



# The **Running** Postman

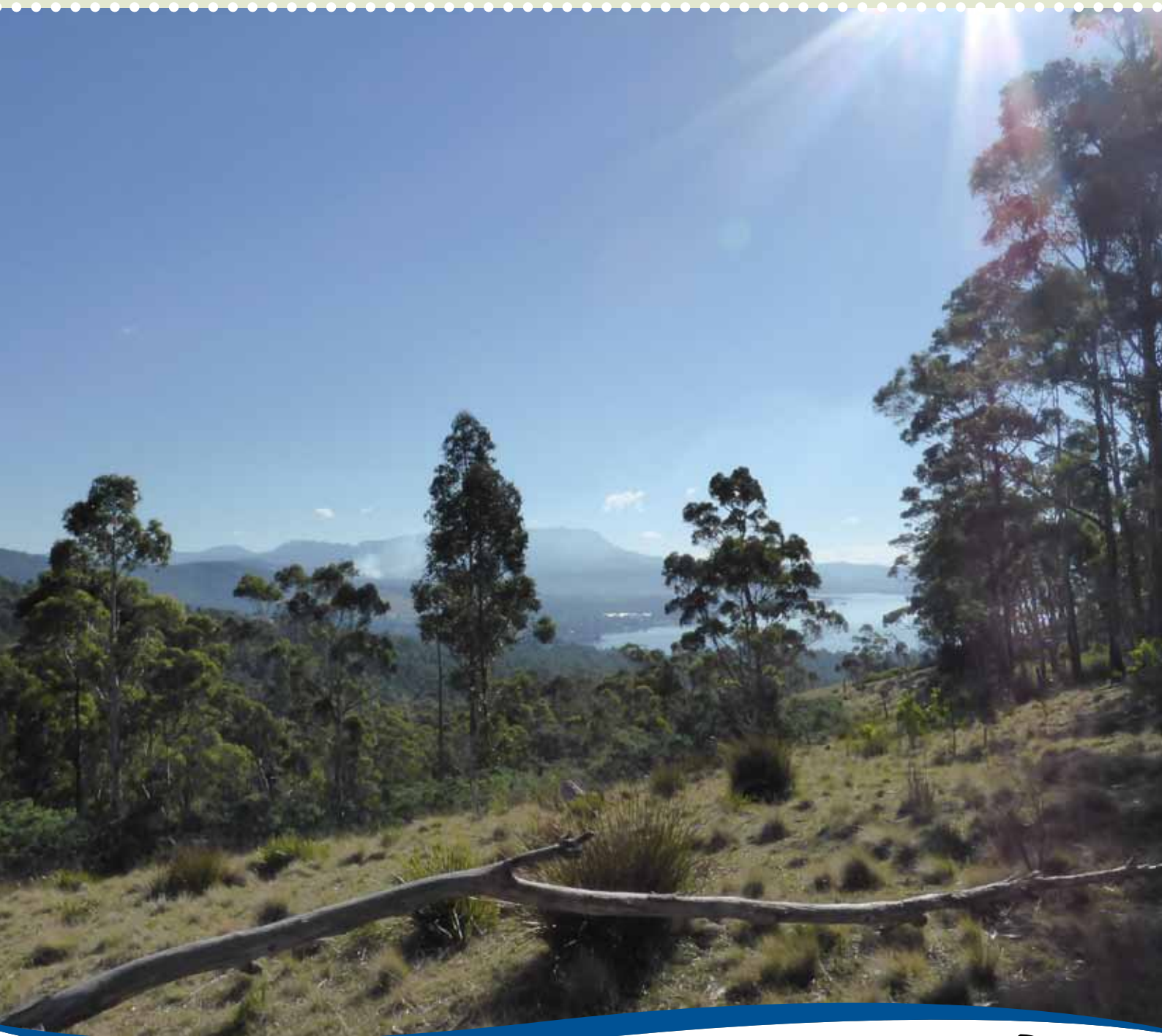
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*Building partnerships with landowners for the sustainable management  
and conservation of natural values across the landscape.*



Department of  
Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment



# Manager's **message** – Winter 2015

Earlier this year I was fortunate to increase the scope of my role in DPIPWE to include management of natural values information programs and natural values research in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA). This change has given me a much greater insight into the amazing biodiversity and geodiversity present in Tasmania. We truly do live in a place where ancient cycles of life and earth track through our daily life revealing new species, experiences and viewpoints for the keen observer.

This insight has refocused my appreciation for the value and contribution of private landholders in the conservation and management of nature. Through the Natural Values Atlas it is clear that private conservation landholders are large contributors to records and observations of unique and diverse flora and fauna, and the research programs in the TWWHA generate understandings of the interaction of

nature and humanity that apply across all tenures.

In this edition of the Running Postman we acknowledge the great value of partnerships in improving the management and conservation of nature. As always Conservation Landholders Tasmania grows in popularity and value, I take my hat off to the vision of Robin Garnett, Phil Collier, John Thompson and others who started this group, and encourage all to participate in their meetings and forums.

Landcare Tasmania has almost completed six rounds of biodiversity grants largely for covenant and Land for Wildlife landholders and the results are spectacular as you will read. Thanks go to Pete Stronach and his co-workers for a really constructive and relevant program.

The State Fire Management Council is also a partner who has come to the fore in helping covenant holders deal with the issue of fire management.

Likewise Biosecurity Tasmania provides resources and guidance on the important issue of keeping reserves free of pests, weeds and diseases.

On another note, the team has farewellled a long term staff member with former program Manager Louise Mendel moving to the role of Program Coordinator of the Fuel Reduction Unit (details of this unit are in this edition). Louise worked with the Private Land Conservation Program over many years, firstly overseeing the covenant monitoring program before moving into the Managers role. We thank Louise for her outstanding contributions and wish her all the very best in her new role.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition, I am grateful to a dedicated team in DPIPWE for the high standard of this publication.

*Peter Voller,  
Manager, Natural Values  
Conservation Branch*

## In this **Issue**

Manager's <b>message</b> - Winter 2015	2
<b>Talking tadpoles</b> Applying acoustic ecology to private land conservation	3
<b>Fuel Reduction</b> Program	4
Conservation landholders gain <b>plant identification</b> skills	5
The <b>Landcare Biodiversity Grants</b> – Supporting Conservation across the State	6
<b>Biosecurity</b> on conservation properties	8
The benefits of <b>attracting insects and other invertebrates</b> to your garden	9
<b>Controlling weeds</b> Bio-logically	10
Winter <b>wattles</b>	11
Do you have a <b>conservation covenant</b> over your property?	12
Upcoming Field Days for <b>Conservation Landholders Tasmania</b>	12
<b>Selling</b> property?	12

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*On the cover: The view from Spanish heath control site of Friends of Cunningham Wildcare group, recipients of a Landcare Biodiversity Grant.  
Photo: Nepelle Crane, Landcare Tasmania.  
Design and layout: Land Tasmania Design Unit, DPIPWE.*

# Talking tadpoles

## Applying acoustic ecology to private land conservation



While it might not be the burning ecological question of our time, it is a question few can answer. And as an ecologist I had no idea when I was asked 'So, do tadpoles make sounds?'

The answer is YES.

While the repetitive chorus of male frogs calling in the hope of attracting a mate is a common occurrence when we visit wetlands or other aquatic habitats, the unique vocalisations of tadpoles are something that is foreign to even the most avid nature enthusiast.

With the help of technology, we at the Protected Areas on Private Land Program, a partnership between the Tasmanian Land Conservancy and the Tasmanian State Government, are taking conservation landholders on a journey of discovery and opening their eyes and ears to the world of bioacoustics.

The field of bioacoustics or acoustic ecology is an emerging, cross-disciplinary science that brings together biology, ecology and acoustics. As conservation professionals we typically make conscious visual observations to guide and inform our understanding of ecological processes and ecosystems. We often use our ears

subconsciously to listen to natural systems, yet rarely link what we learn formally.

Acoustic ecology provides that link. Bernie Krause, the famous American composer, is often referred to as the godfather of bioacoustics and soundscapes, and explains the emergence of the field through his life work in an inspiring TED talk (see link below).

During a recent visit to a covenanted property in southern Tasmania, along with conservation landholders Lyne and Allesandro, thought we would have a listen to one of their natural wetlands. You may ask how do you listen to a wetland? No, it doesn't involve getting wet. The answer is with the help of a hydrophone, which is a simple microphone designed to be used underwater for recording or listening to underwater sound. By setting up a hydrophone through a digital recorder we can listen live to what is going on in the aquatic environment.

It is fair to say when we put the headphones on to listen we were blown away. While it was silent above the water, it was a buzz with activity beneath the surface. And after some thorough searching we were able to decipher that the sounds we were hearing were

tadpoles. This was first discovered by a team of scientists in Argentina in 2010.

This technology provides us with an incredibly powerful tool, whereby we can listen, record and share the unique sounds of ecosystems which we are naturally removed from. The soundscape can comprise a plethora of origins, from microscopic invertebrates feeding on detritus to the complexity of a dawn chorus of woodland birds. These sounds are often unique to an environment, which can make them a useful means for monitoring changes in these systems as well as providing us with a new tool for engaging the broader community through sharing these unique and often bizarre sounds. Finding new ways of exploring these often forgotten aspects of our environments will contribute to a greater appreciation of the value of protected areas on private land and the array of ecosystems and biodiversity which rely on them.

*James Hattam*

*For links to Bernie Krause's inspiring TED talk and to listen to the tadpole recordings yourself, visit the Tasmanian Land Conservancy's Blog at [www.tasland.org.au/newblog/](http://www.tasland.org.au/newblog/).*

Photo: Lyne and Allesandro listen to the aquatic life in a wetland on their property.  
Photo: James Hattam.

# Fuel Reduction Program



Those of you familiar with this newsletter will be aware of an increasing focus on planned burning in the bush, through programs like Red Hot Tips, which some of you are participating in. Tasmania now has a state-wide innovative and coordinated approach to fuel reduction, which recently began with the launch of the Fuel Reduction Program in 2014-2015. The Program is the result of a Tasmanian Government inquiry into the large bushfires in Dunalley (in 2013) and Victoria (in 2009), which revealed a reduction in the fuel load would have an impact on reducing the severity of future bushfires.

In the financial year 2014-2015 more than 80 fuel reduction burns have been completed throughout the State.

State Fire Management Council (SFMC) Chair Ian Sauer said the 'cross-tenure' approach means that fuel loads on both private and public land will be targeted, and this is an Australian first that Tasmanians should be proud of.

Ian said "Bushfire is the most costly natural disaster in Tasmania's history, in both human and economic terms."

"Fuel reduction burning will not prevent bushfires, but it will minimise their potential damage and make it easier and safer for firefighters to control fires."

Tasmania's wet spring weather produces abundant vegetation, which dries in the heat of summer

and rests on the ground, where it can fuel any small bushfire and – in the kind of conditions faced in Dunalley – accelerate into a catastrophic bushfire. Clearing that fuel load with controlled burns is the most effective way to reduce the size and ferocity of wild fires.

The SFMC commissioned computer modelling and combined the results with local knowledge to identify the areas of the state that posed the greatest risk of bushfire.

Based on a state-wide appreciation of bushfire risk, strategically selecting priority areas of the landscape for fuel reduction burning, regardless of whether it comprises private or state-owned land, will be more effective in creating safer communities than broad-area burning in remote locations.

Ian said landowners' participation in the program was voluntary - however the need for fuel reduction was obvious.

*"The inclusion of private land is a significant shift in current fuel reduction practices and success will rely on the cooperation of private land owners in those high priority areas."*

The program is shared across all three fire agencies in Tasmania - the Parks and Wildlife Service, Forestry Tasmania, and is being coordinated by the Fuel Reduction Unit of

the Tasmania Fire Service. It's an approach that focuses on the strategic management of risk, rather than the amount of hectares being burnt.

Fuel reduction burns are meticulously planned, precise, vary greatly in size, and only ever proceed if the conditions are exactly right. For this reason, burning schedules change daily.

Information on burns will be updated daily on the Tasmania Fire Service's website [www.fire.tas.gov.au](http://www.fire.tas.gov.au). For those Tasmanians who suffer from asthma and other respiratory illnesses, notifications will be provided through the Asthma Foundation of Tasmania when required.

Some of you may be asked to participate in this program over the years if you live in high risk strategic areas that are identified for reducing fuel loads and risk to communities. Natural values, such as threatened species will be considered in the development of burn plans and managed as required. Having a conservation covenant or Land for Wildlife property is certainly not an inhibitor to participating and an authorisation to burn in your covenant can be readily obtained from the covenanting program, where appropriate.

*Catherine Clemens,  
Fuel Reduction Unit,  
Tasmania Fire Service*



## Conservation landholders gain plant identification skills

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could all name the Tasmanian native plants growing in our own local area. Naming species helps us to see them as distinct components of complex dynamic natural systems – and to be able to monitor any changes in their populations.

In February, thirty members of Conservation Landholders Tasmania (CLT) improved their skills and understanding of plant identification under the guidance of inspiring botanist, Fred Duncan. We looked carefully at the leaves and flowers of banksia, hakeas, eucalypts, daisy bushes and other Tasmanian plants, learning to recognise the general features of nine main Australian plant families. Recognising families is an advantage (but not essential) for the use of Greg Jordan's excellent online *Key to Tasmanian Vascular Plants* [www.utas.edu.au/dicotkey](http://www.utas.edu.au/dicotkey).

With memorable anecdotes and a wealth of useful hand-outs, Fred led us through introductory plant ecology and nomenclature. He gave examples of the intricate interplay of plant, animal and climatic factors that have evolved in nature. An unforgettable example was the tough, prickly alpine plant, *Richea scoparia*, that scratches the legs of bushwalkers. This species has a tubular flower with fused petals like a condom over its reproductive parts, the stamens

and pistil. The cap of fused petals protects these delicate parts from damage in wind and rain. But in fine warm weather, Snow Skinks, attracted by nectar in the flowers, knock off the caps. This allows insects to fly in and pollinate the flowers. The structure of *Richea scoparia*, with its nectar reward system, and the increased activity of Snow Skinks and insects in warm weather have evolved together to mutual advantage.

Fred also told us how to distinguish nine species of Tasmanian thistles and thistle-like plants and we discussed how the growth form of these different species necessitates different control methods. And finally he stepped us through the new field key to Tasmanian eucalypts that he has revised with local ecologist Mark Wapstra. It is straight forward to use and includes those tricky hybrid eucalypt species.

Conservation landholders who took part were very appreciative of Fred's plant identification workshop, asking for additional Plant ID days in future. We are grateful to NRM North for sponsoring the day, with funding from the Australian Government, and to Mercedes Duncan, Anna Povey and Phil Collier for assisting Fred.

Later that afternoon, Josh and Wendy Cocker took us to their covenanted conservation area in a

stunning position above the Tamar River. We deliberated about why some of their large white gums, like many other white and blue gums in northern Tasmania, are turning rusty red and then possibly dying. The consensus was that probably many factors were involved, with stress from lack of water at some point in the past being a significant factor. Our thanks go to the Cockers for hosting such an interesting visit.

The next CLT event, on 28 and 29 November 2015 will be at Murrayfield on Bruny Island on *Birds on Conservation Properties*. Murrayfield Station, operated by the Indigenous Land Corporation, combines farming with protection of environmental and Aboriginal cultural sites. Naturalist and author, Sarah Lloyd, will lead bird watching walks and talk about her studies of bird calls; and Tasmanian Land Conservancy's Conservation Science and Planning Manager, Sally Bryant, will show us work being done to increase the population of forty-spotted pardalotes on Bruny Island.

Information about the bird weekend will be sent to everyone on the CLT mailing list a month beforehand. For more information or to add your name to the CLT emailing list, contact Robin Garnett at [robin@rubicon.org.au](mailto:robin@rubicon.org.au).

*Robin Garnett*

# The Landcare Biodiversity Grants – Supporting Conservation across the State



Landcare Tasmania secured funding from the Australia Government in 2012 to develop and deliver the “Landcare Biodiversity Grants” in partnership with the DPIPW Private Land Conservation Program.

Landcare Tasmania’s Project Manager, Peter Stronach, said that projects were developed across the State with the assistance of Landcare Tasmania staff and stewardship officers from the Private Land Conservation Program.

*“Over the last three years, we have delivered a devolved grant program consisting of 6 funding rounds with 67 successful applicants working on 144 sites, providing landholders with opportunities to undertake activities that support high conservation values,”* Peter said.

As the program draws to a close, over 4,000 hectares of high conservation vegetation is being managed for threats, including invasive weeds such as gorse and Spanish heath. A further 1,800 hectares has been protected and enhanced, through fencing and controlled grazing regimes, and 360 hectares of biodiverse plantings and active natural regeneration have been established around high conservation areas. This program has become one of the largest state-wide weed programs and has successfully instilled long-term commitment from landholders – so follow up will be ongoing, cost effective and well-directed.

There was a broad range of participants, from large-scale primary producers and Indigenous managed land to smaller-scale Care groups and conservation-based landholders. In total 47 covenants and 36 Land for Wildlife properties benefited directly from the grants funding, and many more indirectly. As a result of this diversity, a number of strategies were employed by the project team to accommodate projects at various scales including:

## Strategic management of landscapes

Strategic landscapes with high conservation values were targeted across Tasmania. The far North West is an example; identified at a state level as a ‘focal landscape’, it includes 7 projects focussing on weed control including the removal of gorse from 270 hectares of native vegetation around East and West Inlet, near Stanley. Fencing in Marawah has also protected important Marawah Skipper habitat, a nationally threatened species. Traditional and innovative weed control techniques were used on gorse, including mulching, cut and paint, spraying, biological control and even using native grasses to compete with emerging re-growth. The Landcare Biodiversity Grants supported a whole of property approach, with work to enhance conservation values managed alongside successful commercial farming operations.

*“Having people around who have an in depth knowledge of the bush is invaluable... these grants are incredible. It gives you the impetus to carry on... The back’s been broken. It is up to us now to do the follow-up and we should now be able to maintain what we have left.”* Sarah and Rob Medwin, new Land for Wildlife member and farmers near Black River.

## Supporting production and conservation on farms

The Landcare Biodiversity Grants have supported farmers to increase long-term productivity and enable them to manage conservation values on their properties. At Stonor in the central Midlands, it’s a multi-generational effort involving 82-year-old Basil Clark, his sons and grandson. The Clarks received multi-year funding for control of 107 hectares of gorse-affected bushland, protecting the local dry grassy white gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*) woodland, lowland grasslands and threatened species including the rock plate buttercup, chocolate lily and curly sedge. Commitment has not been a problem and a helping hand in the form of a grant can go a long way. Gordon Clark said *“You need to be in it for the long run. We had a huge flush of new [gorse] plants germinating after the late rain last spring and it’s slowed our work treating new areas. But if you don’t follow up, you’ll be back where you started before you know it.”*



## Bringing together Local Government and local landholders

Project staff also provided the networking link between groups and landholders, and contractors, expert consultants, Councils, State agencies and the three Tasmanian Regional bodies. In Glamorgan Spring Bay, Landcare Tasmania and Council staff worked with landholders on high conservation value properties to undertake primary weed control. This partnership produced property-specific Action Plans for 12 conservation covenant properties. By providing the link with experts and the necessary tools for follow up, the capacity of landholders to manage nationally significant vegetation and fauna habitat has been strengthened.

## Supporting conservation landholders

Funding has also gone to assisting landholders with smaller properties containing significant conservation values. These projects focused on supporting landholders to protect the natural values on their property through strategic weed control, helping them to “break the back” of weed outbreaks. Creating a step-by-step work plan and access to a skilled contractor has allowed a number of landholder to take charge of such an issue. Funding has also enabled some landholders to build on their existing native

vegetation by planting and fencing out native and domestic browsers. Peter and Leissa Dane, covenant and Land for Wildlife stewards in the North East, have created several riparian links between two adjoining patches of bush, buffering and connecting their covenant. *“Without the on-ground support, longer timeframe and technical direction we wouldn’t have been able to plan and take on the project,”* said Peter.

## Working with Care groups

Care groups have been given the assistance to achieve high quality work across Tasmania – providing an opportunity for volunteers to participate in the restoration of the natural environment. Funded in Round 2, Circular Head Landcare Group has taken up the challenge of invasive rice grass (*Spartina anglica*) removal from priority coastal vegetation in Duck River Estuary, north west Tasmania. The Landcare Biodiversity Grant provided funding for contractors to control strategic rice grass infestations across 22 hectares over 2 years. The group and contractors have undertaken follow-up along 35 kilometres of coastline. A partnership has also been struck with Smithton Scouts to regularly undertake photo-point monitoring to record changes in its distribution. The area contains threatened vegetation communities and is an internationally significant site for 23 migratory birds. The group has been required to carry out regular

consultation and detailed scheduling with oyster farmers, commercial and residential land owners, the local council and tide charts. Project Manager Peter Stronach said

*“Without the people on the ground with the local connections and motivation, projects like this one would never succeed. Now they have a real chance of outright eradication.”*

Landcare Tasmania actively seeks funding to support conservation activities for its individual, group and organisation members. Although the Landcare Biodiversity Grants program will finish later this year, Landcare Tasmania continues to work with project partners to develop and deliver projects that engage Landcare and agricultural communities in natural resource management. Landcare Tasmania also offers funding opportunities through the Tasmanian Landcare Fund. For more details on funding opportunities and project details from the Landcare Biodiversity Grants visit

[www.landcaretas.org.au](http://www.landcaretas.org.au).

*Peter Stronach and Nepelle Crane, Landcare Tasmania*

Photos (L to R): Peter Stronach discusses follow up options with weed contractor Sam Bryant and farmer Scott Korpershoek on the edge of a patch of Brooker’s gum threatened by gorse. Photo: Colin Winhall. Glamorgan Spring Bay Council’s Amanda Brooks tackling gorse on a covenant at Dolphin Sands. Photo: Matt Newton. Peter Dane with one of his successful plantings. Photo: Peter Stronach.



## Biosecurity on conservation properties

Effective management of conservation reserves on private properties is essential for maintaining their natural values. Critical to this is having good property hygiene, or biosecurity, practices to prevent the introduction and spread of pests, diseases and weeds. Almost anything brought onto your property can be a potential source of risk. This includes not only equipment and machinery but also people, plants and propagation materials.

Good biosecurity is everyone's business. It includes preventing new pests, diseases and weeds from arriving on your property, managing those that might already be present, and reducing the risk of spreading pests, diseases and weeds.

The good news is that good biosecurity doesn't have to be difficult or expensive. The following quick and simple hygiene measures built into everyday practices will help protect your property.

### Have a plan

Be proactive in managing your property and have a biosecurity plan. Assess what pests, diseases and weeds are threats to your property and identify the measures you will take to manage them. For example, will you seek to prevent new pests, diseases and weeds from arriving on your property or manage the impacts of those that do? Write this down in a clear, concise document. This is the basis of your biosecurity

plan – it's that simple.

Your biosecurity plan should be regularly reviewed, especially in light of new and emerging threats. For example, the recent confirmation of myrtle rust in Tasmania might mean that you decide to take additional measures to protect your property from this disease by not introducing highly susceptible plants onto your property.

### Keep it clean

Prevention is always better than cure. Pests, diseases and weeds are often introduced into new areas by hitching a ride on vehicles, equipment and machinery. Even mountain bikes and foot traffic can be vectors.

Keep problems off your property by making sure you have an established wash down location for equipment and machinery, preferably at a single entry point to your property. This is particularly important if you are planning large infrastructure projects, such as road or track developments.

### Manage movement

Managing the movement of people, machinery and equipment within your property will help reduce risk and contain problems. Consider having dedicated parking areas, limiting entry points, and restricting vehicle movement in high conservation value and sensitive areas.

Display clear signage to reinforce

the biosecurity requirements on your property and ask all visitors to respect your biosecurity and contact you before they come on.

### Monitor new materials for problems

It is a good idea to quarantine and monitor new materials (e.g. soil, gravel, mulch and building materials) that you bring onto your property while their freedom from pests, diseases and weeds is assessed.

It is also important to keep records of what was brought in, when, by whom and from where. This will not only help you in the event of a problem but also help others trace where the problem has come from.

### Manage pest animals and weeds

If your property already has pests, diseases and weeds, you should consider developing control plans. To be most effective, work with your neighbors' in managing control programs across property boundaries.

The best results will always be achieved when people adopt a shared responsibility for biosecurity. This is what good biosecurity is all about – government, industry and community working together to protect Tasmania from harm.

### Seen something unusual?

You are a front line of Tasmania's surveillance defenses and it is

*Photos (L to R): Learn how to identify potential threats (rainbow lorikeet shown). Photo: Amanda Smith. Establish machinery washpoints to keep problems off your property. Photo: DPIPWE. Control invasive species (pampas grass shown). Photo: DPIPWE. Weeds are easily transported on unwashed vehicles. Photo: DPIPWE.*





important that you report any unusual plants, animals and diseases that you see. Early detection and rapid response is critical for good biosecurity.

Keep informed and find out what pests, diseases and weeds pose a threat to Tasmania. Check your property regularly and if you see something unusual, report it.

**Animal Disease Hotline:**  
**1800 675 888**

**Exotic Plant Pest Hotline:**  
**1800 084 881**

**Invasive Species Hotline:**  
**1300 369 688**

For further information and advice about measures to secure your property against pests, diseases and weeds visit:

Farm Biosecurity website: *Useful information that applies to all property owners, not just farmers. You can also download or purchase property biosecurity signage.*

[www.farmbiosecurity.com.au](http://www.farmbiosecurity.com.au)

Biosecurity Tasmania website: *A wide range of information about biosecurity and managing invasive species. Follow links on the website to register for Biosecurity Advisory emails to keep up-to-date with information about pests, diseases and weeds.*

[www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/biosecurity](http://www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/biosecurity)

*Matt Marrison, DPIPWE*

## The benefits of **attracting insects and other invertebrates** to your garden

Invertebrates (animals without backbones) including insects, spiders and worms, are one of the largest and most diverse animal groups, yet they are the least understood or appreciated. Invertebrates play a significant role in nature as decomposers, pollinators, and prey for many wildlife species – without them we would not see other larger species. They are important food sources for many larger animals, such as birds, bats, frogs, lizards, bandicoots and quolls.

Insects are very important in pollination so that vegetable crops, fruit set and bush flowers are much more abundant and successful. Bees are not solely responsible for this – butterflies, moths, ants, beetles and native wasps are some of the many different types of insects which assist with pollination.

Invertebrates on the surface and within the ground play a vital role in decomposing leaf litter, branches and fallen timber and other organic matter as they use this as a food source. This recycles nutrients back into the soil and rejuvenates soil health, productivity and water retention.

Spiders are also important in your garden, though you may have fears about them or find them a nuisance. They eat insects and other invertebrates and help with maintaining a natural balance in the garden. Birds and other animals also eat them. Many species of spiders weave beautiful webs. Spider webs are particularly important for a number of bird species which depend on spider webs for successfully binding their nests. Spider webs around external windows can assist with reducing bird window collisions as they provide a visible barrier – now there is a good excuse to not clean your windows so regularly!!

Creating or maintaining a diversity of insects and other invertebrates in your garden will achieve a natural balance reducing the risk of dominance of undesirable or destructive invertebrates, such as aphids or leaf eating insects. It will also reduce the need to use chemicals such as pesticides, providing a much more environment-friendly alternative.

*Iona Mitchell*



## Controlling weeds Bio-logically

Biological controls targeting weeds such as gorse, ragwort, Canary or Montpellier broom, thistles and English broom, have been introduced into Tasmania by the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE) and the Tasmanian Institute for Agriculture (TIA) since 1939.

Landcare Tasmania's Peter Stronach said biocontrol is an important tool in the fight against weeds and saves the Tasmanian community millions of dollars annually.

*"As research funding has been removed from the program in Tasmania (and nationally), maintaining and monitoring releases is the best support our community grants program can provide. Creating awareness in the general community and amongst active Landcarers is a way Landcare Tasmania can support the program,"* Peter said.

One of the most successful biocontrol agents introduced to Tasmania for environmental weeds is the Cape broom psyllid (*Arytinnis hakani*). Released in 2009, it has already caused widespread Canary broom (*Genista monspessulana*) mortalities throughout Tasmania and is now spreading across the state. In some cases it has found isolated patches of broom over 80 km away from a release site.

Cape broom psyllid is a sap-sucking bug (which looks like a narrow aphid) that feeds exclusively

on Canary broom and has the potential to not only control large, established infestations but also to kill emerging seedlings for many years until the seed-stock is exhausted.

Canary broom, also known as Cape, Montpellier or French broom, is a declared weed and Weed of National Significance that grows to three metres, has trifoliate leaves and canary yellow pea flowers, and has the capacity to replace native shrub species.

Psyllid can be detected by shaking a branch onto dark fabric or a piece of paper – the green aphid-like adult psyllids will drop off the plant. Broom plants with dead branches, reduced leaf size or "sooty" leaves, are a sign that the psyllid is present.

Cape broom psyllid is one of four biological control agents being released and monitored across the state. Biological control expert Richard Holloway is delivering a Biological Control Project with support from Landcare Tasmania's 'Landcare Biodiversity Grants' and continues the important biocontrol work of the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture. Other biocontrol agents targeted as part of the project are English broom gall mite, Gorse soft-shoot moth and Ragwort flea beetle.

Richard Holloway highlights the benefits of biological control as an effective alternative to weed control

by conventional means. These include reduced use of pesticides, the biocontrol's ability to 'seek and destroy' weeds that may be growing in difficult or sensitive environments and long-term reduction of weed seed banks. Biological controls, which are primarily insects, require careful management to encourage them to build to the critical numbers required to kill the target weed.

With the support of Richard Holloway, Landcare Tasmania has been liaising with numerous land managers including Parks and Wildlife Service, local councils and conservation landholders to ensure viable populations are being distributed and monitored across the state.

Landcare Tasmania, in partnership with the State Government's Private Land Conservation Program is delivering the Landcare Biodiversity Grants thanks to Australian Government funding. Sixty seven projects across the state will be completed by the end of June 2015.

For more information: Landcare Tasmania [www.landcaretas.org.au](http://www.landcaretas.org.au) (information leaflet available)

Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture [www.utas.edu.au/tia/information-portal-RD/information-portal/portal](http://www.utas.edu.au/tia/information-portal-RD/information-portal/portal).

*Cassie Strain,  
Landcare Tasmania*



## Winter wattles

You know it's July in Tasmania because the silver wattle (*Acacia dealbata*) is flowering. Winter time is not normally associated with native plants flowering, but many *Acacia* (wattle) species do brighten the grey-green bush with splashes of mostly bright yellow flowers in winter. Silver wattles are quite striking as they flower profusely.

Wattles also flower in spring, summer and autumn, so in any season around Australia you will find wattles flowering. In the home garden it is possible to plan to have wattles flowering almost all year round by careful selection of local species suited to the area. They range in habitat from low growing small shrubs, to medium shrubs, up to tall trees and so species can be selected according to garden size and space availability.

Winter flowering also greatly assists insects and bees who feed off the flowers, or feed off smaller insects attracted to the blossom. These insects can in turn provide food for insect-eating birds and so wattles are a valuable winter food source for wildlife. With all the activity of insects or birds landing on the flowers, pollination can occur from either depositing pollen from other wattles, or picking up pollen and carrying it to another wattle. The pollen from wattles is rich in

protein and an excellent winter food source.

Wattles also produce a sweet sticky substance around the time of flowering from glands called nectaries on their leaves. Birds are attracted to this nectar to feed off it directly, or to feed on insects that have been attracted to the sweet nectar.

The long seed pods which develop after flowering has finished also are a good food source for birds, such as parrots, which easily split the dry seed pods to eat the hard seeds.

Australia has around 1000 species of wattles, with the potential for more species to be identified. In Tasmania there are 20 wattle species, with the twentieth being identified in recent years as a new species and named Derwent wattle (*A. derwentiana*) after the location where it was first found.

Wattles can grow in a wide range of habitats from the coast to arid inland Australia, though rarely in alpine to subalpine regions. Wattles can be found in wet damp gullies, along rivers, coastal sand dunes, dry stony slopes to harsh dry arid areas. Their ability to grow in dry harsh conditions with variable rainfall is largely due to the shape and form of their leaves.

The leaves of wattles growing in

dry conditions are often greatly reduced to hard spines or spikes and are narrow and linear in shape. All wattle seedlings have bipinnate feather-like leaves, however as they grow and mature many wattles leaves change shape into what are called phyllodes, though some species such as silver wattle and the autumn flowering sunshine wattle (*A. terminalis*) retain the bipinnate leaves. Phyllodes can vary in shape from flatten narrow or broad to tough, small dagger-shaped and often have a sharp point.

Spikey-leaved wattles in the garden, grown in clusters, make great habitat for little birds for nesting or protection from bigger bully birds. They also provide good habitat for many invertebrates which feed on the blossom, or live in the bark.

Though wattles are native plants, there are some species which can become weeds outside their range and are to be discouraged from growing in areas where they can escape from gardens. One such example is the Cootamundra wattle (*A. baileyana*) which is listed as a weed in Tasmania.

*Iona Mitchell*



# Do you have a conservation covenant over your property?

If yes, you are invited to contribute to an Australia-wide research study led by Julie Groce, PhD student, and Dr. Carly Cook at Monash University. We are interested in hearing your perspectives about the covenanting program, your engagement with program staff, and the sorts of management activities that you undertake on your property. By responding to a survey and/or short interview, you can tell us what you think has worked well and what additional steps would help you reach your goals for your covenanted property.

This is a great opportunity to express your views, and all your contributions will be kept anonymous.

If you are interested in participating or would like more information, please contact Julie Groce at [julie.groce@monash.edu](mailto:julie.groce@monash.edu) or **0431 882 164**. Thank you!

## Upcoming Field Days for Conservation Landholders Tasmania

Conservation landholders are welcome to participate in the following events:

**Friday 27 November (from 5pm) – Sunday 29 November 2015 (finishing 2pm).**

Theme: *Birds on Conservation Properties*

CLT landholders are invited to a weekend of walks and talks on Bruny Island focused on bird conservation.

**Saturday 27 February 2016**

Theme: *Managing wet sclerophyll forest*

An interesting field day based at Lower Barrington Hall, South of Devonport, and Philip Milner's property nearby.

Contact Robin Garnett [robin@rubicon.org.au](mailto:robin@rubicon.org.au) or John Thompson [thompsonjohn@gmail.com](mailto:thompsonjohn@gmail.com) to add your details to the CLT email list.

## Private Land Conservation Program participants as at June 2015

Number of covenants	772	96,477 hectares
Land for Wildlife members	903	56,977 hectares
Gardens for Wildlife members	526	2,647 hectares

*Please note that some landowners are registered with more than one program and there is some overlap in the figures presented.*

## Post or email

Just a reminder that if you would prefer to receive your copy of *The Running Postman* by email please contact the PLCP on **6165 4409** or [iona.mitchell@dppwe.tas.gov.au](mailto:iona.mitchell@dppwe.tas.gov.au)

Natural and Cultural Heritage  
Private Land Conservation Program  
134 Macquarie Street Hobart  
GPO Box 44 Hobart TAS 7001  
[www.dppwe.tas.gov.au/plcp](http://www.dppwe.tas.gov.au/plcp)

# Selling property?

If you have a conservation covenant over your property and are thinking of selling, you should keep in mind that anyone involved in the sale process (e.g. agents, lawyers) need to be informed of the covenant and its implications.

Prospective buyers and new owners must also be informed of the covenant on the property title so that they can factor this into their decisions.

A covenant may appeal to particular purchasers and should be promoted as a valuable aspect of the property. The PAPL Stewardship Officers are happy to talk to prospective buyers regarding the natural values and how to manage them in accordance with your agreement.

We often find that buyers of Land for Wildlife (LFW) properties are keen to enter the program so that they can get involved in more active conservation management.

We therefore also ask LFW owners who are selling to notify us so that we can make contact with the new owners and see if they would like to keep the property in the program.

## PAPL Contacts

### Stewardship

Stu King (Statewide) **6777 2238**  
James Hattam (South) **0428 129 285**  
Anna Povey (North) **0498 800 611**

### Land For Wildlife

Iona Mitchell **6165 4409**



Tasmanian  
Government