

Bend of Islands Conservation Association

NEWSLETTER No. 27
NOVEMBER 1992

What Local Native's Flowering?

Botanical Name: *Lepidosperma laterale*
Common Name: *Variable sword - sedge*
Family Name: *Cyperaceae (Sedge Family)*
Flowering Period: *September - March*

The most common and widespread *Lepidosperma* species in Victoria, growing in a range of habitats from valley and wet sclerophyll forests to grassy low open forests. The species tolerates a range of soils including very heavy clay soils and prefers a moist, sunny or partially shaded position.

The plant is a perennial tussock, variable in height, consisting of a clump of narrow stiff shining dark green leaves and stems, with sharp cutting edges. The leaves are flatter than the stems which are slightly convex on both sides. The flowers are at the end of the stems in narrow loose panicles (i.e. a branched flowering structure) with erect branches and narrow brown spikelets (i.e. stalkless flowers on an unbranched axis). A large bract occurs at the base of each panicle.

There are several varieties of *Lepidosperma laterale*, depending on the width of leaves and the length of the panicle. The species described here is the more robust variety, 1.0 meters high with leaves 6 - 10 mm wide, panicles 20 - 30cm long and spikelets up to 10mm long.

The fruit is a nut, wrinkled and shiny brown and provides food for many small birds.

The plants can be propagated by seed and division of the clumps. In its natural habitat the plants spread by forming new shoots from rhizomes (underground stems).

An attractive plant with its impressive clump of erect foliage contrasting with the graceful panicles of flowers.

Cric Henry

environmentally
THE FRIENDLY FIRE STATION

On wintry World Environment Day
We trooped to the fire station to see a display.
Thanks to the flora and fauna team
We saw the realisation of Felicity's dream.

For those of us who came to stare
(Every Gavin and his dog was there)
There were nests and feathers and photos galore,
And plants and maps and much, much more.

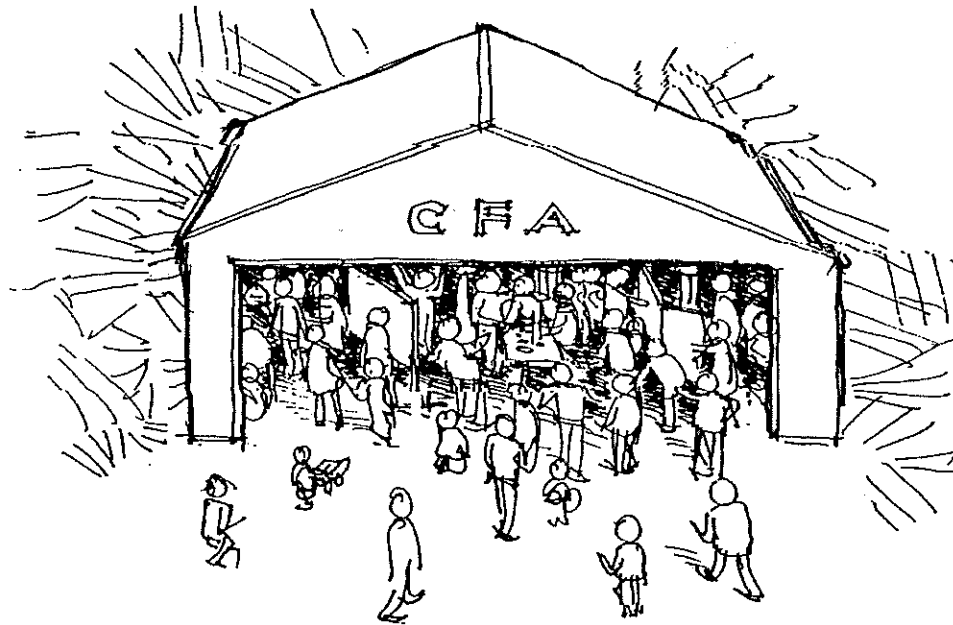
A tidy display of rather old rocks
Once from Gondwana, had suffered some shocks.
In the Silurian period to here the land drifted,
And then, recently, Christmas Hills uplifted.
(Only 7 million years ago - that's relatively ew),
Crikey, on learning all of this I was uplifted too!

A video showed possums gliders and tuans,
All eating honey from lids and spoons
(Compliments of Daunt Motion Pictures Inc.),
The way animals wash-up, who needs a sink?

Meanwhile, John McCallum, heard but not seen
Projected Tom's and Norm's slides on the big screen.
Beautiful scenes and macro photography
Of fungi like aliens from a Hollywood movie.

Sheila's display was of scat and pellet.
(Fortunately for us all you couldn't smell it!)
Cric had sketched plants with delicate petal,
And there was a historical shot of the day of Gazettal.

Amongst all the books, I happened upon
A submission of M J McLure, Secretary (Hon.)



He's a master of superlative phrases, it seems,
Such as "taxes invested in rural water harvesting schemes",
And "pawns in a political game", for a second -
They're words that'd stop a dam builder I reckon.

I saw Tim Ealey standing in front of his bathroom tiles.
He was fully clothed, so wipe off your smiles.
There were nests and photos of the white-winged chough,
For a book of their antics we'd have more than enough.

To judge the photo competition we chose to invite
The Director of the "Authority", Mr. George Wright.
And although some of us offered bribes of all sizes,
He quite Wrightly gave Wolfgang, Cara and Sheila the prizes.

As I flicked through the drawings of "What's on your land"
Some of the efforts were entertaining and grand.
The Mildenhalls' for instance, with legend colour-coded,
While Parris' wrote of excess possums they'd like elsewhere aboded.

Some entries were curious -
Verrall/Browns' for example:
Their sightings were unusual, although documentation was

ample.
They'd listed plasterboard measurements, length and width complete.
Oh! Hang on a minute, that's the back of the sheet!

Barb Snell noted that at precisely 1.15am one night
She looked out at a koala running past in fright.
(I'd like to ask that koala passing by Barb's door,
As it looked in, to describe what it saw!)

Well done to all who helped adorn our fire shed,
(including Krause Display Boards Proprietary Limited)
And well done to all who came to see,
And to those who filled in their survey tirelessly.
Some have suggested, "Let's repeat it next year,"
But Felicity said, "I've already got a better idea!"

Alan Bluhm

Local Fungi



← CLUB FUNGI

I would imagine everyone is aware of the huge variety of fungi which appears in the ELZ: there are many species, but I'll pick the unusual, the common ones and the most beautiful.

Talking about the unusual, I think the vegetable caterpillar - Cordyceps gunnii - has



CORDYCEPS GUNNII

to get first prize. It looks rather like a stiff fat caterpillar with a strange triple head of little clubs. Firstly, the spores of the Cordyceps gunnii infect the larvae of the Oxycanus moth. Then, the caterpillar lives vertically in the soil, feeding by night. While this is going on, the fungus spores gradually consume the whole body of the caterpillar until nothing but fungus remains. The clubs, which are the fruity bodies, then grow out into the light to produce spores. I have a funny feeling that this whole business has a touch of science fiction about it.

Another unusual species is Pleurotes nidiformis or ghost fungus. This is a large fungus with an irregular cap, often lobed and split with colours of pink, yellow and mauve merging together. The gills are cream. They grow in dense clusters up to 50 cm. across and prefer the base of eucalypts, other trees and logs. The light produced by these is green and quite bright: it is possible to read by them at night.

How about the Clavaria or club fungi? We have lots of them up here and my favourites are the flame fungus. They have in common with the other club fungi,

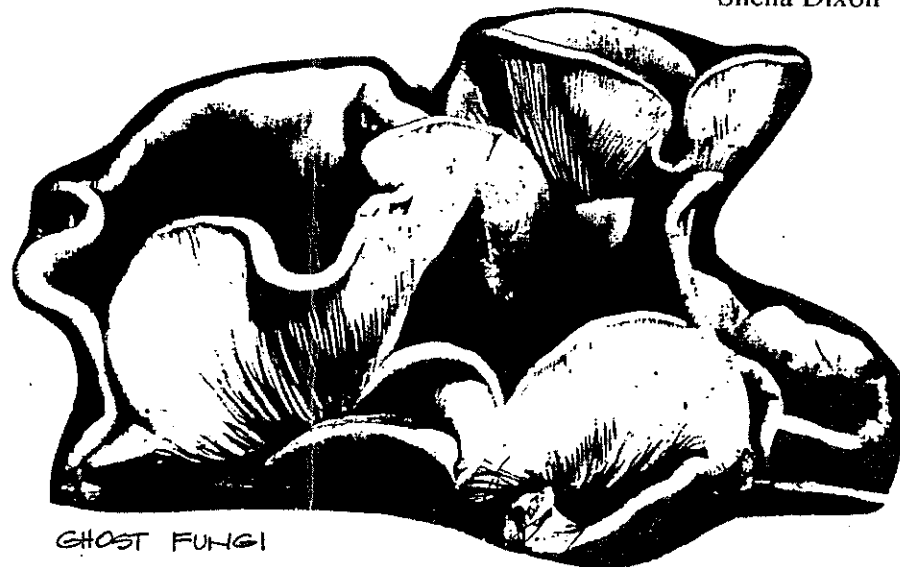
club shaped slender tapering vertical rods. They are a lovely rich red colour and I find them in dark patches of kunzia and other bushes. Fairy castles, another variety, is a pale pink to cinnamon or grey and looks rather like a piece of coral. Down the wrong end of a telescope it could look like a fairy castle with battlements. Lastly, common here are salmon fairy clubs. These are a pretty orange colour and are quite palatable. They like to grow in dark leaf mouldy sort of places.

One fungus I bet everyone has noticed lately is an agaric by the name of Gymnopilus pampeanus. It's a beautiful vibrant golden brown and grows in dense clumps around the base of logs and trees. It is a wood destroying species and likes living trees, but, nature being what it is, I bet it has some sort of predator to even things up. I'll see if I can find out.

One last rather beautiful white fungus is Amanita ananaecephs. It is generally a perfect mushroom shape, pure white with mealy ragged fragments hanging down from the cap. It looks as though damp flour has been spilt over it. Their caps can be from 7 to 20 cm. in diameter and I often see them on the paths by the river.

There are many more I could ramble on about, but I think I'll leave some more for the next newsletter.

Sheila Dixon



GHOST FUNGI

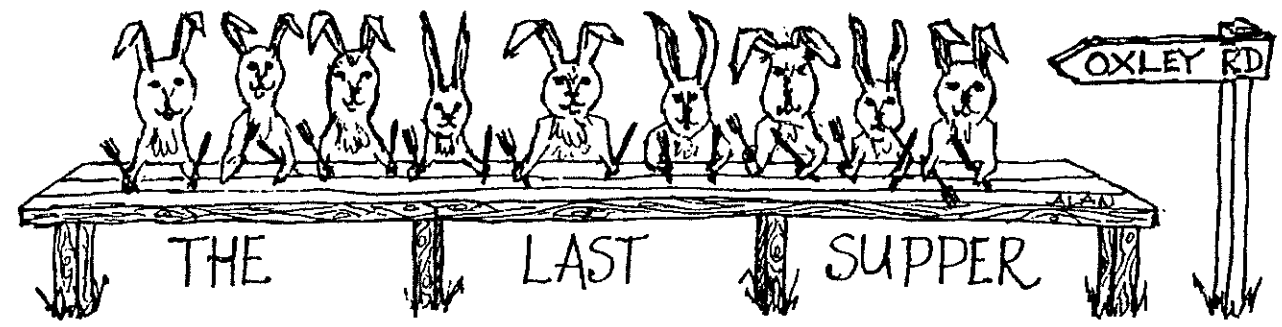
Good Riddance to the Rampaging Rabbits

I have been asked to report on the Great Oxley Good Riddance to Rabbits Campaign. We had significant rabbit problems in Oxley Road. They were not only making life frustrating re trying to grow just about anything, they were also causing potential and real erosion and turbidity problems.

We tried for nearly a year to get some action from the Department of Conservation and Environment (DCE), but eventually got onto a local Landcare Officer, Ray Jasper. We decided that the best approach was to have a meeting of all landowners, basically to explain the problem and to discuss options. The Oxley Road problem could be summarised as follows:

1. Rabbits in unreal numbers day and night - yes, the paddocks literally did move with them
2. The numbers were obviously still increasing - the major threat to life appeared to be old age
3. Most appeared to be scrub rabbits
4. Concern for wildlife and domestic animals - we wanted an environmentally safe, satisfactory solution

Ten or more options were discussed, including combinations. It became clear relatively quickly that the only real solution was to poison. The poison suggested by Ray - Pindone - was discussed at great length. It was apparently quite effective (80 to 90%), it was much less toxic and harmful to wildlife than 10/80 and, in addition, it did not have secondary effects.



It was felt that Pindone was the way to go but we should have another meeting within a couple of weeks before we would commit ourselves to the program.

Another meeting was duly held and all landowners agreed to sign up for the program. Absent landowners also committed themselves. From Ray Jasper's point of view that was the significant problem overcome - all residents in or adjoining Oxley Road were to be involved. This meant that the Department would carry out the work at minimal cost as one property not participating in the middle would have made the program inefficient particularly down the track a bit.

It should be said that Oxley Road does enjoy a significant advantage with respect to this program as 80 to 90% of the properties involved are surrounded by either the Yarra River or Watsons Creek. In effect it was an isolated rabbit catchment.

Ray then visited each property with the particular occupier or someone who knew the nature of the rabbit problem on that block. He worked out a program for each property which worked as follows::

1. Horse carrots are purchased (\$3 to \$4 per 20 kg bag) by each owner or by group purchase.

2. Ray and a co-worker mince up the carrots, put them in a revolving drum on a trailer that has a disc plough and is pulled by a four wheel drive.
3. The carrots are trailed automatically along the freshly dug furrow. This happens from one to three times depending on the uptake by the rabbits. These are the free feeds designed to encourage the rabbits to accept the carrots.
4. A short time later (weather dependent) the carrots mixed with Pindone are laid in the trenches or in spot areas where necessary.
5. Ray then observed the uptake and put down more Pindone as required.
6. After seven to ten days a further inspection takes place. It's a miracle! Not only are the numbers down but those rabbits remaining have shrunk! (In reality the dominant males hogged the carrots and the immature ones survived.)

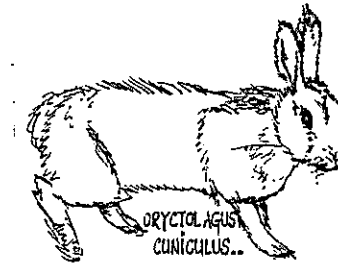


7. There was no sign of damage to wildlife.

I would thoroughly recommend the program to people who have a rabbit problem and a neighbourhood that is concerned about it, since it does require a group of people to get together and get their act into gear.

Rod Roscholler

New Weapons Against Rabbits and Foxes



Taken from New Approaches to Rabbit and Fox Control

ECOS No 71, Autumn 1992

by Carson Creagh

Rabbits have the habit of breeding and breeding and breeding. In a good season, a doe can produce four to five kittens every month for five months a year.

In Australia, rabbits have been very busily at it since the 1860s when Thomas Austin gained the dubious merit of being the first man to let 24 wild English rabbits go on his property near Geelong.

The exponential growth of that group over the next 90 years led to what agriculturalists defined as a "grey blanket" of destruction across the Australian landscape. In agricultural terms it was costing some \$70 million annually but in the long-term the impact was far more devastating: "It forever changed the Australian landscape."

In the 1950s science gave agriculture a powerful weapon with which to combat the plague that had spread all the way to the heart of the continent. In the first two years of its application, the myxomatosis virus reduced local rabbit populations 6:1 and for a while it looked like the battle

could be won.

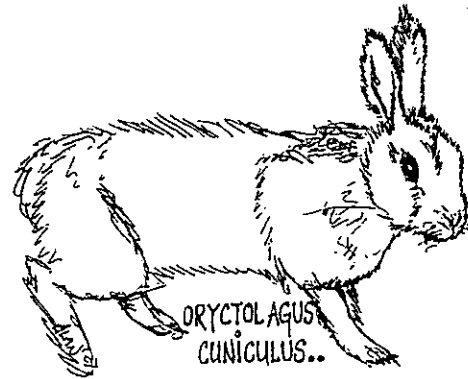
But rabbits, breeding like rabbits do, have progressed thousands of generations past that initial impact of myxo and these now distinctly Australian rabbits show a very high resistance. It is estimated that of infected rabbits, only 30 to 80 per cent will eventually die.

Thus scientists have gone back to their labs to devise new biological and biochemical strategies. All are still in the testing stage but the most promising target is the reason for the rabbit's astounding success - its fertility.

CSIRO researchers in various different states are looking into a laboratory engineered myoxma virus which, they hope, "could be used to interrupt the intimate conversation between sperm and egg."

If this form of immuno-sterilisation is practical and the method behaves in field tests as it has in the lab, the predication is of a 75 per cent reduction in rabbit numbers in a short time.

A secondary strategy is RHD, a viral disease which attacks the liver and spleen of rabbits, killing in two to three days. It arose naturally in China in the early 1980s and has had a similarly devastating impact on Mexican rabbit populations.



What needs to be established for Australian conditions is whether it remains specific to rabbits and how best it is spread. Further testing should take two to three years.

In South Australia, the CSIRO is trying to see if a Spanish flea species could help transmit viruses across rabbit populations in arid and semi-arid areas. So far, they believe the flea does not parasitise on marsupials although the Southern Victorian Bush Rat (rattus fuscipes) and the Stick-nest rat (leporillus conditor) might yet prove susceptible. The first field tests will take place later this year.



Foxes present a much wilier problem for science yet, eradication programmes realise the need to deal with both species simultaneously to save foxes turning from an 80 per cent dependence on rabbit kittens to preying on native animals.

Foxes have only one short fertile period each year and in their social grouping, breeding rights depend on dominance. Here again the hope is that immuno-sterilisation could be the key but what needs to be located is the right vehicle (or vector) by which a virus could be transmitted through the pest populations.

Already a fox herpes virus is known and two other proteins have been identified with invade a vixen's genital tract preventing successful fertilisation. Researchers are hoping that a viral "soup" combining these various elements might have a significant impact on fox numbers and then prove just as effective against other vertebrate pests such as feral cats and pigs.

The proviso about this final research is that it is very early in the piece and it provokes just as many questions as it answers.

Jenny Brown

Waste Recycling

Eureka! The Shire of Healesville is going ahead with a plan to establish local recycling "drop off" points throughout the rural areas of the Shire, which will include a point within the Bend of Islands, probably at the fire station.

This has come about via several initiatives including, in 1990, Tom Fisher beginning the community service to enable residents of the ELZ to recycle their paper. He placed his trailer at the fire station every few months and then would take the load to APM at Fairfield.

In mid-1991 the Shire of Healesville trailed waste recycling by collecting glass, aluminium and plastic on a fortnightly basis from each property in the ELZ and an urban area of Healesville - for comparison. The result of the three month trial was that almost 70 per cent of ELZ residents took part in the programme, although the result in the other area was less encouraging.

Tom's paper recycling continued through the trial period, and, after the trial ceased in October, 1991, was expanded to include glass, plastic and aluminium. Aply supported by



Wolfgang Krause, Mick Woiwod, John and Denise Denyer and Yours Truly, this service has become a routine three monthly exercise: it is now coordinated by Wolfgang.

The new plan is that BICA will sponsor the service locally, advertising and promoting it while the Shire provides the resources. This

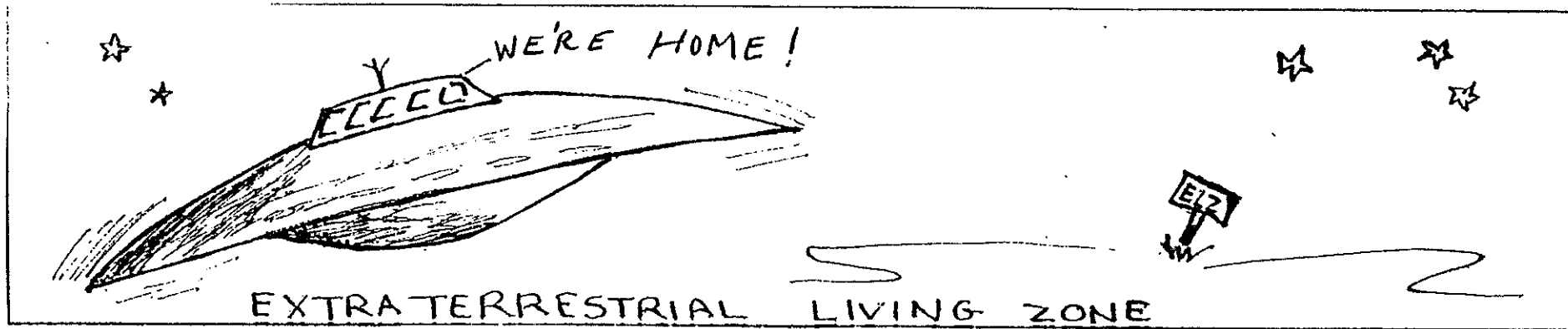
will probably amount to a skip delivered and removed over a weekend every two or three months and, possibly, a sign for the bridge and information brochures.

My last correspondence from the Shire indicates that the service may start in November. I have volunteered to be the community contact for the coordination of this service locally, and I am happy to receive any suggestions to improve the service once it gets going.

Please support this initiative by Healesville. I think that they are finding it hard to get support so readily in other areas of the Shire.

Peter Gurney

Stars....



One night soon after emigrating to Kangaroo Ground from St Kilda, I was staring upwards heaven bound at the white hot stars against the canopy of blackness - although I had no artificial stimulants of any kind - I was, I admit not at present in this world.

The stars have always been a major area of interest, fantasy and wayward day dreams. You see its not just a question of do you believe - that's far too vague - I know that there is 'life' out there I'm confident that someone/thing/it is visiting us poor pathetic earth bound bipeds. Sceptics can go roll down our hill and fall in the Yarra for all I care. The only question is which of the lights I see moving about are terrestrial or extra.....

On that particular night in question I was as usual gazing upwards when I first noticed the small very bright object at the edge of the southern horizon it moved almost due North at high speed - no noise, no vapour trail, no twinkle. I didn't think many satellites move south to north around the globe. This brief 'sighting' hasn't been an only incident - Jennifer and I often see lights - and again I must stress the lack of stimulants - obviously not all are unidentified - some are wondrous, interesting or curious. Aircraft are at the top of

the list - those small ones which sound like muffled air bound chainsaws - they pass over apparently quite low at times on their busy way somewhere. We often see then hear the big jets screaming down from up north with their 'aircraft landing lights' piercing the inky blackness - from a distance they do look eerie, small and star like, growing in size and intensity. They could quite easily be mistaken for "one of them there UFO thingy's". Those lights are another interesting point, we have spent some time working out who we can see at night along the valley - some yellow, amber and red and the search light intensity from the house about 2 kilometers away which casts a strong shadow through the trees onto our unassuming little house. The most curious night lights have to be the helicopters - or at least we think that's what they are. Usually they are seen hovering over the Skyline Road area. Sometimes we have observed the shaft of light directed down from these hovering craft moving along slowly as if searching for something although I can't imagine what.

Perhaps the ELZ is the home of a secret Extra-terrestrial Lifeform Zone?

ALAN JAMES

Horse Manure

Can horses carry seeds? Yes. They are not ruminants and do not chew their food as finely as sheep or roos. Scientists at Roseworthy Agricultural College, S.A. demonstrated that a large proportion of seeds from clover, burr medic, marshmallow and horehound were still viable after passing through horses. One passed 700 viable marshmallow seeds in a day.

However, what do our local horses eat?

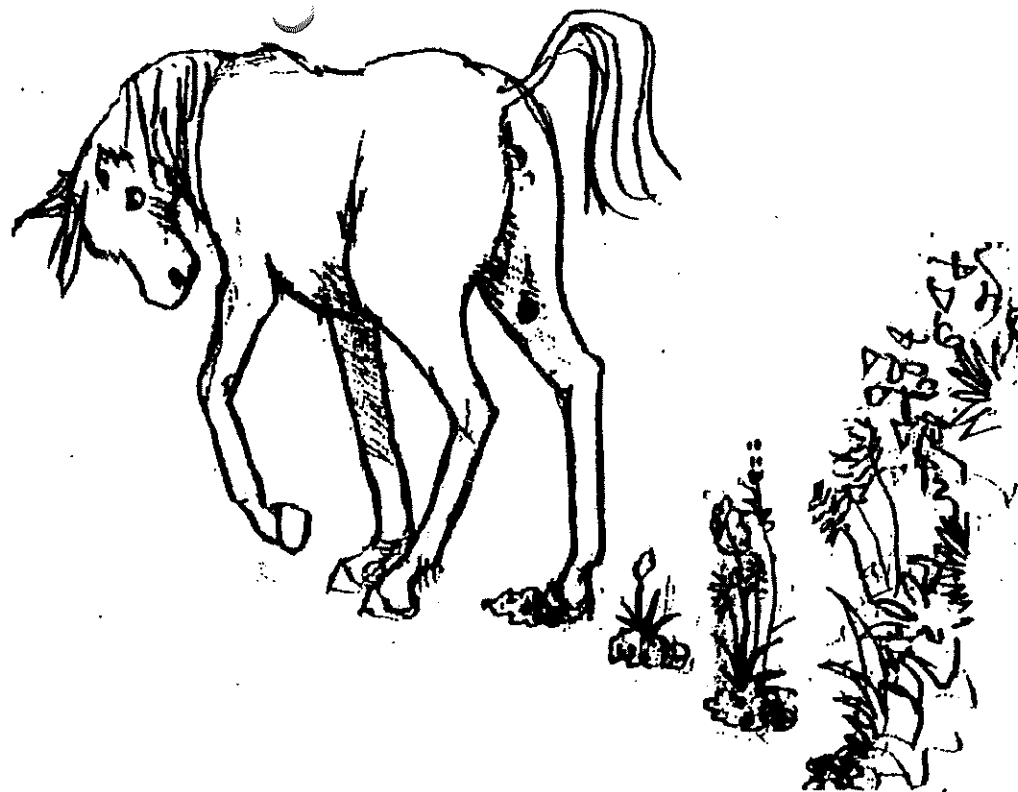
- * Chaff - no seeds
- * Lucerne hay - unlikely to carry seeds and lucerne would not survive in the bush
- * Crushed oats - some might germinate but not survive
- * Rolled barley - some might germinate but not survive
- * Coprice (crushed rice) - no problem
- * Molasses - no problem
- * Meadow hay - if cut when green, seeds may not be set. Grasses like Filaris cannot survive in our soil without superphosphate and trace elements. However, Fog Grass is one which can penetrate bush. The worst risk is some weed species cut with the hay. For example, the infestation of St John's Wort on "Musso's land" must have come in a bale of hay.

Local weeds and grasses

As most ingested seeds do not pass through a horse until two days after being eaten, seeds of weeds eaten during a weekend ride would not be spread along the road - the horse would be back in its paddock before the seeds passed through. However, if the seeds germinated in the paddock, the weeds may be spread from there if not controlled, so may be a problem later when grazed in the home paddock.

How bad is the problem of weeds spread by horses? We simply don't know. However, we do know weeds are also spread by wind, birds, foxes, imported soil, road gravel and worst of all, by cars. Dr Nigel Wace in his paper The Botany of the Motor Car identified over 300 species of plants germinated from mud in a Canberra car wash.

Remember it is legal to ride anything along the

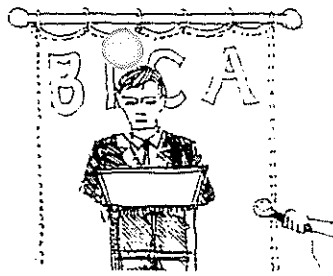


public roads in the ELZ - horses, donkeys, camels, yaks (elephants would need a permit!) - so, rather than place manure in a cardboard box in a horse owner's drive as one anonymous protester did, people could spread samples on bush soil near their home, see what germinates and ring me to arrange identification. Two horse owners are already doing this for me.

I understand horse owners value the bush as much as other residents so they could help by scrutinising hay bales and paddocks for weeds. Let's all work together to evaluate and deal with this possible problem sensibly.

Tim Ealey

President's Report



A very successful display was created for World Environment Day in early June and set up in the fire station by the Flora and Fauna sub-committee ably led by Felicity Faris with strong support by committee members. A large number of people viewed it on the Saturday so much so that it was also opened on Sunday. It included the results of the valuable local flora and fauna survey with many members of the community taking part as well as much information about the ELZ and its evolution. We thank the fire brigade for the use of the fire station.

The Council has been active in the area and some of you will have noted the realignment at the top of Henley road near Burns' corner and the installation of long overdue culverts, especially in Catani Boulevard. BICA has been constantly involved with the Council through Mick Woiwod and David Bradley and our aim is to restore the Gongflers/Catani intersection as well by decreasing the number of short cut roads now in use and revegetating.

We are actively pursuing BICA interests in regard to the possible future sale of Melbourne Water land associated with the ELZ. Continuity of the ELZ and the generation of an efficient wildlife corridor are some of the concerns.

In addition we are involved with a submission to Melbourne Water for the future recreational use of the Sugarloaf Dam and its surrounds.

Within the ELZ there has been recent constructive activity relative to doing something about rabbits and the pine trees. See the rabbit story within this issue of the Newsletter.

Michael Pelling



1992 Kangaroo Awards for Sculpture - from Mary and Peter Burns (712 0351):

The official opening of the awards by Margaret Rich, Director, Ballarat Fine Art Gallery is to be held at our property Kangaroo, 30 Henley Road at 3pm on Sunday, November 1, and the exhibition will remain open until Sunday, November 29. This exhibition for young and aspiring sculptors, is privately sponsored and the specially designed and inscribed trophy is donated by *MARY & PETER BURNS. ALL WORKS FOR SALE.*

Community News.....

Be there! 8pm, 2 Dec 92, No. 6 Catani blvd. (South Fire Station) Fire Information Night. I am urging new and old residents to participate in this important information sharing evening. When you smell smoke on a hot summers' day, it's too late to plan ahead. Please bring a plate and any concerns you may have.

ZONE CARE PLAN

The Friends of the Fire Brigade initiated this plan last year as a means to provide support and assistance to each other in times of need. Although it was set up primarily for the fire seasons, it is also a means to assist each other in any emergency. In the plan the Bend of Islands has been divided into 11 zones. Each zone decides on its own requirements and plan which can cover the care of ... fire systems, fuel reduction, children, first aid, fire information etc.

If you would like to know more come to the **Information Night**

Miners, Moulds and Manna Munchers

Taken from Healesville Sanctuary
Tracks Issue No 4 - Autumn 1992

Three organisms causing concern at Healesville Sanctuary are present in the ELZ and so the discoveries they have made we thought would be of interest to residents.

These organisms are a small, confiding bird, an attractively named fungus and a tiny insect which grows beneath a parasol of sugar. But what do these creatures have in common? And why the concern? The answer is 'dieback', a mysterious ailment which makes native trees lose their leaves and die. Forests throughout south-eastern Australia have been affected, and Healesville Sanctuary has lost many of its gum trees -some more than 150 years old.

So what causes dieback? The most likely culprit is Cinnamon Fungus Phytophthora cinnamomi, a soil-living mould which attacks tree roots. Implicated in many cases of dieback, this fungus was found in the Sanctuary's soil when samples were taken in 1988. However, recent samplings have failed to detect the fungus at all. Yet still the trees die.

Another suspect is a small insect called a psyllid which lay their eggs on gum trees and the babies (called nymphs) suck sap from the leaves. At high densities psyllids can do a lot of damage, making the leaves fall and ultimately killing the tree.

Psyllid nymphs are unusual in that they secrete for themselves a protective shell called a lerp. This delicate roof of crystallised honeydew stops the young insect from drying out. These sugar-coated psyllid nymphs are the favourite food of many of our

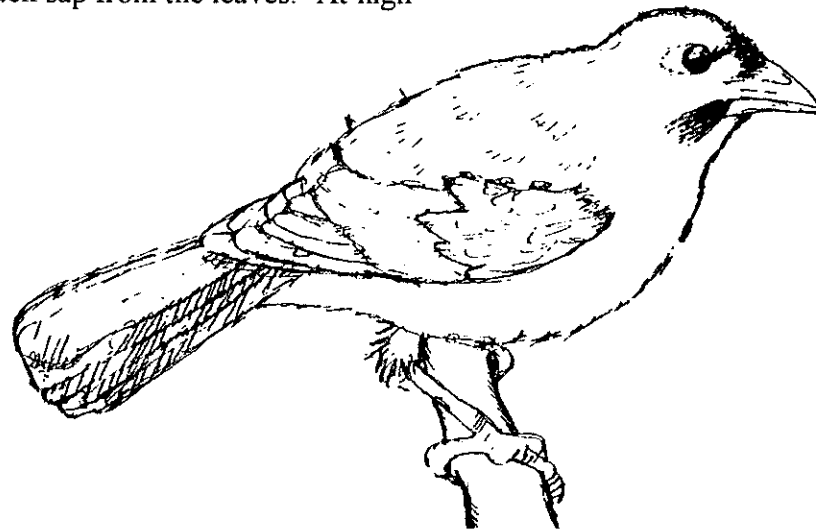
native birds.

But bellbirds (or Bell Miners - Manorina melanophers) don't actually eat psyllids, they farm them. Instead of eating down the entire psyllid nymph, often bellbirds only eat the lerp which the nymph replaces in a couple of days. Thus the bellbirds and psyllids happily co-exist.

This is bad news for eucalypts. With Bell Miners living in colonies of 20 to 200 birds, and aggressively excluding other psyllid-eating birds from their territories, psyllid numbers often build to high levels. Bell Miners have been found in many dieback areas, and when removed experimentally, the dying trees recover due to the influx of other psyllid-eating birds.

However, Bell Miners can't be held responsible for a section of Coranderk Reserve called Piccaninny Swamp. Here there are no bellbirds and the trees are suffering psyllid-caused dieback.

Water pollution is the prime suspect here because the water flowing into the swamp is unusually rich in nutrients: legacy of artificial fertilisers and septic tank seepage draining from farmland and houses upstream. Eucalypts which use this water produce leaves with a high nitrogen content which encourages growth of psyllids, leading to high insect numbers and dieback.



Perhaps in such a complicated world, it is unrealistic to expect just one cause of dieback, however, the research being undertaken at Healesville Sanctuary on soils, cinnamon fungus, psyllids, bell miners and even water pollution will help all Australia's forests. For further information contact Noelle McCracken (059) 62 4022.

Barb Whiter

Question of Balance

Three and a half years ago, when I moved to Oxley Road, I would have considered that only 'red necks' would talk about the need for a balanced view when it came to matters of environmental significance. I believed the right way was the rather extreme way. In political terms I held rather extreme leftist views. There should be absolutely no compromise when it came to environmental issues.

I am now not too sure that my old views are the most effective, particularly from a long term perspective. I believe that those who hold extreme views, and those who push them, can in fact do as much damage over time to the environment as those who see the environment as something to be used for personal gain. The reason is that both extreme views have a similar effect on the majority, that is the moderates, of the area. The effect is alienation. I disagree that extremist views help maintain the balance.

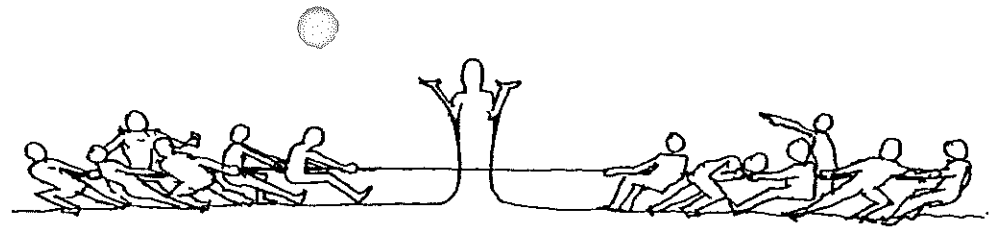
What then is the relevance to the ELZ? To me it is highly significant because the long term survival of the ELZ is as much about social networks and cohesion as it is about planning ordinance provisions, prior rights enforcement and particular environmental concerns. The ELZ alone does not ensure the survival of the Bend of Islands area, it merely means that the zoning is capable of preserving the area. An identical argument applies of course to the Green Wedge.

The survival of the Bend of Islands is, in my view, contingent upon two things:

1. A strongly held and cohesive local community view that supports the ELZ principles and is well articulated.
2. The political will and resource to support and enhance the provisions of the ELZ.

Clearly the two are related, it is what representative democracy is all about.

The red neck mentality and the environmental extremists put a great deal of strain on (1) and the latter actually alienate some moderate greenies. For



example:

- We get great pleasure from feeding the birds. Extremist greenies would say we are making them dependent. Is that bad?
- Oxley Road residents working with officers of D.C. & E. have been poisoning rabbits in a way unlikely to damage wildlife. Extremists would say, "Poison, no way!!" The red necks would say, "Drop 1080 from a helicopter!!"

It is a question of balance.

The question of balance must be a permanent agenda item when dealing with the many complex issues that should be considered in the Bend of Islands. For example:

1. How vigorously should the ELZ provisions be enforced? Should it be active or reactive enforcement?
2. What role do individuals or local groups have in the above process?
3. Should environmental weeds be sprayed in the Bend of Islands?
4. Should rural properties be treated differently to bush blocks under the ELZ?
5. Should normal farmland management of rural blocks be acceptable within the Bend of Islands?
6. Should horse riding be prohibited in the ELZ? What are the environmental consequences and what are the community impacts whether the move is or is not successful?
7. Should the 'prior rights' provisions for grazing animals in rural blocks be abandoned in favour of a carrying capacity approach?
8. Can and should all the local residents be represented in one group or is there a continuing need for the retention of BICA and BIRA? If everyone was in the same organisation we could all debate the

above issues together.

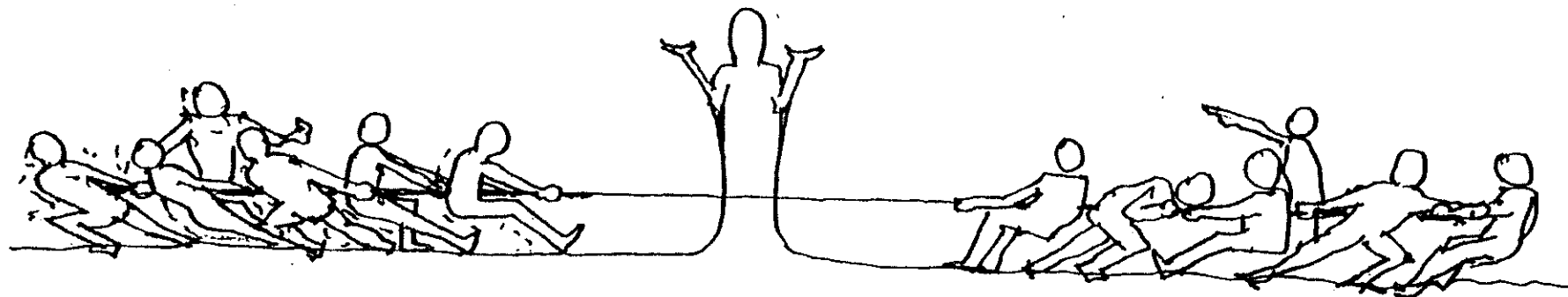
Recently, I, along with Wendy and Sally, had the day off sick. During the day three Oxley Road neighbours asked about our state of health - what could they do to help? That is one of the really great things about the area we live in - the sense of community. This social network not only makes the area a very pleasant place to live in, it also is particularly important in retaining the beautiful environment that is the Bend of Islands. Extreme views in either direction are a significant threat to both the area's social fabric and its environmental values.

I believe there is currently a growing sense of moderation spreading throughout the Bend of Islands. I do hope this trend is

not reversed and I hope that those who hold very strong environmental views do not see it as a move in the wrong direction. Providing a reasonable balance is presented, then I believe the local environment and local community will be the better for it.

It must be said that I am not commenting here on the appropriateness of people having particular views regarding environmental issues. This is an individual issue and it is not questioned. What I am raising is the manner in which people work together for the community good. This article should not be seen as an attack on any individual but rather an individual raising some issues for community debate.

Rod Roscholler



Fire Report



It is generally recognised that fire causes the seeds of many species to germinate. However, it is often not realised that lack of fire leading to lack of germination can actually allow the seed bank in the soil to diminish drastically as seeds are progressively eaten or rot away. Some plants can even become extinct in time, which leads to the extinction of the animals which depend upon them.

The "Smoky Bear" policy of keeping fire out of North American forests lead to the extinction of species such as the Northern Heath Hen. In Australia, the Ground Parrot became endangered by lack of fire which normally controlled the overshadowing Melaleuca and germinated heath, the seeds of which were needed by the parrots. Accidental fire resulted in a great increase in parrots as it also did to the once rare New Holland Mouse.

The increase in the numbers of the supposedly extinct Leadbeater's Possum following the 1939 fires in the Central Highlands is well known. The fires germinated the three species of Acacia which produce the sap needed for food and also killed mature Mountain Ash allowing appropriate nesting hollows to form.

These examples lead to concern about the ELZ, much of which has not been burnt for 30 years since the 1962 fires. This concern is validated by the lack of understorey in parts of the Bend of Islands. Two of us (Dianne and Robyn) have analysed several soil samples in part of the Co-op not burnt for over 20 years. A significant lack of seeds has been noted.

A real problem is that there is not a complete list of plants which were in the ELZ 30 years ago. Therefore, because of lack of burning, species may have already disappeared from the ELZ before we were even aware of their existence.

However, it is not necessary to wait for a complete floristic

management programme. If residents wish to use fire as a management tool, here are a few guidelines:

- * Burn at a frequency between 7 to 10 year intervals (perhaps divide your property into tenths)
- * Burn a variety of habitats, ie ridges, slopes, gullies
- * Burn at different times of the year, ie sometimes autumn, sometimes spring
- * Because different seeds germinate at various temperatures from 60 deg C to 160 deg C, try to use different fire intensities
- * Don't rake into big heaps and burn as soil beneath the heap may be sterilised
- * If all litter is burnt, there is danger of erosion, especially in gullies. Place small logs and other barriers across the slope to slow water flow.

The authors are willing to advise on burning techniques. The Fire Brigade should be approached, and the "Summary Offences Act" & the "Country Fire Authority Act" must be complied with. If burns are planned. Remember, bush conservation is not just planting a few common species along roadsides, it is appropriate management of an ecosystem for optimum survival of all its plants and animals.

Robyn Adams

Tim Ealey

Jeph Neale

Dianne Simmons

Birds of the Area



The Yellow Tailed Black Cockatoo

Every now and again I may be busy inside the house, radio chattering away, when I hear an old familiar sound. It's the sad slow cry of the yellow tailed black cockatoo - calyptorhynchus funereus. Because of their infrequent visits and their large size I always rush out with binos in hand.

Sometimes if I'm lucky a flock of 15-16 will go flying slowly and deliberately through the trees all the time contacting each other with a sad cat-like cry. After finding a suitable group of trees (often old wattles), they settle along the trunks and begin their chopping and gouging with their enormous beaks. I've actually watched one ripping down a length of bark, standing on it like an axeman, and then burrowing into the trunk for grubs.

Around the bottom of this tree will be a pile of chips about 3 cm. long and quite a mess they can make too! I suspect they are after those large wattle goat moth grubs that we find in our firewood sometimes.

The bird itself is quite spectacular in appearance. It's much larger than the sulphur crested cockatoo and has a quite different beak. This is large and rather flat, a much heavier tool than those other wretched

cockies. Mercifully it doesn't like cedar and oregon. Its plumage is dark brown to black with yellow cheek patches and a broad band on its tail, yellow with brown speckles.

Barb Snell has kept notes on when she has seen these birds and sure enough the sightings have mainly occurred in June, July and August, taken over the last three years.

Their nesting takes place around here from July to January and takes place in the hollow of a tree made comfortable with a floor of woodchips chewed from the inside part of the nest. The female sits on her eggs for four weeks without a break and is provided with food by the male. Only one baby survives and this remains with the parents for nearly a whole year.

There is still some mystery about these birds. Not much is known of their migratory movements but hopefully the survey being done throughout Australia now will have some information. Perhaps if anyone sees these birds they would be kind enough to ring Barb (712 0523) or I (712 0542) and we will enter them in our notes for the survey.

Sheila Dixon

Temporary Farewell to "Sippy"

Felicity Faris came to the Bend of Islands 15 years ago, and from the outset she has embraced all the environmental issues that have occurred in the area, with great energy and concern.

Her skills are numerous. She has, and continues to be politically active, working as secretary to Lou Hill when he was the Member for Warrandyte. She then became the Director of the Conservation Council of Victoria, has worked with the Environment Defenders Office, and is currently working with Endangered Species.

Closer to home her contribution to the planning and development of the ELZ and her continuing work on the BICA committee reflect her deep commitment to this area, and will not be forgotten.

She has generated innovative ideas for other community activities.....Will we ever forget the Firemen's Balls and the Review of '82!!!

Her love of the bush is expressed as much at home, as in her work, focusing on the nurturing of some of our indigenous fauna. She has cared for, and reared sick animals over the years. It is a spectacular "theatre" to visit Sip at feeding time for the sugar gliders, tuans, possums and tawny frogmouths all competing for that pot of honey.

She has chosen to move temporarily to the city enabling her to be closer to work. She has been a good friend to many and we will miss her delightful sense of humour and colourful anecdotes. We wish her well in her urban pursuits.

GOOD LUCK SIP!



They said it couldn't be done
They said no-one would agree
They said the Greenies in the Bend of Islands
Were barking up the wrong tree

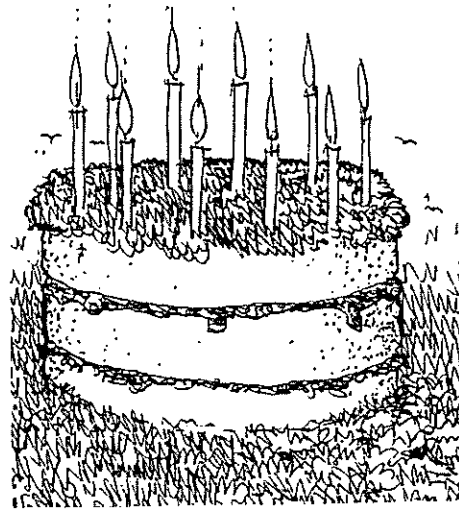
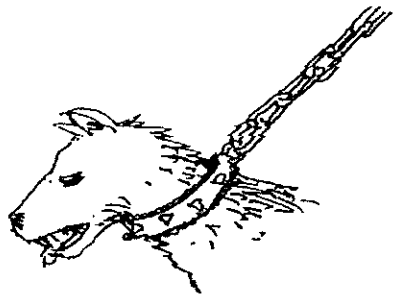
But the committed pressed ahead
And now we're ten years on
The love for our special environment
Is still just as strong

It's more than cats or dogs
It's more than tuans or roos
ELZ expresses a philosophy
We can't afford to lose

From us in warmer climes
From us who can't be there
We thank you for being guardians
Of the values that we share

Love from, John & Glennie

Just a reminder to deter any tradespeople you need from bringing their dogs into the area - before they arrive! It's rotten to have to have them locked in the van all day, isn't it? The dogs would be far happier at home!



ELZ 10TH Anniversary

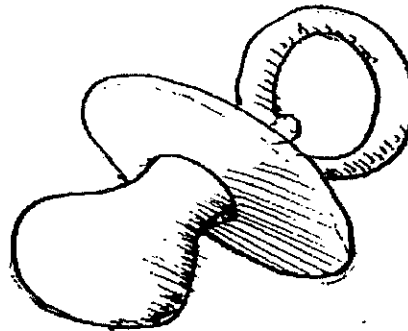
Before the Co-op existed, Neil Douglas and I and a few others talked and argued with Government Agencies, politicians and ourselves from the late 60's to the early 80's.

Our original objectives were:

- to prevent further threatening subdivision
- to live in the bush with minimum impact
- to protect animal, plant and aesthetic values
- to protect the rights of people who had farms or prohibited animals as long as these were managed properly.

Despite some ups and downs, a few dead wombats on the road, a few unpainted tanks and roofs, the ELZ is working well. There has been no more subdivision and a register protects the rights of non conformists. A lot has been achieved and many people are to be congratulated.

TIM EALEY



Welcome to the new generation of ELZers: Rory Kamminga, Daniella Donaldson, Dustin Flanagan/Dennis, Dylan Taylor and Hadley Hickson. Good luck also to Julie and John Cain and Chris Steed and Eleanor Fowler who are in the happy-in-waiting stakes.

Are there any of you wonderful cooks out there interested in contributing to an ELZ cookbook? From some of the scrumptious fare on offer at local functions, it's bound to be a much sought after publication. Please send recipes to the Editor.





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SECRET

SECRET