



swift chatter



June 2015

swift tips | Engaging young children in protecting dunes.

Last year Michael and I where approached by Discovery Early Learning Child Care Centre to run a coast care activity.

After touring their centre, seeing the vegetable patch, free range chickens and talking to the older children (3-4 year olds), we adapted our primary school program to suit this younger age group.

This involved building a dune system near the water edge, covering it with wind mesh material.

We ran two sessions; each group had 20 children and 4 Carers.

Group A: we taught them how to plant a plant, and then gave them the opportunity to plant a coastal plant.

Group B: We started by all joining hands and holding on tight; I likened this to the root of plants holding onto the sand. I then

showed them my Dune with the wind mesh material holding onto the sand like the roots of plants. I then told a story about Mr Happy and Mr Lazy. They where given buckets of water and encouraged to throw the water at the toe of the Dune, we talked about how much sand was washed away. We then cut throughout the wind mesh material as Mr Lazy and his friends did not want to use the proper walk way therefore killed the plants and their roots by walking over them. They again threw water at the edge of the Dune, this time a lot of sand got washed away from where Mr Lazy was walking through the Dune. Mr Happy was now not happy because his house was being flooded from Mr Lazy's eroded walk way.

Group A and B swapped over, this was repeated for the next group

(They had a mini bus and brought the children down in two groups)

Evaluation: Each session was only half an hour which was just right for this aged group.

The Carers gave us positive feed back, one of them overheard one of the children telling his father they can't use their own walkway to the beach anymore as it is bad.

Even though we had to replant some of the plants we both thought it was a valuable exercise that introduces the children to caring for our Environment.

*By Susanne and Michael Hovington,
Landerdale Coastcare.*



Clarence has recently lost two long-time volunteers in Land and Coastcare, Neale Mathews and Bruce Andrew. These two gentlemen have given their valued expertise and time to care for Clarence's Natural Areas and will be missed.

NEALE MATTHEWS

15-8-1943 - 8-03-2015

On Sunday 8th March Neale Matthews passed away after a further recurrence of brain tumour problems that had first emerged two years previously. In 2008 when Neale retired he accepted an invitation to give a hand with the rehabilitation / development of the Bluff foreshore although he did not live in the immediate area – the request was responded to in a most spectacular way. Over the ensuing six years, Neale assisted with several school groups, Conservation Volunteers, Polytechnic students, corporate volunteers, and for a period of 18 months with a day-release prisoner for two days a week. Neale was also the Group's treasurer. He would have averaged a full day a week over that six year period. Many of the improvements on the Bluff during recent years are attributable to his passion, energy and vision.

In 2011, our group won the Tasmanian Landcare Award, and the following year Neale represented the State and the group at the National Landcare Conference and Awards in Sydney.

In 2013 Neale was awarded a Pride of Australia Medal in the Environment category, Tasmania division, and later travelled to Sydney for the national awards where he was a runner-up, a fitting acknowledgement for his outstanding contributions.

Our group extends its deepest sympathies to his wife, Helen, to his three sons – Nathan, Craig and Giles - and to their families.

On the Monday following his funeral, the family gathered on the Bluff to establish a memorial section with plants provided by our group along with a generous donation of a mature Callistemon donated by Andrew and Helenka at Wild Seed.

Graeme Rainbow
Bellerive Bluff Coastcare

BRUCE ANDREW

Bruce was born in January 1932. Raised in suburban Sydney, he trained as a Land Surveyor, working on sewer design and location and as Engineering Surveyor at Warragamba Dam. He was experienced in road design and construction, drainage and footpath maintenance. He retired as Assistant Works Engineer for Blacktown Council in 1980 due to ill health.

His experience provided useful attributes in his retirement years. With their children grown up, he and wife, Wendy, moved to Tasmania in 1991 to enjoy their retirement and joined the Tranmere-Clairence Plains Land & Coastcare Inc. in 1997.

Bruce helped Wendy as a volunteer manager of Work for the Dole teams for 7 years on Council's Clarence Plains Rivulet Recreation area, and was instrumental in teaching them to concrete, install seats, and sub-soil drains, plan and construct a 900m walkway, whilst rehabilitating the area. The Old Rokeby Historic Trail was another major project.

Bruce also used his previous chemical training to the advantage of his local patch with weed control of boxthorn and boneseed. Bruce helped to protect threatened species on a coastal reserve, by helping with fencing and protecting the saltmarsh from horses and human vandalism.

Bruce was widely respected for his contribution to caring for our environment by many other groups, local government and non-government organisations.

The environment has benefitted much from his practical skills.

Bruce suffered cancer for many years and finally succumbed in February 2015. His family would like to thank all those who have supported them in this difficult time.

By Wendy Andrew



*Glebe Hill Landcare
group ready for weeds!*

new landcare group in Clarence

A new Landcare group has formed in Clarence at the Glebe Hill Reserve. The group was formed as part of public consultation process for the recently approved Reserve Activity Plan (RAP) by Clarence City Council.

The group's convenor Adam Holmstrom (second left) and the new members are very keen to raise awareness of the reserve and its place in the local community and to encourage local residents in the use of and appreciation of the beautiful natural environment on their doorstep.

The Glebe Hill Landcare group has held two working bee's removing woody weeds from the Wendy Andrew Entrance is now busily planning activities in line with the RAP. They are also considering a letter box drop to local residents about activities they can participate in over the coming year.

Image: C Johns

Bushfire Ready Neighbourhoods *We all play a part.*



Are you and your community bushfire ready?

Bushfire preparation is a year round activity and even though this past summer has been a quiet fire season, this will change from year to year and we need to not let this make us complacent about the very real risk of bushfires in the landscape.

Clarence City Council in collaboration with the TFS Bushfire Ready Neighbourhoods program has been active during the summer of 2014/15 working with two Clarence communities- Mt Rumney and Dulcot. Coordinated by Phil Watson at Council and Community Development Coordinator Peter Middleton, TFS, said "the community engagement activities have seen positive interest and attendances by community members".

Two property assessment field days have taken place with 100 community members attending between events.

Council and TFS will be looking to do engagement works with these communities and some other high risk communities with the aim to build shared responsibility where we all play a part; individuals, emergency management agencies and communities.

Image Courtesy of Peter Middleton

new connection on the Tangarra Trail

Clarence City Council recently completed an important connection on the Tangarra trail on the Mortimer Bay section south. The new section links the coast trail from the Mortimer Bay southern carpark, Gellibrand Drive, to Baragoola Lane then to Palan Court and linking to the South Arm Highway and the South Arm State Recreation Area via Gellibrand Drive.

It is part of the multi user trail for horse, mountain bike and walkers seeking great natural area experiences that Clarence is becoming increasingly known for.

Image: J Easton

Clarence council's legendary trail consultant and contractor John "snapper" Hughes with his dog giving the new trail a test run.



Sign of *the times*



Wildcare, Parks and Council
(courtesy Elizabeth Shannon).

Visitors to Clifton Beach can now learn more about the natural values of the locale, thanks to stylish new signage in the adjoining picnic area. The sign gives information about the three adjoining reserves that make up this conservation area: the Clifton Beach Coastal Reserve, the Cape Deslacs Nature Reserve, and the Pipe Clay Lagoon Reserve.

Clarence City Council Mayor Doug Chipman and Councillor Sharyn Von Bertouch were on hand to mark the occasion. Commenting on the way the design reflected the cultural and natural values of the area, "It's a beautiful sign" Mayor Chipman said to the artist commissioned to undertake the work, Kath Chapman, of Design Soiree, Cremorne.

Clarence City Council has been very supportive of Wildcare Deslacs and been a valuable partner in maintaining the group's momentum. The natural values sign was funded by a Clarence City Council Community Support Grant. It marks another step in the implementation of the *2013 Clifton Beach Coastal Reserve Activity Plan* - collaboratively developed by Clarence City Council; Wildcare Deslacs; Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service; the Clifton Beach Surf Lifesaving Club; and other interested members of the community.

Clarence City Council has provided funding to work in partnership with these stakeholders to:

- landscape in the centre of the car park and revegetate the dunes this side of the beach
- upgrade the beach access track near the toilets
- undertake revegetation works in the community park and along Clifton Beach Rd

Council has also supported the rubbish clean ups with funding and/or practical support on Clean Up Australia Day.

Peter Feil, Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service Ranger at the South East Field Centre, Seven Mile Beach, expressed appreciation of the work of Wildcare groups, such as the one operating at Clifton Beach. The Community Action in Reserves (CARes) groups assist in Reserve management across the state. Wildcare Deslacs work with Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service on protecting the short-tailed shearwater rookery on the Cape Deslacs reserve.

Ian Mace, Wildcare Deslacs president, thanked both key partners and then outlined the other kinds of work done by the group, which was formed in November 2008. This includes

- work with the Pipeclay Lagoon Oyster Growers Association removing feral oysters from the Pipeclay Reserve; and
- work with the University of Tasmania Tasmanian Shoreline Monitoring and Archiving Project (monitoring the effects of sea level rise on vulnerable coastlines).

If you are purchasing a Tasmanian Parks Pass, simply tick the box and you can become a member of Wildcare, with no additional cost <http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/?base=914> Alternatively, you can join a Wildcare branch near you via the Wildcare website - membership costs only \$25 per annum at <https://wildcaretas.org.au/join/>



network chatter

Clean Up Australia Day

2015 Clean Up Australia Day in Clarence

The Clarence city council community and schools were once again outstanding in their efforts on Clean Up Australia Day.

Veolia once again were very generous with their resources and provided a total of eight skip bins around key sites within the Clarence municipality (these skips were provided at the request of participating groups).

Eleven groups or schools requested rubbish pick-ups – this rubbish was added to skips where possible.

Bunnings (Rosny Park) were also very generous in supplying disposable gloves, gardening gloves, bags, electrical tape and cable ties. Clarence City Council is grateful for the on-going support from Bunnings.

'Art from Trash' schools exhibition: Bellerive Primary School participated in 'Art from Trash 2015'. Bellerive Primary School held the exhibition in their school reception area, and the exhibits were then displayed in CCC foyer for the school holidays. Certificates

The clean-up results were as follows:

Total number of estimated participants: 2,500

Total Tonnes of waste collected: 14.8

Passenger tyres collected: 40 recycled, 23 to Mornington Total 63

Total number of truck tyres collected: 3 recycled Total 3

Light truck tyres collected: 5 recycled, 6 to Mornington Total 11

Total number of registered sites: 25

Total number of registered participants: 47

Total number of community groups participating: 18

Total number of school groups participating: 10

Total number of business groups participating: 1

Total number of students participating in 'Art from Trash' 40

were presented to students at the school's assembly by Alderman James Walker. Participating classes were presented with gift certificates, purchased from Bunnings.

By Sally Johns CUAD Coordinator

Image: Art from trash Bellerive Primary School. Image C.Johns

safety: volunteers workers manual

Clarence City Council is committed to providing safe and healthy workplaces for all volunteers and I am pleased to be able to announce the availability of the Volunteer Workers Manual to all of our hard working volunteers in Natural Areas. Over the coming months I will be distributing the manual to groups as well as a short presentation session to go through the Manual and answer questions.

The purpose of this manual is to provide guidance in regard to work health and safety matters within Council. Information is of a general nature only and all volunteers are encouraged to seek additional information and advice where deemed necessary.

Part A of our Volunteer Workers Manual contains general information and outlines the registration process to be completed by all volunteers.

Part B provides practical advice and guidance for on-ground works to assist convenors and working bee supervisors.

Electronic copies of this manual are located on the Clarence City Council web page www.ccc.tas.gov.au.

On behalf of Clarence City Council I would like to acknowledge input from Council Staff. Very big thanks go to the many groups' volunteers and convenors for their valued comments about the realities of the natural areas workplace and keeping the manual relevant.

Chris Johns
Natural Areas Volunteer Coordinator



The next round of Clarence City Council's Reserve Activity Plans will be for:

- Clarence Plains Rivulet
 - Kuynah Bushland reserve, a new RAP
 - Otago Bay Lagoon and Coastal reserves, a new Rap
- Keep an eye out in newspapers for your chance to be involved in caring for these Natural Areas or contact Phil Watson.
- RAP's for Potters Hill Reserve, Bellerive Howrah Beach and the combined Natone Hill, Geilston Bay and Limekiln Point reserves are awaiting endorsement by Council and should be ready for implementation soon.

early bird notices

Council is hosting an [Australian Government Green Army](#) team for a week in early August working around the Clarence Plains Rivulet

The next round of [Councils Land and Coastcare grants](#) will be starting in August for groups planning, with the official opening in September. Please consider what kind of project your group may wish to undertake so you can be ready to apply.

[National Tree Day](#) is on Sunday 26 July and Schools Tree Day on Friday 24 July. These are the official dates; however you can hold an event on another day if more convenient. The tree day is not just for trees, other understory plants and vegetation can also be included. Contact Justin Burgess or Chris Johns for more information and help to hold a planting day.

[Practical training for Volunteers](#). Clarence Council will be providing Land and Coastcare volunteers the opportunity to participate in hands on training. The first of these will be aspects of Natural Area Management in the form of a series of 9 workshops covering plant identification and weed management, seed collection and propagation.

Volunteer Training Workshop 1 - Plant ID and Weed Management

Date Saturday 19th September
Time 10:00am till 12.30pm
Venue Glebe Hill Bushland Reserve – meet at the park adjacent to 58 Glebe Hill Road
Contact Chris Johns
Phone 6217 9715
Email cjohns@ccc.tas.gov.au

Glebe Hill Wildflower Walk and Waverley Flora Park Wildflower

Come along and enjoy the natural environment at Glebe Hill to see the display of threatened species such as the Chocolate Lily (*Anthropodium strictum*) and the range of vegetation communities including the Risdon Peppermint (*Eucalyptus risdonii*). You can also get the chance to meet the volunteers of the Glebe Hill Bushland Reserve.

Date Sunday 8th November
Time Glebe Hill 9:00 am to 11:00am. Waverley Flora Park 11:30am to 1:30pm.
Venue Glebe Hill – meet Carpark 60 Glebe Hill Road, Waverley Flora Park – meet 2 Mercedes Place Bellerive
Contact Phil Watson
Phone 6245 8619
Email pwatson@ccc.tas.gov.au

Sustainable Parrot

The day was a cracker, bright warm sunny weather and an ideal day for enjoying nature's treasure troves. Deciding to leave the pack, walking boots, gaiters and jackets in the cupboard, I instead decided to fossick around for my bathers, towel, mask, snorkel and flippers. With a quick check on the tides I headed out to a favourite sheltered beach which had fortunately remained relatively unscathed from urban development.

With flippers in hand I tip toed cautiously into the shallow water being careful not to disturb the sensitive hooded plovers and pied oyster catchers prying for pippies and other sediment dwellers in the intertidal flats and the black swans feeding further out on the seagrass leaves. The biggest challenge was walking out to where it was deep enough, knowing that there was a curious world waiting to be explored under the water's mirror-like surface. Finally a few deep breaths and then – wow that was cold!

A cool seagrass meadow wonderland

Although gasping for air as the chilly water took my breath away I quickly adjusted and slowly phased into the gentle art of snorkelling. Slowly relaxing as I floated over the lush front lawn of the sea, its remarkable diversity of life began to reveal itself. Feeling comfortable as my back warmed under the hot sun, I soon became enthralled with the animal life crawling every which way beneath me. I watched intently as the numerous sea urchins with their hard jaw plates scrapped away at the seaweed leaves which seemed to host an array of encrusting epiphytes such as many different algae, sea sponges, sea mosses, sea fleas and sea lice. Segmented worms crawled over the grass in search of food. Curiously it became clear that numerous snails, amphipods, limpets, isopods and gastropods were not eating the

Southern strapweed *Posidonia australis* seagrass meadow courtesy of Professor Gary Kendrick¹



Native vegetation does not stop at the Beach

leaves but were also grazing on the epiphytic plants and algae growing on the seaweed leaves.

Interestingly there appeared to be two different species in the seagrass lawn growing over the thick accumulation of sediment trapped beneath the plants. The dominant seagrass seemed like groups of eels swimming along with their elongated strap-like leaves wavering in the current, so the names 'eelgrass' or 'strapweed' seemed like good names, whilst the other species had leaves much more like grass and appeared to be common in the wrack thrown up on beach so the name 'grass-wrack' seemed appropriate as a common name.

Surprisingly my observation powers had now become acute as this miniature forest of the sea revealed more of its secrets. Many common stationary (sessile) invertebrates were attached permanently to seagrass leaves and sandy surfaces. Reverting back to my childhood days I was tempted to poke at some of these filter feeding mussels, oysters, barnacles, sea squirts and clams, but the urge soon dissipated as my eyes were diverted towards the tiny shrimps and crabs scavenging on seagrass detritus. Noticing the remains of partially eaten invertebrates

made me wonder what types of carnivores were active. It appeared that the molluscs such as squid, octopi, whelks and other crustaceans were some of the culprits.

Could fish survive without seagrass meadows?

Without warning my heart jumped into my throat as I became aware of a large dark shadow lurking to the side of me. Good grief I gasped under my breath; it was a monster skate or maybe a ray? Whatever it was it frightened the hell out of me! Gracefully it nonchalantly glided past. Thank heavens for that!

Attempting to recognise and recall the names of fish darting in and out of the seagrasses became all pervading. The habitat provided by the seagrass seemed to offer a superb fish nursery as revealed by the many juvenile fish species such mullet, flounder, garfish, whiting, flathead, trumpeter and most importantly crayfish, oysters and muscles. I wondered what the fisher folk would do if this hidden seagrass meadow and fish breeding ground had the same sad fate as the many of Australia's sea meadows over the last 50 years.

Unheralded contributions to our planet's health

The crystal clear conditions allowed me to see bubbles of oxygen working their way to the surface prompting me to recall the 'Seagrass Fact Sheet' I read at brekkie. This explained that the seagrass meadows can be considered as lungs of the sea and possibly the most effective carbon sinks in the biosphere.

I was fairly impressed by the facts² that

- We can breathe easier knowing that just one square metre of seagrass generates up to 10 litres of oxygen by photosynthesis each day.
- Remarkably seagrasses provide the world with an undervalued long term Carbon storage system which traps most of the Carbon (Blue Carbon) in the sediment rather than in the seagrass plants themselves. Whereas carbon in a forest is mostly released by logging and fire before 100 years, Blue Carbon remains locked away in the sediment for up to 8000 years protected from fires.
- One hectare of southern strapweed meadow has up to 10 times more CO2 storage (sequestration) capacity than a pristine hectare of Amazonian Forest whilst amazingly it is reported to store Carbon up to 60 times faster than rainforests.
- It is estimated that seagrasses offset around 2% of Australia's annual Greenhouse emissions

it's smelly but it's the life blood of the foreshore

Being so engrossed in this underwater wonderland I was slow to notice that I had



begun to shiver quite markedly. It was time to get out and get warm, so I wandered out onto the beach and staggered over the heaps of decaying smelly seagrass (wrack). I realised that for most folks this wrack must be the only indication that there are seagrass meadows offshore.

Although consideration was given to lying on the beach and warming up, the smell was a bit overpowering and the beach teemed with a myriad of creepy crawlies moving in and out of the decaying wrack. Besides that, I would have been in the way of the folk energetically shovelling seagrass onto a trailer. I wondered whether they have authorization to do so, knowing that wrack not only acts as a horizontal seawall supplying an important protective barrier to storm tides and rising sea levels but also a habitat and food supply.

It appears to be literally swarming with little crabs and small crustaceans such as pipis, cockles, amphipods, worms and burrowing

bivalves all feverishly feeding on the decaying organic matter as it is being broken down by bacteria and fungi as recycled nutrient for the saltmarsh, intertidal and seagrass food chains. Shorebirds also seemed to be enjoying their feasting on the invertebrate smorgasbord.

I finally made a bee line for the car, elated by my morning's experience and was inspired enough by the experience to do some follow-up research later in the day on this unheralded yet enigmatic native vegetation community.

By Phil Watson

¹ Southern strapweed *Posidonia australis* seagrass meadow' photo courtesy of Professor Gary Kendrick, University of WA Oceans Institute

² Dr. Peter Macreadie, ARC DECRA Fellow at the University of Technology, Sydney, *The Conservation* online publication

Phil Watson - NRM Planning Officer
6245 8619 - pwatson@ccc.tas.gov.au

Justin Burgess - Natural Assets Officer
6245 8785 - jburgess@ccc.tas.gov.au

Chris Johns - Natural Areas Volunteer Coordinator
6245 8773 - cjohns@ccc.tas.gov.au



Natural Resource Management Committee

Alderman Sharyn Von Bertouch	ald_svonbertouch@ccc.tas.gov.au
Lance LeSage	aboriginaltiger@gmail.com
Peter Wall	pwall008@gmail.com
Phil Watson	pwatson@ccc.tas.gov.au
Justin Burgess	jburgess@ccc.tas.gov.au
Ruth Eriksen	reriksen@aquaticsience.com.au
Lyndel Wilson	lwilson@nrmsouth.org.au
Catherine Nicholson	c.nicholson@ozemail.com.au