



Photo: Matthew Newton

So close to The Big Punchbowl goal

Silver gull feather in beaded samphire
at The Big Punchbowl

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Jane Hutchinson

Chief Executive Officer

The excitement is palpable. With the support of people from all over Australia and overseas we are so close to achieving the goal of protecting forever The Big Punchbowl as our fourteenth reserve. The Big Punchbowl is a truly unique and marvellous property on Tasmania's east coast, adjacent to the internationally significant Ramsar-listed wetland Moulting Lagoon. Thank you so very much to all of our wonderful supporters who have given generously to help protect this multi-layered and complex property.

The Big Punchbowl has taken us on a journey of discovery over the past six months. The big reveal of the fledgling white-bellied sea eagle chick, the chance finding of one of the largest and oldest Oyster Bay pines ever recorded in Tasmania by an expert botanist, and the four metre core-sample of the namesake ephemeral wetland launching us back in time past the last glaciation all indicate that this property has so much to teach us. I hope that in the next newsletter I can share news of its protection.

Our summer season of events has wrapped up, and they are becoming so popular that registrations fill up

weeks in advance. This is terrific, but disappointing for those who miss out so please get in early when events begin again in spring. Our children's program is great for the kids too! After the recent Blue Tier field day, one of our youngest supporters summarised the experience to her mum: "It was the best day of my life!" That is high praise indeed for our children's activities and their volunteer leaders.

On a completely different note, after months of planning we are close to finishing the new-look TLC website. This is long overdue – the current site is not compatible with new and ubiquitous platforms such as smartphones and tablets. All that is about to change!

This process has been well-timed with the strategic plan review which, with your input, has helped us identify the most important priorities for the TLC to focus on over the next five years. Specifically, we need to achieve outstanding, evidence-based conservation results by protecting critical places, communicating the value of nature conservation and remaining an independent, innovative and collaborative organisation. We would love to hear what you think. Thank you to all who have contributed to the overhaul – we are so very grateful.



Ancient forest at the Vale of Belvoir

Photo: Awen Dyer

Looking back at the summer of science

The TLC has had a busy summer delivering an exciting range of field activities across our reserves. The Vale of Belvoir was a focus early in the season with a study to help determine the impact of cattle grazing on threatened plants and natural values. A simple but effective experiment designed by Matt Taylor correlated the cluster of cow pats with threatened flora distribution. The data is being analysed in collaboration with Professor Jamie Kirkpatrick, of the University of Tasmania. These findings, coupled with more detailed information, will guide our historic lease arrangements for grazing cattle on the Vale and whether a change to cattle numbers or removal is warranted.

Three reserves had long-term ecological monitoring installed across their conservation targets – the Vale of Belvoir, Flat Rock and The Big Punchbowl, making a total of six permanent reserves with monitoring programs in place. Once the first tranche of monitoring data is collected we can establish a baseline for flora and fauna diversity on these reserves and any trends or fluctuations in the future can help guide our management. This monitoring program is an essential component of the TLC's land management and its value as a conservation tool will increase exponentially over time.

In addition to ecological monitoring, we have repeated our carnivore monitoring program across the Five Rivers Reserve to build on the trial we conducted in 2014 through a grant from the Save the Tasmanian Devil Program. In February 2015 we installed motion sensor cameras

at 46 sites across the Five Rivers Reserve to detect primarily Tasmanian devils, spotted-tailed quolls, eastern quolls and feral cats. We've collected the cameras and a quick scan of images suggests that the two species of quoll are rare whereas Tasmanian devils and feral cats are more common, with some images showing devils with facial tumour disease and cats with kittens. Detailed screening and scoring of images is about to begin.

Two additional conservation programs began on the Five Rivers Reserve this summer. They comprise our plan to expand the area of occupancy of the native fish species *Clarence galaxias* around Kenneth Lagoon, and the collection of a second core from the Sphagnum peatlands at Skullbone Plains for a more detailed investigation of fire ecology and aging, to be undertaken by Dr Geoff Hope of the Australian National University.

During March and April this year we hosted two undergraduate interns sponsored by the US National Science Foundation and Montana State University. Over a five week period, Kenneth Edmo and Charmayne Dayaye helped us investigate the fire history of The Big Punchbowl by measuring and aging fire sensitive Oyster Bay pine, sheoak and black wattle compared to fire resistant eucalyptus species. Trees at three sites were measured and banksia nodes counted to reveal an interval of approximately 35 years since the last fire.

This project also attracted the collaboration of fire experts Professor David Bowman from the University of

Tasmania and Professor Simon Haberle from the Australian National University, who visited the reserve to extract a core of sediment from the middle of the wetland for pollen analysis and carbon dating of charcoal. The core extended to a depth of four metres and there was a real 'wow' moment when we detected fragments of charcoal near the bottom layer. The importance of this will become more obvious once the analysis is completed and, if the experts are correct, we could have a very significant time sequence of 120,000 years or older spanning prehuman occupation and an entire glacial period.

The TLC's Science and Planning Advisory Council has continued its support for several projects including the major assessment of a World Class Reserve System for Tasmania, and investigating the impact of fallow deer at Freycinet Peninsula in collaboration with Bush Heritage Australia. The feral deer project is timely given the recent paper published in the journal *Wildlife Research* predicting an explosion in deer numbers across Tasmania. In February Daniel Sprod helped deliver a five day course on the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation. This course was based at Bronte using the Five Rivers Reserve as a case study and delivered as part of the Protected Areas Learning and Research Collaboration. It attracted students from mainland Australia and the South Pacific and received great positive feedback.

After all this excitement we are looking forward to concentrating on data analysis and report writing during winter.



Shane McHugh conducting a controlled burn at Archers Wareham

Photo: Leanne Stenif

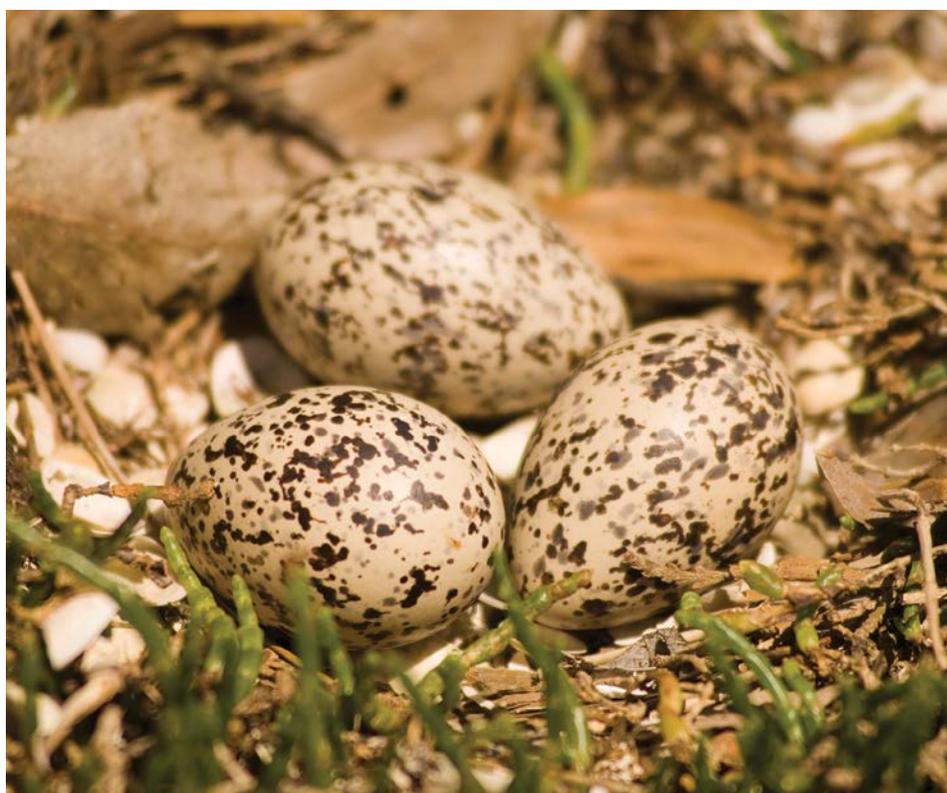
Wrapping up a season on the reserves

Late summer and autumn is always a great time to undertake a range of activities that are highly weather dependent, particularly major construction and maintenance of roads, bridges and roadsides.

The TLC team has prioritised these activities on our managed properties, and supported the organisation by undertaking tasks such as a major upgrade of the entrance road to The Big Punchbowl in anticipation of February's open day. We spent more than a week undertaking drainage works prior to gravelling the road. The TLC has over 300km of roads to manage, so this was a fantastic opportunity for reserve managers Shane McHugh and Tim Devereux to work with our highly experienced staff member and road planner Bruce Hay.

It is always good to see the crew taking up the challenge of learning new skills, which were further enhanced by three major replacements of creek crossings, and the upgrading of a particularly rough section of road on the New Leaf property, Archers Wareham.

In previous newsletters we have reported that fire and fire planning is becoming a regular part of the TLC team's role and we recently had the opportunity to become involved in the State Government funded Red Hot Tips Planned Burning program. Archers Wareham was selected as a demonstration site for the program, so with the great support of the program and an appropriate weather window we undertook a small planned burn.



Red-capped plover nest with tiny eggs at Lutregala Marsh

Photo: Matthew Newton

The burn was successful and the team gained valuable knowledge and skills in fire management. We are also planning other burns for ecological or hazard reduction purposes.

As always, a major summer TLC reserve management activity was the ongoing Central Highlands weeding program, which was well attended – more than 40 staff days and 35 individual volunteers resulted in 105 long days of work. Around 350km of roads were checked and weed control undertaken. Volunteers and staff also covered a further 500km on foot searching in more

inaccessible areas. Reserve Manager Denna Kingdom has brought together many volunteers across TLC reserves, including Lutregala Marsh in late April, where we have now cut and painted around 90% and brush-cut nearly 75% of a targeted area. We could never achieve these outcomes without the support of volunteers.

We continue to plan for future management and write applications for grants to support our activities.

If you would like to become involved please contact us at the Hobart office on 03 6225 1399.



Photo: Joe Stenesh

Tasmanian eastern bettong

Powerful voices speak up for wetland oasis

We are extremely privileged to have powerful support for our efforts to protect The Big Punchbowl – Professor Ted Lefroy, Director of the Centre for the Environment at the University of Tasmania and a 2015 Fulbright Scholar, and Andry Sculthorpe of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre – both of whom are featured in our new The Big Punchbowl video.

Ted's expertise on landscape management is globally respected and Andry's knowledge of the cultural significance to the Aboriginal community of the Moulting Lagoon area is captured in the video. **Please take a few minutes to watch the clip online at bit.ly/big_punchbowl**

Thanks to Ted and Andry for their incredible commitment to biodiversity conservation in Tasmania and their support of the TLC.

Open day

More than 100 TLC supporters recently joined a group of our volunteer experts and staff at The Big Punchbowl to experience the natural values and cultural interpretations of the site. Participants learnt about the area's endangered plants and animals, Aboriginal cultural values, the wealth of waterfowl at Moulting Lagoon and sea eagle breeding patterns, including distant sightings of the newly-fledged eagle with its parents. It was a wonderful day filled with fascinating information, a satisfying walk and opportunities to get to know others in the TLC family.



Photo: Matthew Newton

Andry Sculthorpe from the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre with TLC board member Peter Cosier and Karen Cosier

We couldn't do it without you. Thank you!

Thank you to our many wonderful supporters who have given so generously towards our efforts to protect The Big Punchbowl.

Thanks to this support, we are very close now to being able to protect this wetland property in perpetuity and creating a total of 628 hectares of

connected private reserves adjoining the globally significant wetland, Moulting Lagoon.

However, we still need your help to secure The Big Punchbowl, forever. Your support makes such a big difference to the ongoing protection of Tasmania's unique ecosystems.

Val Whatley

Thank you to everyone who participated in the auction of Val Whatley's marvellous oil painting on canvas *The Big Punchbowl*. The winner is Janet Smith of Tarooma who offered the highest bid. Every cent from the auction will go towards the purchase and permanent protection of this important reserve.

Janet is very familiar with the wetlands around Moulting Lagoon including The Big Punchbowl, having researched the vegetation as part of her PhD. Artist Val

was very pleased to learn that her love of the Tasmanian landscape is shared by the new owner of her unique painting.

A big thank you also to Clive Tilsley and the staff of Fullers Bookshop without whom the successful auction would not have been possible!

Please make your tax-deductible gift today by visiting our website www.tasland.org.au/donations or phone 03 6225 1399.



Volunteer Marie Brolev spots eagles with Sally Bryant at The Big Punchbowl open day

Photo: Matthew Newton

Volunteer Profile: Marie Brolev

Marie was born and raised in North Zealand in Denmark and came to Tasmania in 2013 to study marine conservation biology and protected areas management at the Australian Maritime College. With a science degree from Copenhagen University and a Masters in Nature Management, Marie has made an enormous volunteer contribution to the TLC Science and Planning team's conservation efforts on the reserves.

Looking to expand her skills in protected area management, Marie's search for environment organisations led her to the TLC, and since then she has spent many hours at the Vale of Belvoir, Skullbone Plains, Five Rivers Reserve and The Big Punchbowl.

Marie has been assisting Matt Taylor and Sally Bryant with ecological monitoring through observations, setting up cameras, establishing transects and other means of documenting specific sites. You may have also seen Marie leading a gang of kids as part of our crack team of educators at our open days.

According to Marie, the methods of management used by the TLC are similar, and possibly even more developed than those she observed in Denmark. While the conservation landscape may differ between Denmark and Tasmania, the methods and application are similar so the experience she has gained on TLC reserves will come in handy well beyond Tasmania.

"Denmark has some protected areas, and three national parks managed by

private organisations, but there is just not as much focus on nature protection as in Tasmania," says Marie.

"The work I have been doing on the TLC reserves is so very relevant to the work I want to do."

Are you interested in volunteering? Register at www.tasland.org.au/about/volunteering

Thank you to all our volunteers!

Like Marie, so many TLC volunteers make our work happen to a level of excellence we simply would not achieve otherwise. Whether it is weeding, monitoring, building, advocating, governing, mailing or interpreting, your assistance is always noted and enormously appreciated. This year's Volunteer Week was celebrated in May and we would like to wholeheartedly thank all our volunteers.

We would also like to note our volunteer field day experts. At The Big Punchbowl Mark Wapstra, Jane Keble-Williams, Andry Sculthorpe, Kris Schaefer, Marie Brolev, Keith and Sib Corbett made the event a delightful experience for all. At our Blue Tier field day (coinciding with the fungi season in the north east) nearly 100 supporters studied land snails, fungi in full bloom and a glorious display of mosses and liverworts. We wish to thank our magnificent volunteers: Genevieve Gates and David Ratkowsky, Kevin Bonham, Paddy Dalton, Christine Corbett, Lesley Nicklason, and again, Kris and Marie.

Lexi the Tree Change Doll

Sonia Singh is amazed her Tree Change Dolls have gone global. When her role as a CSIRO science communicator was abolished Sonia decided to fill time by remaking dolls – recreating toys to look like real children, with the added bonus of keeping plastic out of tips. When photos of the remade dolls appeared on Tumblr they went viral, and suddenly Sonia couldn't keep up with demand from all over the world. Requests for dolls now come from Vienna, Russia, Latin America and Asia.

Each month Sonia uses the Tree Change Dolls to highlight a charity and while working with Grade 4/5 at Albeura St Primary School, Sonia suggested that if the students identified a charity they would like to support, Sonia would donate a doll to auction online, giving 80% of proceeds to their preferred cause. Grade 4/5 chose the TLC and Lexi the Tree Change Doll came into our world. With the help of their teacher Mr Williams, the students found a doll in desperate need of a reality check, and before long Lexi was on eBay and the bidding war began.

The global reach of the Tree Change Dolls is evidenced by the fact that Lexi now lives in Florida with her new owner, who, along with a new doll, has a new-found understanding of the TLC's work. And our efforts to protect The Big Punchbowl have received a welcome boost of \$1260!

Thanks a million to Sonia Singh, Mr Williams and Grade 4/5 at Albeura St Primary School.



Photo: Banksia at The Big Punchbowl, Awwen Dyer

Protect The Big Punchbowl

Donate today to ensure iconic species and areas of high conservation value in Tasmania have a future

“You realise as soon as you come here the richness of life... it is not only rich within these habitats, but at the intersection of them all sorts of interesting things happen. This is a very special place.”

Professor Ted Lefroy, Director of the Centre for the Environment, University of Tasmania

DONATE NOW: Visit www.tasland.org.au/donations or phone 03 6225 1399

Back page briefs

An experience that will last a lifetime

Researching alongside the TLC and experiencing Tasmania is an experience two US interns will never forget.

Charmayne Dayaye from Whiteriver in Arizona and Kenneth Edmo from the Flathead Native American Reservation, home of the Salish, Kootenai, and Pend d'Oreilles peoples in Montana spent three weeks in Tasmania.

“The fauna and flora are remarkably unique and the staff at TLC are very helpful, experienced, and professional individuals,” says Kenneth.

“It has helped open future goals and paths to a career we both would love to have. The TLC is more of a family than an organisation, and we would absolutely recommend TLC to any student seeking an internship or who wants to become a volunteer. Wonderful group of people!”



Sally Bryant with US interns Kenneth Edmo, Robert Kenney and Charmayne Dayaye investigate the fire history of The Big Punchbowl

Photo: Awwen Dyer

Midlands Conservation Fund video

The TLC and Bush Heritage Australia are raising money to support the fantastic work of the Banksia award-

winning Midlands Conservation Fund in protecting threatened grasslands and grassy woodlands. Watch the video at bit.ly/midlands_conservation_fund to find out how you too can support this innovative collaboration with committed Tasmanian farmers such as Julian and Rose von Bibra.

Skullbone wetlands on show at NGV

Artist John Wolseley's water-based works are on display at the National Gallery of Victoria until 16 August. His four year

pilgrimage to waterholes, mangroves and mires has resulted in the exhibition 'Heartlands and Headwaters'. Described as 'monumentally-scaled works on paper', the exhibition includes 'Natural History of Sphagnum Bog – Lake Ina, Tasmania 2013', created from John's time spent on the TLC's Skullbone Plains reserve as part of the Skullbone Experiment.

Gordonvale

A quick note to let all know that the Gordonvale plaque is firmly in place at the head of the track to Lake Rhona. Stop for a look if you are passing by!

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

