



TASMANIAN | Land | CONSERVANCY



The Egg Islands - a precious riverine wetland

Photo: Matt Newton

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Dr Geoff Couser (Vice President)
Ms Rebecca Fergusson (Treasurer)
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The Egg Islands are a conservation gem in the estuary of the Huon River and are soon to be our next permanent TLC reserve.

Fundraising is now underway. We aim to raise at least \$200,000 to complete the purchase and invest funds for ongoing management. This will be matched by a further \$200,000 from the Federal Government's National Reserve System Programme.

The Egg Islands contain a beautiful mosaic of forest, wetland and saline grassland communities including significant stands of endangered black gum (*Eucalyptus ovata*). The northern part of the islands is upstream of the Huon River estuary. With roots bathed in a continuous supply of fresh river water fed from the mountainous south west of Tasmania, the black gum forest is in excellent condition despite having been partially cleared in the past. As the natural salinity increases downstream, eucalypts give way to shrubs, and then to saline grasslands and sedgeland dotted with shallow pools and quiet lagoons.

The diversity of these islands' ecosystems provides prime habitat for a wide range of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and fish. Pademelons and short-beaked

echidnas are at home here, and the sedgy grasslands of the southern island provide a sanctuary for the globally endangered Australasian bittern (*Botaurus poiciloptilus*).

The bittern is one of Tasmania's largest wading birds. It is a very shy, well camouflaged and partly nocturnal bird that likes densely vegetated wetlands. Few of even the most dedicated birdwatchers have been lucky enough to observe these birds.

The Australasian bittern population is naturally small and over recent decades has been rapidly declining as a result of extensive draining and clearing of its favourite wetland habitats. It is now on the international Red List of threatened species as one of the world's most endangered birds.

This very important habitat is now well on the way to permanent protection. However, we still have a significant amount to raise and will be working hard to raise funds in the coming months.

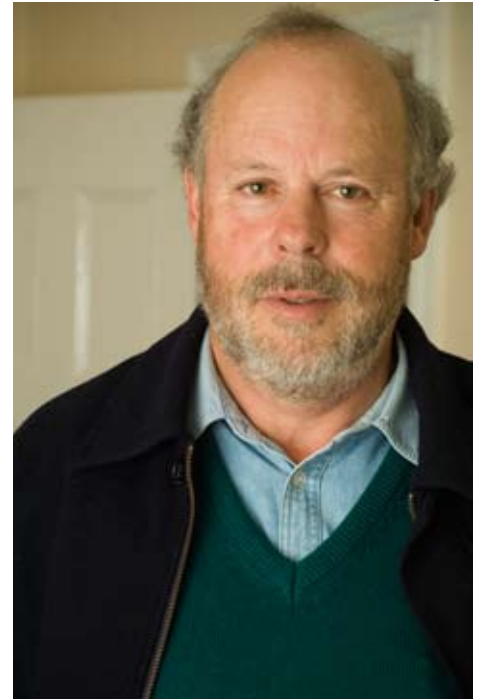
If you would like to make a Christmas donation on behalf of a friend or relative, we will send them a special card in time for the festive season notifying them of your generous act on their behalf.

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Photo: Rod Pearce

Grassy white gum forest growing on karst at Mole Creek



Peter Bosworth

Mole Creek karst protection

Four properties have been approved for purchase through the Mole Creek Karst Forest Programme operated by the TLC and funded by the Commonwealth Government.

The limestone geology around Mole Creek has produced a karst cave system considered one of the most significant and beautiful in Australia. Water flows from high on the central plateau and channels through a complex web of underground tunnels, caves and above-ground springs, creeks and sinkholes. The area contains 118 named caves; most of these are active stream caves – a rare phenomenon in Australia. Even rarer, some of the rivers and creeks flowing into caves then branch underground to emerge later as a number of different creeks.

Many parts of the Mole Creek karst system are protected in existing national parks and conservation areas, although significant areas also occur on private lands.

The landowners of these areas have often found their plans for farming or forestry curtailed due to the presence of important karst values and this has frequently led to grievances between landowners, community and government.

To help with long-term solutions to landowner grievances, and to protect additional high priority karst and forest values, the TLC has been delivering a programme funded by the Commonwealth Government's Forest Conservation Fund

to purchase and/or covenant high priority karst areas in the Mole Creek region.

Two properties have already been purchased through the TLC's Revolving Fund and another four covering a further 307 ha have now been approved by the Commonwealth Government for purchase. The TLC has negotiated these purchases and, once finalised, the properties will be added to the adjacent Mole Creek Karst National Park.

These four properties will directly protect important caves and contribute to the maintenance of downstream caves, including the ecological processes occurring in the cave system.

The four properties will also significantly contribute to the existing reserves by providing them with a buffer and by adding additional unique values. These values include 127 ha of threatened vegetation communities and 42 ha of priority vegetation communities.

The properties all provide habitat for rare or threatened species, such as the Tasmanian devil (*Sarcophilus harrisi*), spotted-tailed quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus maculatus*) and more cryptic but no less important harvestman spider (*Hichmanoxyomma gibbergunyar*) and Cockerill's cave beetle (*Tasmanotrechus cockerilli*).

The mole Creek Karst Forest Programme continues until June 2008 and we hope to protect additional important areas.

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Board profile

The TLC's incoming president, Peter Bosworth, has over 30 years nature conservation planning experience and three years on our Board.

During his time in senior management at the Tasmanian Government's Department of Primary Industry and Water (DPIW) he was responsible for developing the \$125m Tasmanian component of the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT), and chaired the Tasmanian NHT Biodiversity Technical Assessment Panel.

Peter provided us with this brief insight. "I was born and raised in Tasmania, and its natural environment has always been an important part of my life.

After completing a Masters of Environmental Studies degree at the University of Tasmania, I joined the Tasmanian National Parks and Wildlife Service (TNPWS) for what became a 30-year career.

For most of my career at TNPWS I was responsible for setting up reserve systems such as the Douglas-Apsley National Park and ensuring that conservation values were taken into account in decision making.

When I retired I was asked by Nathan Males to join the TLC Board. I accepted and have been happily surprised with the satisfaction I get from working with such a professional and enthusiastic organisation which contributes significantly to the nation's reserve system."



Flat Rock Reserve

Photo: Matthew Newton



Midlands landscape

Photo: Daniel Sprod



Snows Hill Reserve

Photo: Denna Kingdom

Major TLC accomplishments in 2006-2007

Permanent Reserves

The TLC has achieved major success in expanding and maintaining its permanent reserves. At the end of June 2007 the TLC owned six permanent reserves covering 1156 ha, two of which were acquired in the last financial year. These latter two reserves, Flat Rock and Brown Mountain, are protecting an additional three vegetation communities and six threatened species.

Flat Rock Reserve encompasses 455 ha of grassland and woodland, and connects the Chauncy Vale Wildlife Sanctuary with the Alpha Pinnacle Conservation Area. The reserve is within the Tasmanian Midlands Biodiversity Hotspot and protects threatened silver peppermint and grassy blue gum forests, rock plate grasslands, and several species of threatened plants.

Brown Mountain Reserve supports 86 ha of wet swamp gum and stringy-bark forest, including a significant stand of old-growth forest. The property was purchased by the Brown Mountain Association in 1994 for permanent protection, and was donated to the TLC in 2007.

Reserve management involves a considerable input of time and expertise by enthusiastic volunteers and staff. The main focus this year has been the Long Point Reserve woodlands restoration project, which involved the planting of 5000 seedlings by 29 volunteers.

Partnerships for Conservation

The TLC has continued to work effectively alongside government and partner organisations to secure important conservation values on private land.

Since 2002 the TLC has been a partner in the Protected Areas on Private Land Programme (PAPL), which facilitates conservation covenants on private land.

During 2006-2007 the TLC completed a further four covenants covering 109 ha, bringing the total area protected by the TLC in the PAPL programme to 2300 ha on 43 sites. The TLC also continued actively working with private land owners in the development of a further 29 conservation covenants.

The PAPL programme was recently expanded to include a Tasmanian Midlands Landscape Conservation project which is partly funded by Bush Heritage Australia.

The TLC also worked with the Department of Environment and Water Resources, delivering the Mole Creek Karst Forest Programme to protect forests in the Mole Creek area which contain significant karst cave systems.

Two Mole Creek properties covering 66 ha will be revolved by the TLC, and a further four properties are approved for purchase to include in the adjacent National Park.

Revolving Fund Reserves

The TLC has had great success with its revolving fund, on-selling Dorothy Reeves Reserve (Rubicon Sanctuary) and purchasing four other revolving fund reserves. These reserves have all been protected in perpetuity by conservation covenants.

The Rubicon Sanctuary comprises 19 ha of threatened black gum woodland, which provides a precious habitat for the vulnerable burrowing crayfish and nine threatened plant species.

The Colliers Forest Reserve protects 140 ha of threatened King Island eucalypt woodland and *Melaleuca ericifolia* swamp forest, which maintain habitats for five rare plant species and three threatened woodland bird species. This reserve is under contract for sale.

The Mayberry and Liena Reserves protect major areas of underground karst systems in the nationally important Mole Creek karst area. These reserves were purchased through the Mole Creek Karst Forest Program, and are both currently for sale.

Snows Hill Reserve is 80 ha of vulnerable silver peppermint and black peppermint woodland communities and is adjacent to existing conservation areas. The reserve protects threatened plant and animal species, as well as a range of woodland birds. This reserve is currently for sale.



Australasian bittern

Photo: Peter Fuller



Cathy Gibbons (main and inset)

Photo: Carol Hirst

Thank you

Donors to the TLC, volunteers and supporting organisations are critical to the success of our work. We love to hear what motivates such wonderful support. Here is one such comment from Susan Wijffels and Joe Adelstein:

“We have seen many wonderful places preserved in the USA by organisations similar to the TLC. In the face of developmental pressures it is an extremely effective way to ensure conservation of important places for wildlife and the public. The TLC allows us to protect forever very special places such as the Egg Islands and we know our donation will be directly used to do this.”

We are eternally indebted to our wonderful team of volunteers who help with newsletter mail-outs and other administrative and conservation work. This helps keep our running costs to a minimum and is greatly appreciated.

We also wish to pay a special tribute to The Tasmanian Printing Authority for providing this current issue in full colour at no extra cost; to Hobart Cruises for their continuing support of our Recherche Bay appeal and to TASMANIA 40° SOUTH Magazine for free advertising and promotion of our fund raising appeals.

From the staff at the TLC we wish you all the very best in 2008.

Cathy Gibbons Trust Fund

Funding the ongoing management of the TLC’s reserves and our basic organisational operations is an ever present challenge.

Many TLC supporters recognise the need to build the organisation’s core funding with a view to establishing a truly long term vehicle for conservation in Tasmania. Several supporters have donated funds or provided interest free loans for the establishment of trusts which generate interest to fund the TLC’s ongoing work.

Carol Hirst recently set up the Cathy Gibbons Trust Fund. Carol is dedicated to conservation and is known as a world class kayaker. Carol felt that establishing a trust fund in her mother’s name would be a fitting way to provide a lasting celebration of Cathy’s life. Carol writes:

“My mother was born in Manchester between the two World Wars to a family with four brothers. Mum met my dad in Oxfordshire where she spent many hours in and around gliders with my dad, a world away from the industrial town she grew up in. It was the late sixties when, with me in tow, we moved to Australia with the promise of a new start.

A lifetime later, mum had remarried and been widowed but was the same fiercely determined and inquisitive person she had always been. The trappings of our material

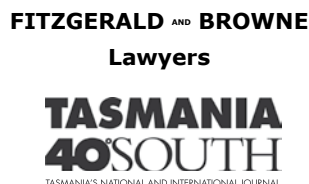
lives no longer (if ever) held much interest to her. Much of her life was spent travelling to the lesser known quarters of this planet, learning about the cultures and languages of many different peoples.

Her library hinted of her interests with a focus on who we are, why we are here and what is to be done about it. Here you could read about theories of the mind and consciousness, explanations of $E = mc^2$, delve into the mysteries of Buddhism, die laughing at the humour of Terry Pratchett who characterises so many aspects of human nature and then pokes fun at them, or immerse yourself in the infinite range of human experience with Isabelle Allende.

Knowing mum as I do, it could be said that she believed that nature is an extension of who we are, and as conscious beings with the power to manipulate it we are responsible for its welfare.

Mum passed away last year and has left me with resources enabling me to make a difference. It is with much love and fond memories of my mum and her enormous spirit that I have chosen to set up a TLC Trust in her name to help the continuance of this organisation in its role to protect the nature and biodiversity that is so much a part of the thriving humanity she loved, in a part of the world that I love.”

We are grateful to the following organisations for their support in recent months



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