The Running Postman

Newsletter of the Private Land Conservation Program

June 2013
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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

Tasmania
Explore the possibilities

Manager's **message**

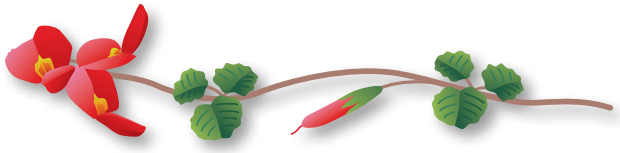
So far 2013 has been a significant year, not least the bushfires that raged through January, impacting on so many lives and livelihoods. Fortunately nature, like the human spirit has the amazing ability to recover from adversity and adapt in an aftermath of destruction. We have seen as a result of the fires a great opportunity to learn from the recovery. I recently took part in some post fire monitoring work in the Giblin River catchment in the South West of Tasmania. A 37,000 ha wildfire had a spellbinding impact on that landscape, and yet the scale of this fire provided the best opportunity in many years to look closely at the landscape scale biological and geological responses to this and many previous fires. As we study and reflect on these events, we learn more about management approaches and their lasting impacts.

We acknowledge in this edition the great work of the University of Tasmania through the Natural Ecosystems Research Program (NERP) in an endeavour to quantify our knowledge of ecosystems in the Midlands. This project will provide significant and lasting advances in our approach to conservation in this fragile and important natural landscape.

There have been some great outcomes in terms of new conservation reserves, notable amongst these is the establishment of a permanent conservation covenant on Skullbone Plains, a property purchased by the Tasmanian Land Conservancy and now secured for conservation. The ongoing partnership between TLC, DPIPWE and the Australian Government through the Protected Areas on Private Land program provides a shining example of the great opportunity that Tasmania provides for world leading conservation outcomes.

I wish to acknowledge the wonderful work of so many people in progressing nature conservation on their land and neighbourhood - through a shared ethic, so much can be achieved. I hope you enjoy reading this edition, and from its pages, find inspiration and encouragement to keep Tasmania a magical natural place.

Peter Voller, Manager
Land Conservation Branch



In this **Issue**

The Running Postman *is printed on Monza Satin recycled paper, derived from sustainable forests, elemental chlorine free pulp and certified environmental systems.*

On the cover: Yellow paperdaisies at the Vale of Belvoir. Photo by Matt Newton. Design and layout: ILS Design Unit, DPIPWE.

Conservation Landholders Tasmania

2013 Field Days and Next Steps

Thirty one conservation landholders and representatives from conservation organisations attended a field day on *Rehabilitation of Degraded Land* at Gunns Plains, near Ulverstone, on 24th March.

The field day was the third organised by the self-help volunteer group Conservation Landholders Tasmania (CLT). The previous two field days were on *Weed Control* and *Fire Management for Asset Protection and Ecological Burning*.

The principal presenter for the latest field day was David Tongway, a former CSIRO scientist based in the ACT who spends his 'retirement' teaching and advising on ecological restoration around the globe. He and John Ludwig are authors of the book entitled *Restoring Disturbed Landscapes – Putting Principles into Practice*, which encapsulates their ideas and approach to landscape restoration from 35 years of collaboration and practical experience.

At the heart of David's approach is the idea that you need to fully understand how a landscape functions before you can develop a plan to restore it. Assessment of landscape function and biodiversity are complementary, and both are needed for the wise management of a landscape.

Assessment of landscape function uses quite different concepts and indicators to standard biodiversity assessments. It focuses instead on vital resources such as water, topsoil, seeds and organic matter.

During the day participants were taught how to 'read the landscape' using simple in-the-field observations and tests to evaluate soil health and how well a landscape is operating as a biophysical system. This included identifying the presence of soil fungus *Streptomyces* by its characteristic 'earthy' smell!

In the field David drew on the local knowledge and expertise of the North-West's own Jim McLeod from Oldina Nursery, author with Sue Gray of *Living with Plants – A guide to Revegetation Plants for North West Tasmania*.

The field day was organised by the CLT Steering Committee and financially supported by a Cradle Coast NRM Community Biodiversity Grant awarded to the Tasmanian Land Conservancy as the CLT event sponsor. The Land Conservation Branch in DPIPWE also provided assistance with communications.

The field component of the day was held at 'Tall White Gums', a conservation property in Gunns Plains preserving and restoring the threatened *Eucalyptus viminalis* wet forest. The property was sold to the current owners in 2010 by Tasmanian Land Conservancy which had purchased it through its Revolving Fund. The property's owners, John Thompson and Annette Vojinov, are actively revegetating or restoring five hectares of the property with the assistance of an Australian Government Biodiversity Fund grant they were awarded in May 2012.

The next CLT gathering will be at Campbelltown on Saturday 24 August, supported by NRM North. We have selected a central location to make it accessible to landholders from all parts of the State. There will be expert presentations on a topic that many have requested, *The management of pest species on conservation land*. In addition, Professor Malcolm Wells will facilitate a discussion on future priorities for CLT.

For further information about the next gathering or about CLT please contact Robin on 0438 002 615 or email **robin@rubicon.org.au**.

Robin Garnett and John Thompson

Photos (L to R): Demonstrating in-the-field soil health analysis. Photo by Robin Garnett. David Tongway, Photo by Phil Collier.

Sprouters and seeders
natural regeneration

The start of 2013 saw some terrifying destructive fires at various locations in Tasmania, especially the Forcett- Dunalley, Lake Repulse and Molesworth fires. Numerous houses and infrastructure were lost in these fires along with 100's and 100's of hectares of native bushland and forest.

The scene after a fierce fire has gone through is blackened trees, burnt canopies, the ground covered in black to whitish grey ash with charred fallen trees or branches and little if any evidence of the understorey or ground cover. Yet, within two to three weeks post fire amazingly green leaves can be seen sprouting along the trunks and branches of gum trees and green leaves sprout from the ground from saggs. The resilience of the Australian bush to bounce back after a severe fire event is truly a remarkable and extraordinary adaptation to evolutionary change and natural regeneration.

Eucalypts are a fine example of some of the types of adaptations used to cope with stress, such as fire, to enable regeneration. The two key mechanisms identified to aid regeneration involve the capacity to grow from seed if the entire plant is killed, known as 'reseeding', or the ability to grow from stem, trunk or rootstock, known as 'resprouting'. Reseeding is usually undertaken by Eucalypt species with smooth trunks that produce hard seed cases. Fire promotes the release of seeds from the gum nuts and germination of seed occurs when conditions are favourable for the growth and survival of seedlings. Reseeders tend to produce more seeds and greater numbers of seedlings in an effort to maintain the species' presence in the vegetation community.

Resprouting occurs largely with Eucalypts which have dense thick bark. This offers protection for the buds which remain dormant until stimulated to grow. This is known as epicormic growth. Hormonal inhibition controls sprouting with epicormic buds sprouting in response to a physiological imbalance in the tree crown which prompts an expansion in leaf area to compensate for the loss and to assist with the maintenance of tree health and survival. Effectively, it is a re-establishment of the leaf area following disturbance or stress, this can also happen following drought or massive insect infestation.

Another form of resprouting in some Eucalypt species is from underground lignotubers, which are large swollen roots. This can occur even if no above ground part of the tree survives. Growth from sprouted lignotubers often results in multi-stemmed trunks. Lignotubers store nutrients and reserves which sustain the growth of the growing shoots.

Understanding the mechanism by which Eucalypts, and indeed other plant species, recover after a significant fire event can lead to consideration of fire regimes with respect to such factors as frequency, intensity, and season. Too frequent fires can lead to loss of biodiversity from exhausting the epicormic bud reserves or preventing 'reseeders' from attaining a size where they can produce seed. This can lead to a significant change in the vegetation community and loss of both flora and fauna species.

Iona Mitchell

Photos (L to R): Epicormic bud, Epicormic growth. Photos by Janet Smith.

Landcare Tasmania

Biodiversity Grants

For more information of the successful projects and future funding contact:
Peter Stronach: 0488 404 061
projectmanager@landcare.tas.gov.au
www.landcaretas.org.au
or alternatively contact your local Stewardship Officer.

Thanks to a new partnership between Landcare Tasmania and the Private Land and Conservation Program (PLCP), new projects have just been announced to protect high conservation values, with more grants on the way.

Supported through funding from the Australian Government's Biodiversity Fund, fifteen projects have been funded under the first round of the Landcare Biodiversity Grants, including eight covenants and three Land for Wildlife (LfW) properties.

The main activities are based on three Australian Government project themes where work supports biodiverse plantings; protection and enhancement of natural values; and the removal of threats to vegetation in good condition.

The initiative will include several rounds of funding to support land managers across the state with biodiversity conservation.

Round 1 was by Expression of Interest and potential applicants were identified in targeted areas across the state and from several well developed projects from other areas. Project proposals could include three stages (a maximum of $15,000 per stage) with activities to be completed by May 2015.

Three main focus areas were identified using several methods in consultation with the PLCP team. The methods included the focal landscapes and metrics spatial layers developed by DPIPWE, which highlighted concentrations of high conservation areas.

The Meehan Range

Landholders in the Meehan Range in the south were targeted for onground activities which involved fencing, weed control (including African Boxthorn, Radiata Pine and Gorse) and revegetation. The vegetation communities range from the threatened *Eucalyptus amygdalina* forest on Cainozoic soils to *Eucalyptus globulus* forest.

The far North West

A cluster of landholders in the far NW were invited to participate in this round. This area is a focal landscape with a number of high value forest communities and threatened species on private land. Removing weed threats from large tracts of *Melaleuca ericifolia* swamp forest are part of the activities in this area. Other sites involve gorse removal from Wet *Eucalyptus brookeriana* forest. These forest communities are both listed as threatened under the *Nature Conservation Act (2002)*.

St Marys to Beaumaris

A group of LfW and covenanted properties in the north east were also targeted, many of which link with the current state reserve system. One successful project will trial a "caging" method to allow natural regeneration without the browsing pressure from native animals. In another project, the North East Bioregional Network will continue activities on its landscape scale restoration project on the Skyline Tier removing Radiata pine from regenerating areas that have been logged in the past.

A state-wide round for activities in high conservation areas will be opened in the new financial year.

Peter Stronach

Photos (L to R):
Gorse control Stanley West Inlet.Photo by Peter Stronach.
Removal of gorse from covenanted area of dry forest near Risdon Vale. Photo by Iona Mitchell

Connecting
landholders with researchers

A team of 36 researchers led by the University of Tasmania's Centre for Environment Director, Professor Ted Lefroy, is studying the Northern Midlands Bioregion as a case study in regional biodiversity conservation.

The Landscapes and Policy Research Hub is funded for four years (2011-2014) by the National Environmental Research Program (NERP) to examine the environmental, social and economic impacts of land use change, climate change, demographics and government policy in two contrasting regions, Tasmania's Northern Midlands and the Australian Alps.

A review of the Australia's primary conservation legislation, the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC)*, recommended that we lift the scale at which we manage Australia's biological diversity, from that of species and communities, to include consideration of whole landscapes and ecosystems. The research hub is responding to this recommendation by developing tools, techniques and policy options to integrate biodiversity into regional scale planning.

The hub is placing particular emphasis on landscape-scale management of species and communities listed under the under EPBC Act, including the Tasmanian Devil and the Tasmanian Midlands Lowland Grasslands communities.

Combining the expertise of researchers from a range of disciplines (social science, economics, climatology, biogeography, wildlife, vegetation, fire and freshwater ecology), they are exploring the likely implications of different scenarios of climate, land use, land management, demographics and infrastructure development in the Tasmanian Midlands on ecosystem services, agricultural profitability and habitat suitability for selected species of plants, mammals, reptiles, birds and amphibians.

Researchers from all discipline areas have been drawing on the expertise of staff from the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment and using existing datasets to examine the Tasmanian Midlands as a social-ecological system, and explore the implications of a range of plausible scenarios on biodiversity and its management.

A key objective of the hub is to talk to landowners about their agricultural operations and get a feel for what they currently do to encourage biodiversity and find out what obstacles are currently limiting the effectiveness of their conservation activity.

To gain a grassroots appreciation for biodiversity conservation in Tasmania, early in the project's life the research team visited the Coal River Valley, the Northern Midlands bioregion between the Eastern and Western Tiers, the Tunbridge Township Lagoon Nature Reserve, Hydro Tasmania's Cressy property, the Tom Gibson Nature Reserve at Epping Forest and properties at Tunbridge, Ross, Blackwood Creek and Cressy.

'We have visited farms, involved long term residents and other experts in workshops, interviewed landowners and agency staff and discussed biodiversity conservation with community organisation and NGOs that manage and fund conservation

projects' said Professor Ted Lefroy.

'Every landholder we have spoken to has emphasised the bottom line, that they are in business and they have to make a profit, but biodiversity conservation is seen as an important element of a healthy, profitable landscape,' Professor Lefroy said.

For more about the hub go to **www.nerplandscapes.edu.au**
Enquiries: Landscapes.Policy@utas.edu.au

Research Highlight 1: Mapping wildlife refuges from satellites

Using satellite data, we are testing a novel method for identifying areas that may function as refuges for multiple species in response to drought, climate change and fire. Focusing on the Tasmanian Midlands, we are using MODIS satellite data to generate a decade long time series of vegetation growth at a resolution of 250 m by 250 m. We have begun ground-truthing to test the hypothesis that sites with the highest and most stable growth may represent potential refuges.

Reference: Mackey B, Berry S, Hugh S, Ferrier S, Harwood TD & Williams KJ (2012) Ecosystem greenspots: identifying potential drought, fire, and climate-change micro-refuges, *Ecological Applications* 22:1852–1864.

Research Highlight 2: Species on the move

Modelling the fate of selected Tasmanian grassland species and communities under future climate is suggesting they are on the move, with some strong contractions in the areas over which they are likely to occur. These future distributions vary depending on the particular global climate models used and the set of climate variables used in the modelling process, producing a broad range from extinction to maintenance of their current range.

This has several important implications for research and policy. For research, it highlights the potential sources of error and uncertainty involved when modelling future habitat and the need for researchers to make their selections of model inputs very clear. Questions for policy include the future value of specific locations identified as priority areas for conservation or restoration when the target species and communities are on the move.

Research Highlight 3: Temperature the big threat to freshwater biodiversity

Modelling of Tasmanian river systems under future climate indicates that changes in temperature are likely to have a greater influence on the aquatic biota than changes in stream flow. Using climate simulations from the Australian Government funded Climate Futures for Tasmania project, responses of invertebrates, fish and riparian vegetation have been modelled using a suite of connected models. The results point to the likely localised decline of the Gondwanan-adapted aquatic fauna by 2070 (with the notable exception of eels) due to temperature thresholds being exceeded.

Research Highlight 4: Protecting biodiversity with incentive programs

We conducted an analysis of all tenders for conservation services on private land in the Tasmanian Midlands, concluding that selection criteria favoured agreements with longer durations over agreements that focused on site quality. We also revealed that as the auction budget increases, the conservation value per dollar invested declines. While the latter outcome is largely unavoidable, the tendency to value longevity over quality may not be the most effective way of protecting the greatest area. Where regulatory regimes are likely to change, securing high quality sites for shorter periods is likely to provide a greater guarantee of protecting high quality habitat into the future.

Reference: Iftekhar MS, Tisdell JG & Sprod D (2013) *A review of conservation project selection criteria in the Midlands Biodiversity Hotspot Tender, Tasmania: sensitivity to project duration and auction budget,* University of Tasmania, Hobart, Tasmania.

Suzie Gaynor

Photos (L to R): Researcher Sue Gould (Griffith University) collecting vegetation data. Photo by Suzie Gaynor. A Tasmanian stream, Photo by Regina Magierowski. Tasmanian Midlands. Photo by Suzie Gaynor.

Managing the **Vale of Belvoir**

The Tasmanian Land Conservancy (TLC) raises funds from the public to protect irreplaceable sites and rare ecosystems by buying and managing private land in Tasmania. The Vale of Belvoir was purchased from the Charleston family in 2008 and they continue to assist the TLC in its management.

Long before Europeans came to Tasmania, the Tommeginner tribe of north-west Tasmania travelled through the open grasslands of the Vale of Belvoir, a practice they had probably done for thousands of years.

They may have rested here, and early Europeans observed them burning the grasslands, perhaps to keep the encroaching shrubs and trees at bay to maintain the open, native grasslands as pastures for their herbivorous game. Then they would move on, returning as their travelling cycle dictated, to rest and burn again.

This practice of disturbing the grasslands through seasonal burning, in addition to low-intensity stock grazing, was subsequently undertaken by the Charleston family and their ancestors since the 1890s. The Vale of Belvoir is one of only a handful of highland tussock grasslands in Tasmania to be continuously managed this way.

Whilst it sounds disruptive, scientists recognise that periodic disturbance is required in native grasslands to reduce competition from the dominant poa grasses. This allows the less competitive herbs to regenerate. As a result of the long-term disturbance regime, the Vale exhibits high species diversity within the grasslands, retains numerous threatened plant species and is predominantly in good condition.

These highland tussock grasslands are rare and endangered in Tasmania and were the primary reason for the TLC's 2008 purchase of the property. Key to maintaining the condition of these grasslands is ensuring that management practices are not changed until we better understand, through scientific monitoring, which aspects of past management have led to the Vale retaining its current natural values.

This management effectiveness monitoring (as it is known in scientific jargon) began in 2009 with surveys by the TLC to establish the presence, absence and distribution of any threatened plant species. These were followed by monitoring the populations of key threatened plant species, which included the stunning white grassland paperdaisy and the mat-forming herb, alpine candles.

Stock-proof fencing has been installed around sensitive wetlands, and the tussock grasslands incidentally included within these, will be monitored for any effects occurring from the absence of summer stock grazing. A recent planned grassland burn passed through one of these fenced areas. This offers an excellent opportunity to explore the varying effects of grazing and burning, or their absence, on the grasslands.

Many of the lessons learnt over the past four years have been gained from working closely with the previous owners, Kevin and Wendy Charleston and their daughters, who have been very generous with their knowledge of the Vale. This information is being collated and has formed the basis of the Vale of Belvoir Reserve Management Plan. In addition to the management plan, a fire management strategy is also currently being developed.

It is still too early to ascertain the specific effects of burning and stock grazing on the grasslands; however, the TLC is establishing an excellent understanding of the otherwise little-known ecology of some of the threatened plant species. For instance, alpine candles appears to respond very well to burning in early spring, with established plants observed to have vigorously re-sprouted within two months and have apparently expanded into areas previously dominated by grass tussocks.

It is quite probable that much of this knowledge existed long before European settlement in Tasmania, but was lost with the removal of Aboriginal people from these lands. However, as the Tommeginner tribe are likely to have done, we return to the property to share and build on our slowly increasing knowledge of this exceptional landscape.

Denna Kingdom

Photo: Vale of Belvoir. Photo by Anita Lopez.

The Chequered Blue Butterfly - a rare saltmarsh species in Tasmania, is flying earlier than ever

The Chequered Blue *Theclinesthes serpentata lavara* (Couchman, 1954) is a small but distinctive grey and blue butterfly with chequered wing margins and a short tail on the outer margin of the hindwing. It has a restricted distribution in Tasmania and is listed as a rare species under the *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995*.

Curiously, the chequered blue is a widespread and common species on mainland Australia and exploits various widespread chenopods as foodplants for its caterpillar stage.

First found in Tasmania near Cambridge in the 1950s, populations in the south east of the island are regarded as a separate subspecies, being slightly smaller and completing only a single generation annually.

During a public excursion to the rehabilitated Lauderdale tip site for World Wetlands Day in early February this year, three chequered blues were observed flying around coastal saltbush behind the tip fence. A week later, numerous individuals (estimated 25-40) were active in close proximity to coastal saltbush *Rhagodia candolleana* growing along and near the western fence line of the tip site in mid-afternoon sunshine. Most were males but at least one female, somewhat worn, was seen. Here, the saltbush takes the form of a vigorous scrambling or spreading plant which can overgrow other coastal vegetation and even climbs high against a cyclone wire fence. This could be a useful plant in the rehabilitation of nearby degraded saline communities.

Also present at the site, but less abundant, was climbing saltbush *Einadia nutans* a scrambling perennial native herb common in dry places near the coast (recognised by slightly succulent leaves up to 25 mm long, often hastate in shape). At nearby Dorans Road, a male chequered blue was seen to take nectar at the flowers of the invasive African box thorn *Lycium ferocissimum*, an association that has been noted previously.

These observation dates are considerably earlier in the year than previous records which generally extend from mid-March to early April.

While it may be premature to ascribe this to climate change, elsewhere in the world various butterfly species in temperate climate zones are emerging earlier from their over-wintering dormant stages than ever recorded before.

More attention has been given to this butterfly in recent years and a number of new locations are now known. Phil Bell, Dydee Mann and Jo Potter, among others, have discovered new populations but these are all strictly coastal. On mainland Australia the chequered blue extends well inland and completes several generations each year. It is thought to be continuously brooded year-round in South Australia for example. In addition, mainland populations feed on a wider variety of chenopods, including weedy species in urban areas.

The strong association of the chequered blue with saltmarshes in Tasmania is an emerging conservation issue because these environments will be early casualties of rapid sea level rise.

Peter McQuillan

Photos (L to R): Coastal saltbush spreading over fence. Photo by Peter McQuillan. Male Chequered blue butterfly basking on coastal saltbush. Photo by Peter McQuillan.

World Wetlands Day **celebrated in Tasmania**

Wetlands are beautiful and unique components of the landscape and on 2nd February free public events were held in Hobart and Launceston to promote and celebrate our Tasmanian wetlands and their flora and fauna.

Bogs, lagoons, marshes, moors and swamps… all of these colloquial terms refer to habitats which are broadly known as 'wetlands'. Tasmania has 20,000 wetlands which vary in size from less than 1 ha to more than 27,000 ha. Wetland types range from freshwater highland tarns to coastal saltmarshes, with all others lying in-between according to their salinity, water depth and water level fluctuations.

Wetland types are often characterised by their dominant plant community. However, given their dynamic nature, more than one plant communities are usually present. Twenty-seven broad wetland communities are recognised in Tasmania (TASVEG, DPIPWE). Nine of which are listed as threatened under the *Nature Conservation Act 2002*.

Despite the relatively small area of Tasmania which is covered by wetland habitat (approx. 3% of the State), these areas are disproportionately important to Tasmanian ecosystems, with many flora and fauna relying on these habitats. For example, many Tasmanian bird and frog species use wetlands for breeding. Furthermore, given the wide variety of wetland types in Tasmania and the range of threats which they face, managing these areas can be problematic. Many wetlands require specific measures to ensure their ongoing protection, especially if they lie in heavily altered or degraded regions.

Private land owners can enter into a legally binding Conservation Covenant to manage their wetland specifically for nature conservation. Administered by the Private Land Conservation Program (PLCP), Tasmania's perpetual covenants also contribute to the National Reserve System. Tasmania has 716 covenants (83,325 ha) of which 106 (4,529 ha) contain important wetland communities. These include six threatened communities, twenty-two threatened plants species and habitat for the endangered green and gold frog.

Given the importance of wetlands, it is not surprising that an international convention was formulated to help protect these habitats. World Wetlands Day is celebrated internationally each year on 2 February. It marks the anniversary of the signing of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention) in the city of Ramsar, Iran, on 2 February 1971. Australia currently has 64 Ramsar-listed wetlands, 10 of which are located in Tasmania. Besides its Ramsar-listed wetlands, Tasmania has 79 wetlands listed as nationally important in the *Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia (DIWA)*.

To celebrate World Wetlands Day 2013 and promote the importance of wetlands, DPIPWE co-ordinated events at the *Tamar Island Wetlands Centre*, Riverside (North) and *Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens*, Hobart (South).

Both events were very successful with approx 7-800 people participating in the wetland activities including: information forum, guided wetland walks, treasure hunts, reptile displays, butterfly and bug making, painting, bug identification, weaving, and more. Due to their success, we will be holding both events again next year so watch out on the DPIPWE website for further information **www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au.**

Janet Smith and Scott Hardie

Photo: Aphelia gracilis. Photo Richard Schahinger.

The Protected Areas on Private Land Program

The Protected Areas on Private Land Program, or PAPL as it's known to many, is perhaps Australia's oldest voluntary conservation covenanting program. The first PAPL covenant was registered on private land in July 1999, making this the 13th year of PAPL. The policy objectives of the program have always been the same, to protect in perpetuity under represented or rare types of native vegetation on private land. Once a covenant is registered on a land title the area becomes part of Australia's National Reserve System, while of course remaining in private ownership.

The program has been so successful because the policy drivers have been real; there really are some unique and threatened areas and species on private land in Tasmania and this is partly why the program has been so long lasting; with the core partnership of the Australia Government's National Reserve System Program, The Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment and the Tasmanian Land Conservancy remaining stable over this period. Today there are 228 PAPL covenants covering an area of 10,603 hectares. Another way to look at this is that almost one third of the state's 718 covenants have came about without any financial incentives, without any enticement, regulatory or developmental requirement, so there must be more about the program than simply it having strong partnership support.

It's no surprise really that the real essence of PAPL is the people who own the land. Just in the last week we had a covenant registered at Jackeys Marsh; actually it was the third covenant registered on this property, wow that is something Mr John Robbin! As I sit here and think about those covenants I have seen go through in my time as PAPL Coordinator, it is like a virtual Google Earth tour. The tour starts right on the high tide mark, crosses lichen covered rocks on the west coast and passes up through the salt sprayed eucalypt forest and damp scrub of the covenants at Marrawah; Google Earth accelerates and I can see myself walking with Michael Sherriff on Flinders Island across his hillside scorched from the last summers fire, both wondering what would come back; what did come back Michael? The tour continues down the East Coast, panning in and out, into dry forest, wet gullies, along private beaches (how lucky are some people?), across the Tasman Peninsula, to Bruny Island and the Huon, and at each stop I remember the stories told by the landowners of their places and their warm invitations to return.

So, return I will. Probably over the next year or two you too will be able to visit some of these covenants. The PAPL program is planning its next program of events and part of this will involve landowner workshops and field days at covenants, providing an opportunity to share stories and see some of the wonderful biodiversity that we have in Tasmania. Whether your covenant is small but perfectly formed, designed to protect some of the last forty spotted pardalotes on earth, or whether it is a giant highland protected landscape at over 1,600 hectares, like the Tasmanian Land Conservancy's 'Skullbone Plains' property it shares something in common with all of the others; and I think the something is a 'specialness' of biodiversity, nurtured by a human presence and an enduring sense of place.

Partner web sites

http://www.environment.gov.au/parks/nrs/

http://www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/plcp

http://www.tasland.org.au/

Dean Vincent

Photo: Banksia marginata flower. Photo Dean Vincent

Conservation Landholders Tasmania

Conservation Landholders Tasmania (CLT) is a self-help volunteer group providing conservation landholders with support and opportunities for sharing information. The common aim of these conservation landowners is generally to protect, manage and enhance the natural values on their properties.

Since its inception in April 2012, CLT has held three field days covering issues of importance to private conservation landholders: *Weed Control*, *Fire management and Rehabilitation of Degraded Land*. Each field day has included presentations by experts and a visit to a covenanted property. The three NRMs, DPIPWE, TLC and others have assisted with the field days.

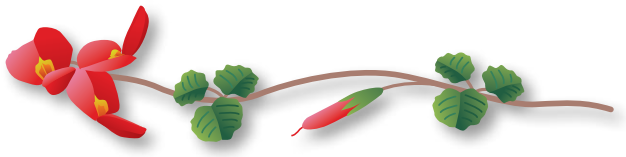
Feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive.

The next CLT get-together will be at Campbelltown on Saturday 24 August on *The Management of Pest Animals on Conservation Properties*.

To become a member of CLT and to keep in touch with future activities, contact the Steering Committee:

Robin Garnett
0438 002 615
robin@rubicon.org.au

John Thompson
03 6429 1138
thompsonjohng@gmail.com



Private Land Conservation Program participants as at May 1, 2013

Number of covenants	717
- hectares	83,332
Land for Wildlife members	848
- hectares	56,294
Gardens for Wildlife members	475
- hectares	2,570

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 **6233 6427** or **iona.mitchell@dpipwe.tas.gov.au**

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 PLCP 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.

PLCP Contacts

Stewardship
North: Stu King 6336 5427
South: Lyn Pullen 6233 3117
Land For Wildlife
Iona Mitchell 6233 6427

Resource Management and Conservation
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Tasmania
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