat in Westerfolds on walking/bike track during day

Robert Bender – green spider 2mm across – *Araneus ginninderranus*. Was identified by Ron Atkinson, is now the subject of a page on his Find-a-spider-guide website.



Female
Copyright: R. Bender

Banyule Creek near Simpson Barracks - North East Link Route



Matted Flax-Lily (endangered)



Yellow Rush-Lily



A Large River Redgum

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