



Newsletter September 2013

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Volunteering, working for change, for advocacy, for ethical balanced decision-making is rewarding. It simulates researching, thinking, better decision making and action toward change.

The Annual General Meeting approaches and it's time to change the management team. You may have heard that some of our outstanding and long serving volunteers are taking a very well earned break from working on the committee of management so there are opportunities available to put your hand up and join the team. All are welcome to serve and we are happy to tailor the tasks in hand to take best advantage of your skills and experience.

Another busy quarter has passed and the state government is well advanced with its plans to change the way decisions are made about planning and natural resources. The future of our native forests hangs in the balance. The government's intention by October is to have completed its process that would change the regulations that would then allow native forests trees to be burnt in electrical power generation station furnaces. To find out more about the forest biomass campaign go to our website, follow the links and write, email or phone to the Premier and our local member Andrew Constance.

On the mining front the owners of the Dargues Reef goldmine at Majors Creek, perched almost on the rim of the headwaters for the Deua River catchment, applied to have the mine's approval changed. As you would be aware this catchment is the primary drinking water supply for the Eurobodalla. The modifications sought were broadly about infrastructure organisation and a wording change in the approval. The proponent seeks to have the word 'generally' added to a section of the approval conditions that may appear, if granted, to lessen the scheduling and rigour of monitoring activities required under the original approval. Coastwatchers has voiced concern to the government.

Finally, please give thought to getting more engaged with Coastwatchers activities, especially committee positions. Don't hesitate to give me a call and talk about the kind of opportunities that you are passionate about. Call Chris on 0468435779 and let's talk.

And please come to the AGM and listen to and question our speakers. Show our shire's General Manager there are many people who care about the environment.

Chris Kowal

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday 12 October, 2013 at 2 pm at
Tomakin Community Hall

GUEST SPEAKERS

Dr Catherine Dale, has been Eurobodalla's General Manager since April this year.



AND

Professor Andrew Short OAM, widely regarded as the world's foremost authority on beaches.

MORE ABOUT THE SPEAKERS NEXT PAGE

OUR GUEST SPEAKERS

Dr Catherine Dale has extensive experience as Chief Executive Officer of several Victorian councils and has proven management skills and experience in strategic, financial and environment and land use planning, town centre development, economic development and people management, and community engagement.

She says this is one of the most spectacular and beautiful parts of the world and a very special place for her, and wants to meet the community and business groups and to understand their priorities and aspirations.

Professor Andrew Short OAM is author of 12 books and hundreds of scientific publications, he is also considered the beach expert's expert and often referred to as Professor Coast.

Professor Short's expertise includes coastal zone management, environment/climate change and coastal impacts. Among many other professional roles he also runs his own consultancy (Coastal Studies Ltd), and serves on the NSW Coastal Expert Group and the Eurobodalla Coastal



SATIN BOWER BIRDS, KEEP AN EYE OUT!

The male Satin Bowerbird is perhaps the best known and well documented of all bowerbirds in Australia. This fame partially stems from its practice of building and decorating a bower to attract females. This consists of two parallel walls of sticks, is built on the ground, and is used as a courtship arena during the breeding season. The male decorates it with bright blue coloured objects that it collects. The male meticulously maintains the bower throughout the year.

John Perkins

PLEASE HELP US TO HELP EACH OTHER

We are not asking for money this time (although that would be useful)!

Changes keep coming – some are dramatic.

Local Government changes have been followed by State Government changes and, now, the Federal Government. These are unlikely to help our cause as none are likely to increase the protection of the natural environment, just when it needs it most. So we and the environment have real problems. As most of us know, protecting the natural environment helps all of us, (including farmers and other businesses and future generations) especially in the long-term and real (ie long-term) vision is needed - NOW.

What can we do? Coastwatchers would very much appreciate your opinions so they can be considered briefly at the AGM or soon after – by members and the new committee.

Further to the recent setting up of the excellent Coastwatchers website, can you suggest ways to improve its effectiveness?

New ways of doing things seem to be essential, like convincing others to become involved, or just become more knowledgeable, and opening the minds of others (or all ages). Now that the social media has taken over from the traditional media and meetings etc, we need your input and enthusiasm to help Coastwatchers become more effective.

So you are all encouraged to suggest what needs to be done – and how to do it.

For example, do Coastwatchers members need to link better with other individuals and groups at local, state and federal level? How could this be done? Do we need to communicate better between ourselves on issues, particularly away from the local level, and also further into the future?

Brian Versey

THANKS – YOUR EFFORTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

We have been calling on our members to take a more active part by sending emails, signing petitions and using social media to let politicians know that there are many voters who want them to protect the environment.

Many thanks to those of you who have taken the time to help. It is probably the only way we can have any influence on governments in these less than ideal times.

If you are not on our email list for NEWS please think of adding your name. The more people we have to personally send a message the more effect it will have. Email John Allen admin@coastwatchers.org.au to be added to our list. You can still get the printed newsletter if you want it.

KOALA PROJECT RELEASES RECOVERY DRAFT

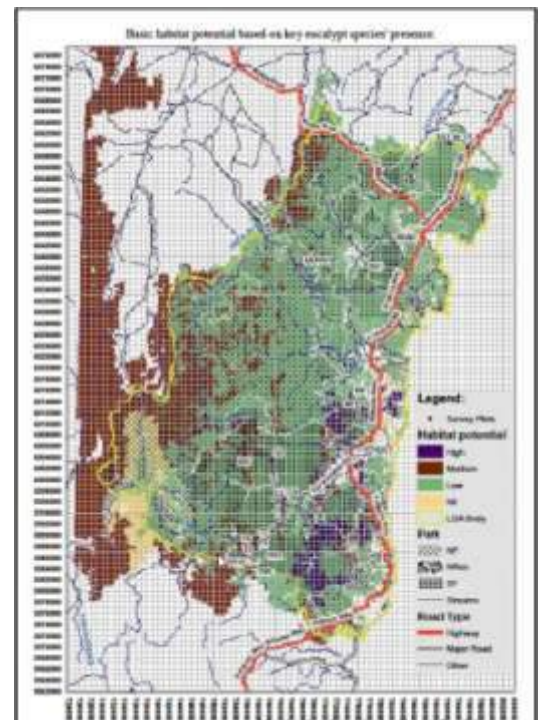
On 3rd September the volunteer Eurobodalla Koalas project distributed a draft 2014-2026 Eurobodalla Koala Recovery Strategy. Feedback on the content and the likelihood of implementation should reach Keith Joliffe by 22nd November. The document will then be completed, uploaded to the Coastwatchers website and a small number of hard copies printed. Members are encouraged to promote discussion of the draft amongst the general community and the major local and state land management agencies. The draft can be viewed on the Eurobodalla Koalas project *facebook* page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/187171881416765/> or phone Keith on 0427 546 156 to obtain your personal copy by email.

The draft strategy envisages coordinated action by multiple stakeholders taking responsibility for specified priorities within their scope. Stakeholders are grouped as follows:

- Forestry Corporation NSW
- NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (National Parks and Wildlife Service)
- Eurobodalla Shire Council
- NSW Roads and Maritime Services
- Owners and managers of private forests
- Farmers
- Urban and peri-urban dwellers

Priorities are concentrated around establishing a landscape-scale Shire-wide habitat conducive to both natural revival and inbound translocation, through:

- koala habitat as an integrated mosaic across urban, peri-urban, semi-rural, rural, private, State Forests and National Parks tenures
- sustainable forestry consistent with the maintenance of koala habitat
- reception zones for koalas potentially translocated from elsewhere



Keith's team have mapped potential koala habitat based on eucalypt species. To see the map in more detail go to <http://www.coastwatchers.org.au/eurobodalla-koalas-project/pilot-study-report/>

- nomination and protection of potential home range and connectivity zones
- connectivity within and beyond the Shire's borders
- infrastructure featuring protection from traffic strike and facilitation of native animal movement
- retention and replanting of specified eucalypt species
- domestic and hunting dog control
- availability of coordination and advice

The draft elaborates on these priorities in detail, including specific advice for action and sets of performance indicators.

Keith Joliffe



The O'Farrell government plans to let companies burn native forest wood for electricity.



TELL THEM NO
www.nccnsw.org.au

BURNING NATIVE FORESTS

We wrote to the government vehemently opposing the proposed amendment to the law which would allow burning native forest trees to generate electricity. We have seen the forests in and around the Eurobodalla and Bega Shires decimated for woodchip exports. This amendment will make a bad situation worse.

To say that the heads and off-cuts from harvesting will be used is a blatant lie. We witness the trucks that take logs to the Eden chip mill. They never carry such material and it would be uneconomic for them to do so.

Many more logs are taken to the chip mill than are used for sawlogs and the proposal to use these types of logs to burn for the production of electricity will only intensify the destruction of the forests

Jenny Edwards

NSW FORESTRY CORPORATION ERRS AGAIN *(from NCC online newsletter)*

The NSW Nature Conservation Council is calling for an independent review of the state forestry organisation's compliance with environmental laws and regulations following another conviction for serious breaches.

The Land and Environment Court on July 10 found the Forestry Corporation of New South Wales guilty of "systematic failures" of forest management after a forestry officer burned protected bushland near Bateman's Bay in the south coast. The court fined the corporation \$35,000 and ordered it to pay the prosecuting authority's legal costs.

SHARE THE SHORELINE

We'd like once again to ask for your support this year in "Sharing the Shoreline" with one our most endangered birds, the Pied Oystercatcher, Hooded Plover and the Little Tern.

Every year a group of people volunteer to work with NPWS in our area along the South Coast to provide a safe habitat for the Hooded Plovers as well as Sooty Oyster Catchers, Pied Oyster Catchers and Little Terns.

NPWS supported by Birdlife Australia train volunteers and provide funding and materials for whatever is needed within the habitat to improve the survival rates of chicks. This can include signs and fencing, feral pest eradication and information in the form of posters, leaflets and NPWS education programs.

Residents and visitors who have knowledge of this area 30 or more years ago will tell you that our local beaches had many Hooded Plovers, Pied Oystercatchers and Little Terns. However, over time with an increase in human population and the resulting increase in activity on the shoreline our shorebird population has had a dramatic decline, so much so, they are on the Endangered list in NSW. Faced with an increase in threats such as foxes, ravens, dogs and people as well as a naturally low chick survival rate these birds need our support to maintain, and we hope increase, their numbers.

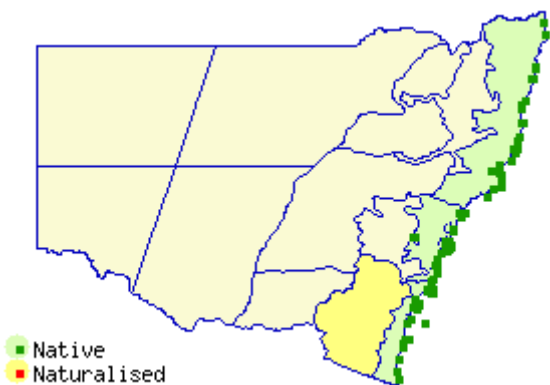
Like all volunteers, the South Coast Shorebird Recovery volunteers are not paid. We volunteer because we make the time for something we think is important. However, it is not possible for us to successfully run this program without your help so we ask you to:

- * comply with the signs around protection areas,
- * respect signs and fencing by not removing or damaging it ,
- * report any damage or removal of signs or fencing,
- * report any threats to the birds by feral animals or dogs,
- * respect the volunteers should you have the chance to talk with them and
- * consider being a volunteer too !

John Perkins



South Durras shorebird recovery volunteers



The natural range of Coastal Wattle (Acacia longifolia ssp sophorae)

COASTAL WATTLE – WHAT’S THE PROBLEM?

In our February newsletter we optimistically predicted that the feud over the native species, Coastal Wattle, at Long Beach had been resolved. A Property Vegetation Plan, signed off by Council and the Southern Rivers Catchment Authority (SRCMA) ‘recommended defined limits for clearing Coastal Wattle to ensure that wholesale removal does not occur’. This should have seen the dune vegetation managed sensibly. However, Long Beach Landcare is afraid this may not happen.

Some people in the Long Beach Community Association will only be satisfied if all the Coastal wattle is eradicated. Meanwhile Council In conjunction with the Community Association (and without input from Long Beach Landcare who have been maintaining the dune for over

8 years) has successfully received funding from a Heritage Trust grant of over \$52,000 to begin removing some of the wattles, controlling rabbits and “rehabilitating” in 2 trial areas at the western end of the dune.

Long Beach Landcare wanted the results of the removal/rehabilitation of any Coastal Wattle in Trial Area 1 to be evaluated before further work was carried out. This is stated in Council’s Implementation Plan and is consistent with the Coastal Wattle Strategy prepared with an earlier funding grant to the Landcare group. However, both areas are to be done with planting by the Community Association members in Trial area 2 to commence in October.

Long Beach Landcare has since remapped the area and it is evident that there is much less Coastal Wattle than stated. This raises the question whether the grant funds, plus council's input of some \$30 000, make the total cost of this project – some \$86 000 – a waste of public money. Long Beach Landcare believe the work relating to Coastal Wattle could have been performed as part of the group's routine maintenance of the dune at a cost not exceeding \$10 000.

Alison Baird & Jenny Edwards

MARINE DEBRIS

Recent storms over the past months have been responsible for an extraordinary amount of marine debris washed up along the coastline of Eurobodalla. More so on southerly facing coastlines. One particular hot spot is the southern coastline of Murramarang National Park where volunteers have removed an incredible amount of litter on a regular basis.

At one remote mostly rocky cove in this area a large bag of small plastic items was collected. It just might be that a lot of this rubbish is tidal and wind driven from the urban area of Batemans Bay.



There are two main sources of marine debris. 60-80% of marine debris originates directly from land sources. This includes debris from run-off, stormwater drains, air-born debris and irresponsible disposal of rubbish by beach goers and campers.

The other source of debris is ocean based. This includes fishing lines and nets, offshore oil and gas rig platform debris, merchant ship, ferry and cruise liner waste, and recreational and tourist vessel garbage.



John Perkins

SOUTH AUSTRALIA SHOWS HOW

Already, one in five houses in South Australia has rooftop solar PV, and a new Australian Energy Market Operator document predicts this could treble by 2022. With wind already supplying 27% of power, and new wind farms coming on, the state will likely have 50% of wind and solar within 10 years.

PLANNING IN NSW

These planning reforms represent the most significant backward step in public participation and environment protection in a generation. It is critical that the government hears from people that support a system that puts environmental outcomes and community rights at the centre of development decisions.

Visit www.betterplanningnetwork.org.au to see what you can do to change the proposed law which will:

- Remove your right to comment on 80% of development – even when it is next door to you.
- Allow developers to concrete our communities
- Massively reduce environmental and heritage protections
- Threaten our quality of life
- Increase the risk of corruption



NATIONAL PARKS

Tourism and access

Queensland and Victoria are already opening national parks for “eco-tourism” developments. They say the income will help pay for upkeep of the parks. It seems likely that NSW will follow suit. It is not just conservationists concerned about this. Local councils see their costs rising to maintain roads and infrastructure servicing the resorts which they say should pay rates.

There is also strong and growing pressure to have national parks, including wilderness areas, opened up to horse riding, grazing, 4WDs and other vehicles.

Hunting

It seems the state government has got the message that most people think that recreational hunting in national parks is not a good idea. At the moment it has been limited and will be supervised by National Parks staff. However, the way has been left open to change this.

Minister Robyn Parker says the program will operate under the “strictest controls in Australia:

- The program will be regulated and managed by NPWS.
- To participate, volunteers will need to have the equivalent skill, experience and accreditation of our professional NPWS staff and contractors.
- All pest control activities will be scheduled and carefully managed by NPWS.
- All pest control activities will be announced in advance. NPWS will provide notification four weeks in advance and final confirmation to park neighbours and the public a minimum of 48 hours ahead of any activities.
- Areas will be closed to visitors on the days of these pest control activities, with appropriate signage and road closures in place.
- No person under 18 will be allowed to participate.
- Bows and black powder muskets will be banned.
- The program will not occur during school holidays.
- The program will not occur in metropolitan parks and wilderness or World Heritage areas. “

Initially 12 parks or reserves will be part of a trial which is expected to commence in October 2013. There will be a review of the effectiveness of this initial stage and report back to Government before any further roll out of the program.

Hunting continues in state forests so bush users beware. It seems more than co-incidence that deer have only recently been seen in forests around Batemans Bay. Have the hunters been releasing animals they consider good prey?

Jenny Edwards

CARBON SINKS OR NOT

Seagrasses as sinks -- Dr Peter Macreadie, scientist at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) says seagrass is 35 times more efficient at sequestering CO₂ than rainforests. Most of the carbon is stored in the sediment and can stay there for thousands of years.

The findings are a result of studies of seagrass beds in Jervis Bay, some intact and some damaged by seismic testing for a nuclear plant in 1969. The holes have still not recovered.

However, coastal development and nutrient runoff threaten seagrass meadows around the world. NSW has already lost half of its seagrass.

“The danger is that by destroying seagrass not only are we pulling less carbon out of the atmosphere, there is a risk that millennia-old carbon stocks could be released back into the environment. We are talking about amounts likely to be in excess of three times Australia’s annual greenhouse gas emissions. This would mean seagrasses would shift from being carbon sinks to carbon sources, thereby accelerating climate change,” says Dr Macreadie.

Making carbon dioxide into bricks.

The University of Newcastle, chemical giant Orica and carbon innovation company GreenMag Group (MCI) have spent six years researching how to permanently and safely dispose of carbon dioxide. A pilot plant in Newcastle will trial the world-first technology that turns carbon emissions from a coal-fired power station into bricks and pavers for the construction industry.



Reneweconomy says the captured carbon will react with chosen basic materials to form harmless solid carbonates, similar to baking soda. Through this process MCI is mimicking earth's natural reactions where rock is weathered.

MCI says NSW has an abundance of low grade mineral deposits that could be mined without competing with farming land, and the carbonation process could yield valuable by-products such as iron, nickel and chrome.

(Coastwatchers question – It seems the process will only capture emissions from coal-fired power stations. What about the emissions from mining, transporting and processing the coal and the minerals needed to make the bricks?)

Forests as sinks-- Peter Reich, scientific advisor, Hawkesbury Institute of the Environment, University of Western Sydney says between one quarter to a third of CO₂ emissions from fossil fuels over the past century have been stored in forests, especially tropical forests but this has changed.

If deforestation continues unabated, and droughts and forest fires become more common, as is expected, then tropical forests could become a large net source of carbon to the atmosphere, heating up the pace of climate change. Disturbances to temperate and boreal forests from climate change-induced droughts, wildfires and windstorms could make the situation even worse.

Oceans as sinks – Oceans have absorbed most of the heat resulting from carbon emissions but some studies seem to indicate that average sea surface temperatures have not risen much in recent years. However, data collected by high tech Argo floats, that can submerge and collect data down to 2000m, have shown that, at depths between 700 and 2000m water temperatures continue to rise.

NAMING CYCLONES

Environmental activists in the US have launched an online campaign urging the World Meteorological Organisation to name hurricanes (we call them cyclones) after politicians who are dismissive of climate change.

Unfortunately, the campaign group 350 Action, which is behind the tongue-in-cheek idea, does not think they will be successful. That's a shame. Coastwatchers could have contributed quite a few names of Australian politicians to add to their list.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES WE SHOULD BE TELLING THE NEW GOVERNMENT ABOUT

Ian Lowe, Emeritus Professor of Science, Technology and Society at Griffith University and president of the Australian Conservation Foundation chose these issues as top priority.

The most urgent issue is climate change. As the worst polluter per person in the developed world and a major exporter of fossil fuels, we have a critical responsibility. It is crucial for the government to take considered advice from the Climate Commission on the scientific basis for our reduction targets.

We should be urgently phasing out all subsidies for fossil fuel supply and use. These don't even make economic sense and are environmentally disastrous.

We need concerted programs to promote renewables and to improve the efficiency of turning energy into the goods and services we use. This is not low-hanging fruit, it is fruit lying on the ground.

Urgent attention needs to be given to urban transport – modernise public transport and improve vehicle efficiency.

Reduce fossil fuel exports, especially as most of the companies benefiting are not even Australian.

Restore the health of our greatest river system, the Murray-Darling, better protect the Great Barrier Reef and stop the loss of biodiversity.

Make sure the Commonwealth government maintains its capacity and political will to hold short-sighted state governments to account.

Population growth and lifestyle choices, including increasing consumption, are behind the environmental problems. We urgently need a national government that has a vision for a future sustainable Australia, rather than the irresponsible headlong pursuit of growth. The current approach is funding our material consumption by destroying our natural resources, effectively stealing from our own children.

BAN THE EMPTY WORD “SUSTAINABILITY”

From an article by visiting Professor of Building Physics at [University of Bath](#)

In order to continue as we would like as a developed society we need to do it with less. Less money, less resources and less fuel. If we reduce our consumption enough we might be capable of enduring on this planet for a reasonable length of time. ...

The word “sustainability” should be banned from technical and political discourse. It has become so corrupted as to not only be meaningless, but to actually obscure the real issues that must be dealt with. To begin with, we must attest that all human activity has impacts, and these may go far beyond the present sustainability indicators. Nevertheless, we need to take responsibility for all of them and strive to minimise or mitigate them.

These responsibilities extend across the generations, and we cannot ignore our responsibilities simply because we will not be around to be held accountable by future generations.

If our successors are still able to talk about these issues in 2100 then surely we will have sustained – by definition.

NEW FACES AND NEW DIRECTIONS

Coastwatchers needs to do things differently. It is time for a change and for new people to lead us. Young, media-savvy people would be especially welcome.

We really need you now so please check that your membership is up to date and consider nominating for a position on the committee or offer to help in some other way (form enclosed).

Those who receive your newsletter online please download the nomination form fill it in and email it back to admin@coastwatchers.org.au .

Tax deductible donations of \$2 or more can be made by --

Cheques or money orders made out to

The Coastwatchers Assoc. Inc Environment Fund and posted to

The Treasurer, PO Box 521, Batemans Bay 2536

Or you can pay by EFT or direct deposit to

Bank : IMB Ltd

A/C Name: The Coastwatchers Association Inc. Environment Fund

BSB: 641 800

A/C No: 200 271 717

Please tell the bank to say the **name of the donor** on their statement. It helps if you email our book-keeper to let her know too admin@coastwatchers.org.au

Or you can use Paypal - click on the Donate button at www.coastwatchers.org.au/support-us

COASTWATCHERS COMMITTEE 2012-13

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If undelivered return to;
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BATEMANS BAY NSW 2536

COASTWATCHERS CO-OPERATES WITH:

Broulee-Mossy Pt Community Association
Congo Area Association
Conservation Council ACT Region
Climate Action Network Australia
Eurobodalla Landcare / Dunecare groups
Friends of Durras
Friends of the Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens
Maloneys Residents Association
Malua Bay Residents Association
Nature Coast Marine Group
South East Region Conservation Alliance
Tomakin Community Association
Tuross Lakes Preservation Group

Coastwatchers is a member of -
The NSW Nature Conservation Council and
The Better Planning Network



Coastwatchers

Eurobodalla's environment and climate action group

ABN 66 003 550 939

EMAIL NEWSLETTER

Members can receive the newsletter by email and save our association paper, time and postage. The email contains a link to a choice of full or text-only PDF files that you can download when convenient

COMING EVENTS

Sat 12th October at 2.pm
Tomakin Community Hall
AGM and guest speakers