



Warringal  
Conservation  
Society

50 YEARS OF CONSERVATION IN BANYULE

Vol 51/one Jan/Feb 2021

*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 Kate Thwaites MP, Member for Jagajaga

COVID-19 restrictions have changed the way we are operating. Check [www.warringal.org.au](http://www.warringal.org.au) or WCS on Facebook for updates on our activities.

## FEBRUARY MEETING (ONLINE)

### **Prof Phil Batterham - Insect Armageddon**

Phil heads a research group studying insects at the Bio21 Institute, University of Melbourne. Insects have essential roles as pollinators, nutrient recyclers, pest controllers and prey species. However, insects have undergone a decline over several decades, with changing agricultural practices and increased use of insecticides a likely contributor. Phil will discuss the effects of insecticides on non-target species, and outline other approaches that can be used to deal with agricultural pests

## MARCH MEETING

### **Dr Barry Clark - Artificial light at night - a serious environmental hazard**

Modern society depends heavily on artificial light. However, there is accumulating evidence that exposure to artificial light at night can harm many species including humans. Combined with the use of fossil fuels to power lights, the environmental case for large reductions in night time lighting is growing. Barry will discuss the reasons underlying ongoing increases to artificial lighting, and the benefits of being more careful with its use.

### **When operating normally:**

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

## AT A GLANCE

### February

**Thurs 4th:** Online Meeting - Insect Armageddon

**Sat 13th:** Twilight Walk

### March

**Thurs 4th:** Online Meeting - Members' Night

**Sun 7th:** Clean Up Australia Day

\*See News and Events for more details

## Message from the President

Dear Members,

Happy New Year! 2020 was an interesting year as we cancelled our plans and worked out new ways to operate. We watched as the parks along the Yarra became the place to go, a timely reminder of the importance of our open spaces, reserves and bushland. We managed to keep in contact, run meetings, produce newsletters, continue our environmental advocacy work, and observe nature close to home. It was a unusual, but successful year that taught us to be adaptable.

Things are starting to resemble something more normal. It was great to catch up with members at Banyule Swamp last December. This year some of us have already gathered to remove thistles at Banyule Flats, the first group activity we have been able to organise since Clean up Australia Day in March last year. More outdoor events are scheduled and we hope to return to having general meetings at the Old Shire Office.

*James Deane*

## News & Events

### Upcoming Meetings

#### Thursday 4th February at 7.30pm

Online General meeting on Zoom. Prof Phil Batterham speaking on insects, followed by Nature notes.

Meeting ID: 829 7239 6452 Passcode: 040191

#### Thursday 4th March at 7.30pm

General Meeting (Online or at Old Shire Office, check WCS Facebook and Website). Dr Barry Clark speaking on Artificial light at night followed by Nature Notes.

### 2021 Activities to start with a 'hoot'!

This year's activities will start with a twilight walk and hopefully we will see and hear an owl or two. And COVID permitting – let's hope we can get back into our parkland areas for some planting, weeding and 'outside' enjoyment. Kylie and Warwick worked hard last year and it would be great to catch

up with them again. As a cautionary measure we would like all event and working bee attendees to register either by emailing the planting coordinator or registering on the Facebook event. This means we can also let you know if things change. Looking forward to seeing you all soon.

#### Saturday 13th February - Twilight walk

Twilight spotlight walk around Banyule Billabong / back Paddocks. 8pm for 8.15pm start. Meet at Somerset Drive carpark, Viewbank. Wear sturdy footwear/dress for the weather. If you bring a torch make sure it has red cellophane over the light so as not to blind the creatures. Please register your interest by emailing [warringal3084@gmail.com](mailto:warringal3084@gmail.com) or registering on the WCS Facebook Twilight walk event page.

#### Sunday 7th March - Clean Up Australia Day

Meet at the Stockyards at the end of Plymouth Street, Heidelberg. Dress for the weather, bring

## Who we are and how to contact us

### Warringal Conservation Society Inc

PO Box 64 Rosanna 3084

Email: [warringal3084@gmail.com](mailto:warringal3084@gmail.com)

Web: <https://warringal.org.au/>

[www.facebook.com/WarringalConservationSociety](https://www.facebook.com/WarringalConservationSociety)

**President:** James Deane

Telephone: 8060 8983

**Vice President:**

John D'Aloia

**Treasurer:** Daphne Hards

Telephone: 9497 4831

### Newsletter

Editor: James Deane

Telephone: 8060 8983

Email: [wcs.editor@gmail.com](mailto:wcs.editor@gmail.com)

Compilation & Mailing: Heather Smith, Don Stokes

**Planting Coordinator:** Heather Smith

**Committee:** Anthea Fleming, Daphne Hards, Doug McNaughton, James Deane, John D'Aloia, Rob Granter.

gloves and water. Please register your interest by emailing [warringal3084@gmail.com](mailto:warringal3084@gmail.com) or registering on the WCS Facebook Clean Up Australia Day event page.

### Treetop adventure park proposal in Yarra Flats Park

Banyule Council is currently considering plans for a commercial operator to construct and run a tree top adventure course at Banksia Billabong, Yarra Flats. Details of the proposal can be found at: [shaping.banyule.vic.gov.au/C107](http://shaping.banyule.vic.gov.au/C107)

The Council must approve a planning amendment to allow the project to proceed. This is not the first time this project has been proposed and WCS has previously expressed concern about potential environmental impacts. The WCS committee reviewed the current proposal and made a submission detailing some of our reservations (submissions closed 10th Dec 2020). WCS is generally supportive of healthy passive and active outdoor activities. We question the location of this particular project within one of the few remaining Yarra Billabongs. Our main concerns relate to the tree pruning that will be required to construct and maintain the course and associated observation paths. River Red Gums are the dominant tree species in the Banksia Billabong and have canopies with dead and broken branches that are good wildlife habitat (see photo below). With hundreds of visitors expected in the area each day, a substantial amount of pruning in the interests of safety appears to be a predictable outcome. The Banyule Council is currently going through submissions received and will decide whether a panel hearing is required.



**Activity report - Thistle removal at Banuyle Flats**

On the morning of Friday the 8th Jan WCS and Friends of Yarra Valley Parks members gathered to remove thistles near the Windmill. This was our first group activity since early 2020. Flower heads were cut off bagged for removal. A dent was made in the thistle population but there are still a frightening number growing alongside other nasty weeds like Black Berry and Kapok Vine. The area is managed by Parks Victoria and is not as well maintained as parts of Banyule Flats that are looked after by the Banyule Council. Thanks to Daphne Hards (WCS) and Graham Patterson (Friends of Yarra Valley Parks) for organising the activity.



*Top: thistle seed heads.  
Bottom: William Deane (left) and Rob Granter (right) contemplate a forest of thistles.*

### Welcome to New Members

We extend a warm welcome to Madeleine Deveson and her family, and trust that their membership will be rewarding

## Vale Meredith Sherlock

Creative, kind, curious and clever...Meredith, 65, passed away in November 2020 from ovarian cancer. A passionate environmental advocate, she was a long-time WCS member and regular attendee at meetings until her move to Frankston in 2004. Meredith kept up her WCS subs, even meeting us at our field trips down her way – at the Cranbourne Gardens in 2007 and the Edithvale Wetlands in 2015.

When she joined WCS she was living up at Aqueduct Road, Diamond Creek and battling to keep a local remnant bush area in good condition. With a few neighbours, she formed the Friends of Aqueduct Road but with encroaching subdivision, the area was subject to vandalism, horse-grazing, kids on bikes and rubbish dumping and after a few years the Friends group disbanded.

Meredith was a dedicated activist and campaigner, playing a major role in the Koonung Mullum Forestway Association that fought the Eastern and Eastlink freeways. Through her and the group's herculean efforts the freeway design was changed to tunnels under the Mullum Creek, rather than through the creek valley itself. Over recent times she was digitalising all the campaign information for prosperity.

Meredith was many things: a founding member of

the Friends of French Island (Paperbark swamps being one of her favourite landscapes). A classical musician with great musical ability – both as a pianist and singer. She was good fun with a wry sense of humour and was knowledgeable about native plants and birds. She said that the Australian bush, flora and fauna both inspired and uplifted her. Meredith and her energy will be missed.

*Heather Smith*



*Meredith (left) with her mother Joyce at the 2007 WCS Cranbourne Gardens field trip.*

## Nature Notes

### December 2020

Michael Smith - Platypus near the Plenty/Yarra River confluence (right), Dollarbird near windmill at Banyule Flats, Tea-tree near Plymouth St with white flowers attracting moths, beetles and a Two-spotted Line-blue - Butterfly, a Jewel Beetle, Masked bee and a Drone fly. Recording of birdsong a Banyule Flats including a Goshawk, Rufous Whistler, Fantailed Cuckoo and a Sacred Kingfisher.

William Deane - King Parrot

Helen Boak - Male King Parrot in Viewbank (right)

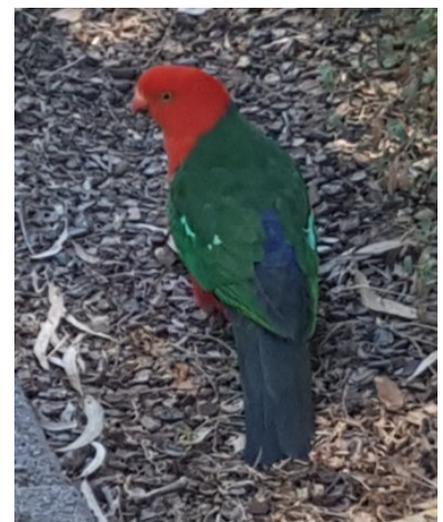
Don Stokes - A Darter

Daphne Hards - Rainbow Lorkeets

Dianne Williamson - Grey Fantails, Eastern Spinebill, Oriole, King Parrots and Common Mynas.

James Deane - Scarlet Honey-eaters, Boobook Owls calling on Viewbank Hill, Wombat being released in Westerfolds Park by members of the Mange Management group.

Anthea Fleming - Eurasian Coot with a chick and a Purple Swamphen with a chick at Braeside Park (next page). A White-banded bee (next page). Bark crawling creatures that leave tracks on eucalypt bark. (next and back page).



## Nature Notes cont.



*A Eurasian Coot (left) and Purple Swamphen (right) with chicks at Braeside Park  
(Photos: Anthea Fleming)*



*Bark Crawlers with a spider (left). A White Banded Bee (right). (Photos: Anthea Fleming)*

## Warringal Conservation Society Annual Membership Renewal July 2020 - June 2021

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Special areas of interest: *This helps us when arranging speakers and events.*

### Subscription types:

- Single \$20       Concession \$15 (seniors/students etc)  
 Family \$25       Life subscription \$200

### There are three ways to renew:

1. By mail: Fill in this form and mail with your cheque or money order to:  
PO Box 64 Rosanna 3084 Victoria.

2. Pay by direct debit:  
Acc name: Warringal Conservation Society  
BSB: 633 108 Acc no: 143918613  
(Be sure to identify yourself as the depositor.)

3. Renew online at:  
[www.warringal.org.au/about-us/membership](http://www.warringal.org.au/about-us/membership)  
Any queries email: [warringal3084@gmail.com](mailto:warringal3084@gmail.com)

- I would like to receive my newsletter by email.  
 Yes - put me on the Plantings notification list.

### Life on Red Gums

For more than 50 years I had often noticed white raised streaks on smooth Red Gum bark in summer. I never knew what made them till last November when I saw them with the insects in situ - slightly domed crawly creatures about the size of a nail-head. I rushed to photograph them but did not know what they were. But thanks to David Cameron, who put me in touch with entomological colleagues, I have learned that they are probably a species of *Pulvinaria*, related to mealy-bugs. The white marks are ovisacs. What the intermediate stages between eggs and adults are, I don't know, and it is quite possible that no-one else knows either. Next summer I shall keep my eyes open and try to collect some for the experts.



*ANTHEA FLEMING*

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**CONSERVATION SOCIETY**  
COVERING THE CITY OF HEIDELBERG