



TASMANIAN
LAND
CONSERVANCY

SPRING 2021

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Prosser River Reserve. Photo: Rob Blakers

As we celebrate 20 years of the Tasmanian Land Conservancy (TLC), we look back at some of the incredible successes of the organisation in the protection of so many important places across Tasmania. From the Vale of Belvoir, Skullbone Plains, Recherche Bay and all of our 23 reserves, all have their own unique story, values and connections, but all have been protected by a community of supporters coming together for a future that expresses the fundamental value of protecting nature. The TLC, through its community of supporters, has protected over 75,000 hectares of land across our state. We celebrate and wholeheartedly thank everyone who has contributed to the TLC journey so far, conserving the core element which makes Tasmania so special: its natural places.

We continue to be optimistic and excited for the future, with positive outcomes across our conservation programs. From the ever-reliable Revolving Fund, which continues to protect important properties across the state, to a new partnership that is re-introducing the threatened eastern quoll to the central highlands. The incredible momentum of the Kelvedon Hills campaign has been inspiring, connecting and motivating, with so many stepping up to protect this iconic landscape. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the campaign so far.

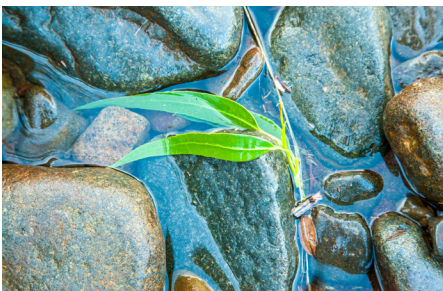
We are mourning the loss of our dear colleague Andrew Cameron. It is a sad time for Andrew's family, his community, the TLC,

our partners and everyone Andrew worked with during his life. He guided and championed the Midlands Conservation Fund since it was seeded in 2013. Andrew will leave an enduring mark on everyone he met and the landscapes in which he lived and worked. We offer our deep condolences to Andrew's family and all those who were close to him.

As we come out of the winter months and into spring, we have some exciting new projects that we look forward to sharing with you all in the coming months. In the meantime, enjoy our spring newsletter and we look forward to seeing you all soon.

**James Hattam
Chief Executive Officer**

HIGHLIGHTS



Kelvedon Hills. Photo: Andy Townsend

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An update on the campaign to protect Kelvedon Hills.



Vale of Belvoir Reserve. Photo: Andy Townsend

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How protecting forests helps reduce emissions.



At Five Rivers Reserve in 2013. Photo: Matthew Newton

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Celebrating twenty years of the TLC.



KELVEDON HILLS UPDATE

Kelvedon Hills. Photos: Andy Townsend

Our campaign to protect Kelvedon Hills has certainly struck a chord with many of you. Since we launched this campaign in May, you have donated more than \$1,000,000. It's an incredible effort and we are humbled by your commitment to conservation. And thanks to the Elsie Cameron Foundation's promise to match every donation to protect Kelvedon Hills dollar-for-dollar up to \$1,000,000, total donations have now surpassed \$2,000,000. We are heartened to be in the home straight for the campaign with just over \$50,000 to raise.

The strength of your support has given us the confidence to begin work on a monitoring plan for the property. Our science team has paid a visit to Kelvedon Hills and begun the search for long-term monitoring sites, which will be set up once the property has been protected. Ten wildlife cameras are now in place to give us some data we can use to establish an approach.

Conservation Ecologist Joe Quarmby was part of the team who installed the cameras, and he reports that one of the highlights was walking through vast areas of native grassland covered by *Themeda triandra* (kangaroo grass). 'Tasmania's lowland native grasslands are a critically endangered ecological community, poorly conserved elsewhere, and having this opportunity to protect such a large, rich swathe of grassland is incredibly precious,' he said. 'This will be the largest extent of this community we've ever had on a TLC reserve.'

Our reserves team has also been mapping the infrastructure at Kelvedon Hills, working out the best way to provide access to the property while making sure it's secure against threats. Walking from river to river through different landscapes and across the property's undulating hills will be a wonderful day out. We want you to be able to visit the reserve you helped to protect, while ensuring its natural values remain intact, and we still have some work to do to make that possible.

When we first had the opportunity to acquire this piece of land we knew that it would be popular. Kelvedon Hills is the largest property we've set out to protect since we established the Five Rivers Reserve in 2014. At 1,300 ha, Kelvedon Hills' protection could make a huge difference – there is habitat here for over 40 rare and threatened species, including 11 that are nationally threatened. Protecting large tracts of open eucalypt woodland like those at Kelvedon Hills is the best way to provide a future for declining woodland bird communities.

With 2,150 ha of private nature reserves flanking the property, and with Kelvedon's connections to TLC's Little Swanport and Prosser River Reserves, protecting this landscape will result in 3,500 ha of contiguous private reserves. And while nothing is confirmed as yet, the success of this campaign looks likely to open up an opportunity to protect even more land in this region: watch this space!

We couldn't do any of this without the involvement of landholders. We are so grateful to Jack Cotton and his daughter Anna for giving us the opportunity to establish this reserve. Kelvedon Hills is part of the 5,000 ha Kelvedon Estate, which has been in the Cotton family for generations. We asked Jack and Anna why they decided to sell their property to a nature conservation organisation, and they told us:

'As custodians of Kelvedon, we are delighted to be involved with the TLC and the Kelvedon Hills project. This is a particularly scenic and special site, encompassing the Meredith River, and its future prosperity is best ensured under management by the TLC.'

Thank you so much to everyone who has supported this campaign so far.

GIVE

Help us protect important habitat at Kelvedon Hills by visiting tasland.org.au/donate-now or calling the office on 03 6225 1399. Our target includes a contribution to the TLC Foundation endowment that will generate funds for ongoing ecological monitoring and management, year after year. By contributing to the creation of Kelvedon Hills Reserve, you are helping to protect nature in perpetuity.



FORESTS & CARBON

Five Rivers Reserve. Photo: Rob Blakers

Across Australia, businesses are looking for ways to offset their carbon emissions. One of the ways they can do this is by buying carbon credits from an accredited and verified source. The TLC manages one such accredited carbon abatement project under the Commonwealth Government Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF). The revenue raised by selling our carbon credits from this project funds ongoing land management, science and monitoring.

The TLC's carbon project spans 12,143 hectares of protected native forest across our New Leaf properties. In this project, carbon is stored in vegetation and soils. However, this carbon can be released back into the atmosphere by man-made or natural events, reversing the environmental benefit of the sequestration project. This means we are obliged to regularly monitor and report carbon stocks, particularly when the forest has a disturbance such as a fire.

In 2019 a wildfire burned part of our project and we were required to submit a disturbance assessment to the ERF to ensure we were still sequestering the same amount of carbon. As the basis for our assessment, the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE) provided an outline of the burn area and gave us data about the fire's relative severity, calculated using satellite imagery from before and after the fire.

As part of the TLC's long-term ecological monitoring, we surveyed vegetation within the burn area.

These surveys collected data on fire patchiness and severity, which we used alongside DPIPWE's fire severity data. Fifty-nine plots, each measuring 45 x 45m, were surveyed, using a method developed in consultation with Australia's Clean Energy Regulator.

As expected, due to the variation in vegetation structure, landforms and forest types across the fire area, the impact from the fire varied significantly. But the fire did not cause so much long-term loss of canopy cover as to result in a reduction in carbon abatement – that is, it didn't result in canopy loss of more than the allowed number of mature trees across the project area.

The TLC's project was one of the first of this type to gain accreditation and is now one of the first to go through the process of responding to a disturbance event. The monitoring we've done has shown that a multi-structured native forest can be relatively resilient and represents a sound store of carbon.

There are many good reasons to protect forests – for habitat, to maintain resilient ecosystems, or just because they are a wonderful living thing – but being able to derive an income stream from intact forests makes their conservation even more widely appealing. Unfortunately, no new projects like the TLC's can currently be accredited, which is a barrier for other landowners and organisations that wish to calculate and store carbon through forest protection. The TLC believes that landowners should have alternative options to generate income and to support ongoing land management that results in conservation.

Deborah Wace. Photo: James Hattam

RECHERCHE BAY TRIP

In 1792, on the first of Antoine Bruni d'Entrecasteaux's visits on the *Recherche* and *Esperance*, botanist Labillardière described Recherche Bay as 'this solitary harbour at the extremity of the globe'.

The French scientific expedition included leading scientists of the day and carried experiments on the Earth's magnetic fields and botanical surveys. A garden was planted and there were gatherings with local Aboriginal people.

Over 220 years later, we travelled to the area with some of the TLC's supporters who have established their own named funds in the TLC Foundation. This time our arrival was on the *Odalisque*, and just an hour motoring from Dover – but the sentiment remains. Recherche is a precious haven of rich and inspiring stories.

These stories and more were shared (sometimes in song!) with our group of TLC Foundation fund founders by Deborah Wace, artist, botanist, songwriter and activist.

When the 142 hectare property, featuring stands of mature blue gums, was slated for logging in the early 2000s, Deb was among the local community campaigning for its protection. Championed by then Senator Bob Brown and philanthropist Dick Smith, the issue got national attention. In 2006, through the support of over 1,000 people, this site of enormous cultural and natural significance was bought by the TLC and protected forever as Recherche Bay Reserve.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TLC

Long Point Reserve, one of TLC's first, photographed when it was protected. Photo: Matthew Newton

This year, the TLC celebrates its 20th birthday. You've all heard how the TLC started back in 2001, with only \$50 in the bank and a handful of committed volunteers. It was under that model – a volunteer board and staff – that the TLC released its first newsletter, in September 2003. It provides quite an insight into the plucky little organisation of that era.

Scott Coleman took on the job of writing and editing that first edition, and the issues it covered were not that different to the ones we're bringing you today. Back then, the TLC was finalising fundraising for Long Point Reserve, a 386 hectare wetland of international importance that is part of the Moulting Lagoon complex on the east coast. These days, our newest property, Kelvedon Hills, is on the brink of reaching its fundraising goals. In fact, if you stand on tippy toes at Kelvedon you can just about see Long Point Reserve!

At the time of the first newsletter, the TLC was operating out of a corner of the Bush Heritage office in Salamanca before their move to Melbourne, but it had its eye on the buildings we now occupy, in Pearce's Park Tarooma.

That first newsletter also saw the announcement of a brand new Revolving Fund property, an 'orchid hot spot' at Port Sorell. You might recognise it as today's Rubicon Reserve: we featured an ecological burn at the property in our last newsletter.

Of course, much has also changed since then. The TLC is now managing more than 15,600 hectares of permanent reserves, as well as nearly 15,000 hectares in our New Leaf properties. Almost 8,000 hectares of permanently protected land has passed through the Revolving Fund. The TLC now administers Tasmania's Land for Wildlife program, and over the past 12 months 3,833 hectares has been registered as LFW. To stay on top of all that land and all those relationships, we've filled the Tarooma office to bursting with staff, as well as running an office in Launceston.

Two things definitely haven't changed, though. As Nathan Males, then President of the TLC, said in that first newsletter, 'This is an exciting time for us all and an indication of what we can achieve by working together to conserve Tasmania's most important natural places'. Or to quote Scott Coleman, 'Look after yourselves and don't forget to tell Tassie you love her'.

(If you enjoy reminiscing, you can see all the old TLC newsletters at tasland.org.au/about-the-tlc/newsletters-and-annual-reports/)

ACT
Want to make sure you're invited to our book launch and birthday party? Sign up for Event Invitations at tasland.org.au/subscribe-to-our-newsletter

BREATHING SPACE

As part of the TLC's 20th birthday celebrations, we are publishing an exciting new book. *Breathing space* brings together original essays, stories and poems about Tasmanians' changing relationship with nature.

We started thinking about this book in mid-2020, when we emerged from lockdown into a Tasmania transformed. The state's most popular wild places were empty of visitors. A state once seen by outsiders as a backwater was starting to be viewed as an oasis in a turbulent world. Suddenly everyone wanted a piece of Tasmania, a home among trees.

In this very strange time, we wondered what Tasmanians, and lovers of Tasmania, were thinking about our relationship with nature. Had it shifted in the twenty years since the TLC was founded? Would it change again over the next twenty years?

Breathing space includes contributions from prize-winning Tassie favourites like Robbie Arnott, James Boyce, Danielle Wood and Pete Hay, as well as exciting new voices such as poet Kaya Ortiz, speculative essayist Keely Jobe and fearless environment writer Zowie Douglas-Kinghorn. The pages are also graced with a stunning new artwork by Richard Wastell.

Breathing space will be launched at events around Tasmania in October and November. Keep an eye on our website and your inbox for information on where you can get a copy.



Andrew Cameron. Photo: Matthew Newton

An eastern quoll ready for release. Photo: Matthew Newton

The TLC is mourning the loss of Andrew Cameron, who passed away in the early hours of Monday 2 August, with his wife Diana by his side.

Andrew was the driving force behind the Midlands Conservation Fund – an incredible man, living life with heart and soul. He lived his values through his actions and was committed to leaving the world and his beloved Tasmanian midlands a better place. Whether it be as a member of his local community, as a father, grandfather and husband, or his tireless efforts quietly championing conservation – Andrew gently touched a great many people.

His knowledge spanned from farming systems to ecology, and the rich human and natural history of Tasmania. Although he didn't push himself forward in a crowd, he could happily chat to anyone and there was no topic of which he was ignorant. His intellect, humour and curiosity extended to any subject. Andrew's infectious personality, eye for detail, wicked sense of humour and humility endeared him to many.

His generosity of spirit continued through these last difficult months, as he never complained about his situation but welcomed visitors with joy and strove to make friendly conversation.

He leaves an incredible legacy – conservation in his beloved midlands, passion for his community, the importance of family and rich relationships with people from all walks of life.

He was the friendly farmer and an absolute gentleman. Andrew will leave an enduring mark on all who he met and the landscapes in which he lived and worked.

Vale Andrew Cameron and rest in peace.

To make a donation in memory of Andrew, please visit tasland.org.au/donations-in-tribute and include 'Andrew Cameron' in the Honouree Name.

All gifts will be directed to the Midlands Conservation Fund to support the conservation management of the threatened lowland grasslands and grassy woodlands in the Tasmanian Midlands.

EXPLORE

The Tasmanian midlands are home to one of the most threatened ecosystems in the world – temperate grasslands and grassy woodlands. This landscape supports a robust farming region as well as being one of Australia's 15 biodiversity hotspots.

The area is rich in plant and animal species, many of which are endemic or endangered – including 32 nationally threatened species and more than 180 plants and animals that are threatened in Tasmania.

QUOLL RESEARCH

In November 2020, the TLC began researching ways to increase populations of eastern quolls in Tasmania's highlands. Working with the Tasmanian Quoll Conservation Program, WWF-Australia's Rewilding Unit, UTAS and DPIWPE, and with support from the Wettenhall Environment Trust, the TLC set up a research project at our Silver Plains property near Lake Sorell. The program released 20 quolls, 10 of each sex, and is monitoring whether they breed with local quolls.

One of each sex died early on, but when the team returned to Silver Plains in July, they caught five of the remaining captive-bred male quolls. These males are now two years old: pretty good going for this species.

While they only caught one of the nine remaining captive-bred female quolls, she had mated and was carrying five pouch young (eastern quolls can have a maximum of six each season, and most females carry five to six). This result is super exciting, as it is one of the major goals if we want such releases to be effective in increasing local populations. Again, breeding as a two-year-old female is great for this short-lived species.

The team will be trapping in December to take genetic samples from the juveniles, to help determine the impact the captive-bred quolls are having on the local population genetics.



WHAT'S ON

Kelvedon Hills. Photo: Andy Townsend



Flat Rock Reserve. Photo: Andy Townsend

SAVE THE DATE: NATURAL GUARDIANS TRIP TO DAISY DELL RESERVE

Saturday 9 October

This year the Natural Guardians Reserve trip will take confirmed bequesters to Daisy Dell Reserve (protected in 2017) to explore woodlands and rainforest, subalpine grasslands and sedgelands. Detailed invitations will be sent to our Natural Guardians community. If you have included the TLC in your will and haven't let us know, please get in contact with Sophie Marshall at smarshall@tasland.org.au so we can invite you along on this trip. We want to say thank you to anyone who plans to leave a legacy for nature.

SAVE THE DATE: BREATHING SPACE LAUNCHES IN HOBART & TRIABUNNA

Friday 29 October & Wednesday 10 November

Breathing space is a collection of poems, stories and essays on Tasmanians' changing relationship with nature, commissioned to mark the TLC's 20th birthday. We'll be launching the book at Spring Bay Mill on 29 October – this event will also be a celebration of the TLC's 20th birthday for our supporters. At Hobart Town Hall on 10 November, award-winning novelist Robbie Arnott will be launching the book to the wider public, with readings from some of the other authors. Keep an eye on your inbox for invitations.





SAVE THE DATE: TLC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Sunday 28 November 2:00pm – 4:00pm

Following the general business meeting we invite you to join us at Kingborough Community Hub (Goshawk Way, Kingston) to share panel highlights of the TLC's 20 years in nature conservation. More information closer to the date.

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