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Community Action

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COMMUNITY ACTION



The Kungun Ngarrindjeri Yunnan Agreement (KNYA) translates to 'listen to Ngarrindjeri talking' (Gemma Cunningham).

KNYA – new relationships between Ngarrindjeri and the South Australian Government

Lachlan Sutherland, SA Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources in conjunction with the Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority

The Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR) in South Australia is partnering with the Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority (NRA) to implement the

Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth (CLLMM) Recovery Project's, Ngarrindjeri Partnerships Project. This partnership continues the longstanding relationship between the Department and the Ngarrindjeri, the Traditional Owners, in the management of the CLLMM region.

In 2009 the South Australian Government and the NRA entered into the whole-of-government Kungun Ngarrindjeri Yunnan Agreement (KNYA). Translated to 'listen to Ngarrindjeri talking', the KNYA includes a commitment by the state to

work with the NRA to develop the Ngarrindjeri engagement strategy in the CLLMM Business Case and allocate resources to support Ngarrindjeri participation.

The Ngarrindjeri Partnerships Project was designed to implement the objectives of the 2006 Ngarrindjeri Yarluwar-Ruwe (Sea Country) Plan. Since implementation the project has enabled the NRA to forge new relationships with the State that pave the way for Ngarrindjeri to play a major role in the future management of the CLLMM region. The NRA with support from their Research, Policy and Planning Unit (NRA RPPU), based at Flinders University, have also been developing innovative arrangements to enable Ngarrindjeri values and philosophies to be integral to future CLLMM management strategies.

In an effort to better support Ngarrindjeri engagement in environmental and broader water resource planning DEWNR and the NRA held the KNYA Water Workshop in February 2013. The workshop brought together Ngarrindjeri, State Government water planners and policy makers, researchers, and representatives from the Commonwealth Environmental Water Office.

The workshop was a two way learning exercise that aimed to increase Ngarrindjeri understanding of water policy and planning frameworks as well as governments understanding of Ngarrindjeri interests in water. A range of opportunities to better accommodate Ngarrindjeri interests in current frameworks, including wetland management planning, were discussed. A follow up workshop is proposed for later in 2013 to re-imagine water planning processes that better accommodate Ngarrindjeri objectives, outcomes, values and uses as proposed by the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.



The Kungun Ngarrindjeri Yunnan Agreement Water Workshop was a two way learning exercise held in February 2013 by the Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority and DEWNR (Gemma Cunningham).

For more information about the Ngarrindjeri Partnerships Project contact **lachlan.sutherland@sa.gov.au**

The CLLMM Recovery Project is part of the South Australian Government's Murray Futures program, which is funded by the Australian Government's Water for the Future initiative.

The Ngarrindjeri people are the descendents of the original Indigenous inhabitants of the lands and waters of the Murray River, Lower Lakes and Coorong and adjacent areas. Ngarrindjeri have occupied, enjoyed, utilised and managed these traditional homelands since time immemorial.

The South Australian Government acknowledges Ngarrindjeri are the Traditional Owners of the land and that according to their traditions, customs and spiritual beliefs its lands and waters remain their traditional country. The State also acknowledges and respects the rights, interests and obligations of Ngarrindjeri to speak and care for their traditional country, lands and waters in accordance with their laws, customs, beliefs and traditions.



The Eleocharis shallows at this Wah Wah ground tank will be expanded using earthworks (*M. Herring*).

Win-win for wildlife and water

Matt Herring, Murray Wildlife Pty Ltd and Marion Benjamin and Kimberley Beattie, Murrumbidgee Landcare Inc.

In the Wah Wah district north of Hay, New South Wales, a new pipeline is set to boost water use efficiency. It will save an estimated 9000 megalitres for the environment each year. The Murrumbidgee Landcare 'Water for Wildlife' project recognises that saving water for the environment has to be carefully managed because nobody wants to rob Peter to pay Paul. To ensure that landholders are able to protect the wildlife they have valued on their properties over generations, our project is trialling options to compensate for the loss of local habitat associated with the pipeline.

Since the 1930s, many wildlife species have come to depend on Wah Wah's ground tanks, which look much like any farm dams. An extensive channel system feeds these tanks twice a year, and incorporates 51 large properties across the Wah Wah district. There are more than 600 ground tanks, supporting sheep and cattle grazing on the Hay Plain. The Australian Government has earmarked \$44 million to upgrade the old channels and ground tanks by replacing them with a state of the art pipeline and trough system. For wildlife, the landscape and their habitat is being transformed once again.

Landholders in the district have been concerned about the impacts on wildlife of such an enormous change in water management. The

Water for Wildlife project, with funding from Caring for Our Country brings together graziers, Landcarers, water users and irrigation experts to explore management options. More than a dozen landholders have offered land on their properties for demonstration sites. Works are underway using a range of different techniques to improve existing habitat and create new habitat as well.

A range of waterbirds, turtles, chats, bats, frogs and kangaroos are among the wildlife that Wah Wah's ground tanks currently support. For many common species like galahs and crested pigeons, the new troughs will suffice as an alternative to the ground tanks. But at least another 40 species will be left high and dry. Some of the more mobile ones might be able to find suitable unoccupied habitat elsewhere, many others may not. The white-fronted chat, a small black and white bird dependent on mudflats, is one species likely to suffer. Over the past 80 years, it has become a Wah Wah resident, rather than just a visitor to the plains when the wetlands have filled and the creeks are running. No mud will likely mean no chats.

Strategic earthworks and stock exclusion at already significant ground tanks will improve habitat by expanding shallows and waterplant coverage. Once the pipeline is constructed, we hope to arrange for small amounts of environmental water to be delivered to maintain these sites. Habitat creation will target threatened species like the Australasian bittern, Australian painted snipe and southern bell frog. Small garden ponds will ensure bush birds still have a place to drink, and infrastructure to facilitate the delivery of environmental water to some of the region's canegrass swamps could be of great benefit to wetland biodiversity.

A period of dramatic landscape transformation looms, and through Landcare, landholders of the Wah Wah district are proactively conserving their local wildlife and saving water at the same time.

Water for Wildlife is funded by Caring for Our Country. It is a multi-partner project including Murrumbidgee Landcare, Hay Trees on Plains Landcare, the Wah Wah Stock and Domestic Water Users Association, the Murrumbidgee CMA, and Murrumbidgee Irrigation. The trials are being led by ecologist Matt Herring of Murray Wildlife Pty Ltd.



Locals gather at a Landcare field day, determined not to see their Wah Wah wildlife left high and dry (K. Beattie).

Restoring Tuppal Creek—a community and government partnership

Emma Wilson, NSW Office of Environment and Heritage

Tuppal Creek is a 60 kilometre ephemeral system located in the southern Riverina between Tocumwal and Deniliquin New South Wales. The natural flow of the creek has been greatly modified and reduced by river regulation and changes to the landscape, which has resulted in the declined health of the creek.

Tuppal Creek remains highly valued by the local community and is considered an important ecological asset in the Murray Valley which

supports a range of fauna including several threatened species such as the superb parrot (*Polytelis swainsonii*).

An environmental water trial commenced in 2012—13 after the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) and the Murray Catchment Management Authority (MCMA) were approached by the Tuppal Creek community who had concerns about the declining health of the system resulting from lack of flows and prolonged drought. A partnership was then formed between OEH, more than 25 landholders and community stakeholders, local councils, MCMA, the Commonwealth Environmental Water Office (CEWO) and Murray Irrigation Limited (MIL) to conduct the trial watering event.



Tuppal Creek prior to environmental flows, Artulla Crossing September 2012 (Emma Wilson).

The MIL irrigation delivery system was used to deliver almost 5000 megalitres of NSW and Commonwealth environmental water to Tuppal Creek in spring 2012 and autumn 2013. The trial project has achieved several positive outcomes including improved water quality in the system, frog breeding and recruitment and improved health of riparian vegetation. Furthermore, a recent fish survey, conducted by DPI Fisheries NSW, detected the native golden perch (*Macquaria ambigua ambigua*) in the creek.

The project has helped to develop a strong relationship between the community and government agencies. OEH will continue to develop and maintain this partnership with the Tuppal Creek community to achieve common objectives in the future.

A short video of the project can be viewed on the OEH website: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/environmentalwater/envwatermurraylowerdarlingupdate.htm>



Tuppal Creek after environmental flows were delivered, Artulla Crossing October 2012 (Emma Wilson).



The Boondall Wetlands Environment Centre is celebrating the 20th anniversary of Moreton Bay Ramsar site in October 2013 with guided canoe tours, catchment clean-ups and all-ability art activities (*Bruce Gray*).

20th anniversary of Moreton Bay Ramsar site

Lisa Johnston, Boondall Wetlands Environment Centre, Brisbane City Council

This year marks the 20th anniversary of sister wetlands Moreton Bay and Yatsu Higata Tidal Flat of Narashino, Japan as being listed as Wetlands of International Importance.

As both sites were listed in 1993 and the same migratory shorebirds visit each wetland during their migration cycle, it has led to the Brisbane-Narashino Wetlands affiliation agreement.

The agreement embraces the idea of 'thinking globally and acting locally'. It is a shared initiative for the conservation of migratory shorebirds and their habitats and responds to increasing awareness of both cities and their citizens, regarding the conservation of wetlands areas.

To celebrate and continue to raise awareness, Brisbane City Council's Boondall Wetlands Environment Centre, located in Moreton Bay and Yatsu Higata Nature Observation Centre in Japan are hosting a number of community engagement activities during October 2013 to exchange wetland information. Japan is planning for 2000 people to encircle Yatsu Higata each holding a written message from wetlands around the world including Moreton Bay. The people of Brisbane are invited to join guided canoe tours, catchment clean-ups and all-ability art activities.

For more information please contact **BWEC@brisbane.qld.gov.au** or visit Boondall Wetlands Environment Centre's website **<http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/environment-waste/natural-environment/environment-centres/boondall-wetlands-environment-centre/narashino-agreement/index.htm>**



Cabbage Tree Bay Primary School Sticker Competition winning entry by Eliza Curll, Manly Village School (Manly Environment Centre).

Conserving Cabbage Tree Bay – community, co-operation, collaboration, communication

Judy Reizes, Manly Environment Centre


Eleven years after Cabbage Tree Bay's gazettal as Sydney's only accessible No-take Aquatic Reserve, there are ongoing problems with illegal fishing. A new volunteer group is helping local and state government agencies to protect the Bay's biodiversity from illegal fishing and other threats.

The creation of Manly's marine sanctuary is a reflection of the passion and commitment of its community dating back to the early 1990s and is the envy of many Sydneysiders. Key players already involved in protecting the Bay, like Dave Thomas from EcoDivers and marine scientist, Belinda Curley have joined with the Manly Environment Centre, Manly Council and NSW Fisheries to set up a Friends of Cabbage Tree Bay Volunteer Group.

This group was launched at Ocean Care Day in December 2012. Enthusiastic volunteers dedicate half a day per month on weekends to be at Cabbage Tree Bay, engendering a love of the Bay and educating visitors about the importance of its biodiversity and how to protect it, reporting infringements, etc. They provide a valuable backup for the stretched resources of Manly Council and NSW Fisheries.

A growing spirit of co-operation already exists, with local dive companies and tour groups getting involved in sharing information with the volunteers and attending events. Local businesses provide venues, staff and refreshments for volunteer training days and enrichment sessions.

The long-term research by the staff and students of five universities on the Bay's marine life is shared with the volunteers through their training and their volunteer manual. Staff from National Parks and NSW Fisheries also contribute to the training material.



Volunteers set up a blackboard each weekend by the boat ramp so that divers coming out of the water can share that day's visual "catch" with other visitors. If you want to see the hundreds of marine creatures both big and small, check out the eight pages of Cabbage Tree Bay videos on YouTube or the six high quality videos from Manly's Bold and Beautiful Swimmers'. They swim there early each morning with everything from visiting whales and dolphins, dusky whaler sharks and a resident turtle.

Not only is it a marine wonderland but every now and then an echidna will stroll down the stairs and meander across the beach ignoring the Sunday crowd, while large eastern water dragons sunbake on the rocks, protected little penguins startle board riders by skimming the surface after schools of tiny fish and after dark long-nosed bandicoots hang about the barbecues.

And last but not least, hundreds of primary school children shared their ideas of how to discourage illegal fishing in the recent Cabbage Tree Bay sticker competition.

For further information visit
<http://www.mec.org.au/projects/cabbage-tree-bay>

Australian Wetland Network – engaging NGOs in conservation and wise use of wetlands

Louise Duff, Australian Wetland Network


The Australian Wetland Network (AWN) was established in 1994 by Non Government Organisations (NGOs) to support and promote non-government contributions to the Ramsar Convention.

The Ramsar Convention is an intergovernmental treaty that facilitates national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands. The treaty was adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971. Australia is one of 167 member countries, and there are now more than 2100 Ramsar-listed wetlands covering all geographic regions of the planet.

Members of the Ramsar Convention formally recognised the key role NGOs play in promoting conservation and wise use of wetlands at the fifth Conference of Contracting Parties held in



AWN Secretary Louise Duff and Phil Straw attended a site inspection of Towra Point Ramsar Site with representatives from the Australian Government Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (*WetlandCare Australia*).



Japan in 1993. At that Conference, member countries recommended that:

- contracting Parties strongly support and give particular attention to the development and functioning of national and international NGOs that aim for conservation and wise use of wetlands and
- contracting Parties consult NGOs, provide them with relevant information and offer them ample opportunities to contribute to the formulation and implementation of governmental wetland policy.

The AWN recently reviewed our network and now have 30 members, representing peak and national NGOs, state bodies, regional and local groups around the country. AWN members are active in wetland policy, advocacy, management, conservation and education.

The first activity for our new members was to participate in a consultation process with peak national bodies held by the Australian Government to provide input to the development of a National Wetland Policy. AWN's secretary submitted a combined response to a consultation questionnaire that presented our network members' views on key values, threats and issue facing wetlands that the national policy should address. AWN's Secretary, Louise Duff from WetlandCare Australia, and three members of the Technical Reference Group attended the consultation workshop: Christine Prietto from

Hunter Wetlands Centre, Doug Watkins from Wetlands International-Oceania, and Phil Straw from the Australasian Wader Studies Group. We also recently developed a Strategic Plan to guide our actions for the next two years.

The Australian Wetland Network thanks Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority and the NSW Environmental Trust for their financial assistance in 2012-13.

New NGO members are most welcome to join our network. All recent documents including a fact sheet about AWN, a membership list, notes from the NSW Forum, our submission to the National Wetlands Policy and our strategic plan can be found on our web page. To find out more, visit <http://www.wetlandcare.com.au/index.php/our-work/current-projects/australian-wetland-alliance/>

Anstey-Keane Dampland—a Bush Forever Site and part of Jandakot Regional Park, WA

Bryony Fremlin, Friends of Forrestdale

In Perth's south-eastern suburb of Forrestdale is a rare and fragile nature reserve known as Anstey-Keane Dampland – a 311 hectare oasis of heathland, dampland and banksia woodland surrounded by ever-encroaching housing and industrial development. Anstey-Keane's diverse habitats support a rich and unique variety of plant and animal species, and accordingly, is the most significant dampland on the Swan Coastal Plain.

Anstey-Keane Dampland is one of Western Australia's Bush Forever sites (<http://www.planning.wa.gov.au/publications/5911.asp>), which are representative regional ecosystems and habitats that play a central role in Perth's biodiversity. The site is also part of Jandakot Regional Park.



Friends of Forrestdale volunteers removing rubbish from Anstey-Keane Dampland (Bryony Fremlin).

Qualities

Anstey-Keane Dampland has many special qualities:

- It is one of the last intact large nature reserves in the Perth region.
- It is one of the last remaining examples of a now threatened flora community once common throughout the Swan Coastal Plain.
- It has over 35 species of plants listed under WA law as being either priority species, end of range, or declared rare flora.
- It is home to end of range fauna species including Rosenberg's monitor (*Varanus rosenbergi*).
- Anstey-Keane is the only known location of the megamouth bee (*Leioproctus muelleri*), a unique ground-nesting species of solitary bee, which until its discovery there in 2010 was unknown to science.
- With over 380 flora species, Anstey-Keane is the most floristically rich part of the Jandakot Regional Park and second most floristically rich Bush Forever site on the SCP.
- It contains two of Western Australia's threatened ecological communities: shrublands on dry clayflats (endangered), and herb-rich shrublands in clay pans (vulnerable).
- Over 75 per cent of Anstey-Keane's vegetation is in excellent to pristine condition.

Tenure

Anstey-Keane has complex tenure: five government agencies (chiefly the Department of Environment and Conservation), and City of Armadale all have a part to play in its management and protection.



Shrubs on clay flats, Anstey Keane Dampland (*Bryony Fremlin*)

Volunteering

The Friends of Forrestdale - a voluntary group of around twelve members - plays an active role in the care of Anstey-Keane Dampland. Their activities include weed and rubbish removal and fence repair, as well as alerting relevant authorities to environmental damage caused by off-road vehicles and rubbish dumping.

Threats

Anstey-Keane faces a number of threats:

- a proposed road that will fragment the reserve and lead to multiple ongoing degradation processes
- invasive weed species in certain areas of the reserve - most serious of which are cape tulip, pigface and love grass
- unlawful use of off-road vehicles causing noise pollution, degradation and spread of phytrophthora dieback
- rubbish dumping causing visual and environmental pollution and degradation
- fire.

Ongoing Protection

Large areas of Anstey-Keane Dampland were once earmarked for industry. It was through awareness of the conservation values of the area by concerned community members (and enlightened government ministers of the day) that this precious reserve was saved.

Few large intact metropolitan reserves exist today of the quality and richness of biodiversity of Anstey-Keane Dampland. It is therefore crucial that we value and protect this reserve and ones like it, for the benefit not only of the environment but present and future generations.

For further information please contact Rod Giblett, Secretary, Friends of Forrestdale (FoF): (08) 93972874 r.giblett@ecu.edu.au or David James, President, FoF: (08)93970276

Everyone's Environment grants promote environmental improvement in Queensland

Everyone's Environment Grants Queensland

Queensland is home to many distinctive ecosystems including coastal and marine areas, Ramsar Wetlands, World Heritage and many other ecologically significant sites. Queensland's Department of Environment and Heritage Protection is funding communities to implement practical actions to clean up their local environment.

The Queensland Government's Everyone's Environment grants program provides community groups with funding assistance from \$2000 to \$100 000 to tackle environmental degradation in their area.

Last year, 74 organisations received a share of \$3 million under Round One of the program to deliver a broad range of initiatives including waterway and wetland restoration projects.

Wongaloo wetlands near Townsville, sits adjacent to Bowling Green Bay, a significant Ramsar site. Funding recipient, the Wetlands and Grassland Foundation, is using their grant funding to remove the weeds lantana, pink bauhinia and candle bush from over 50 hectares of the Wongaloo site. Three kilometres of fencing will also be erected to help manage stock and control weeds in the future.

With \$12 million of funding over three years, grants are available under the program for hands-on environmental initiatives such as:

- community clean-up activities



Exotic tree removal from rainforest fringe at Wongaloo Wetland near Townsville (*Mark Stoneman*).



Late in the 2013 wet season at Flathole, Wongaloo Wetland, Townsville (Mark Stoneman).

- restoration of wetlands, coastal dunes and river or stream banks, including clean-up, reinstatement of natural hydrology, fencing of riparian areas, revegetation and halting degrading processes
- water quality improvement in rural and urban areas through erosion control, sediment trapping and runoff reduction
- pest control and eradication
- threatened and priority species habitat restoration, rehabilitation and revegetation
- tree planting
- weed control
- water quality monitoring.

Round Two of the program has recently been announced and aims to support projects that help protect the environment against future extreme weather events.

Round Three of the grants program will be announced in 2014 and will offer \$5 million for suitable projects.

A wide range of community groups are eligible for the grants. For more information see the Everyone's Environment grants website (<http://www.ehp.qld.gov.au/funding/everyones-environment/index.html>).