

December 2014

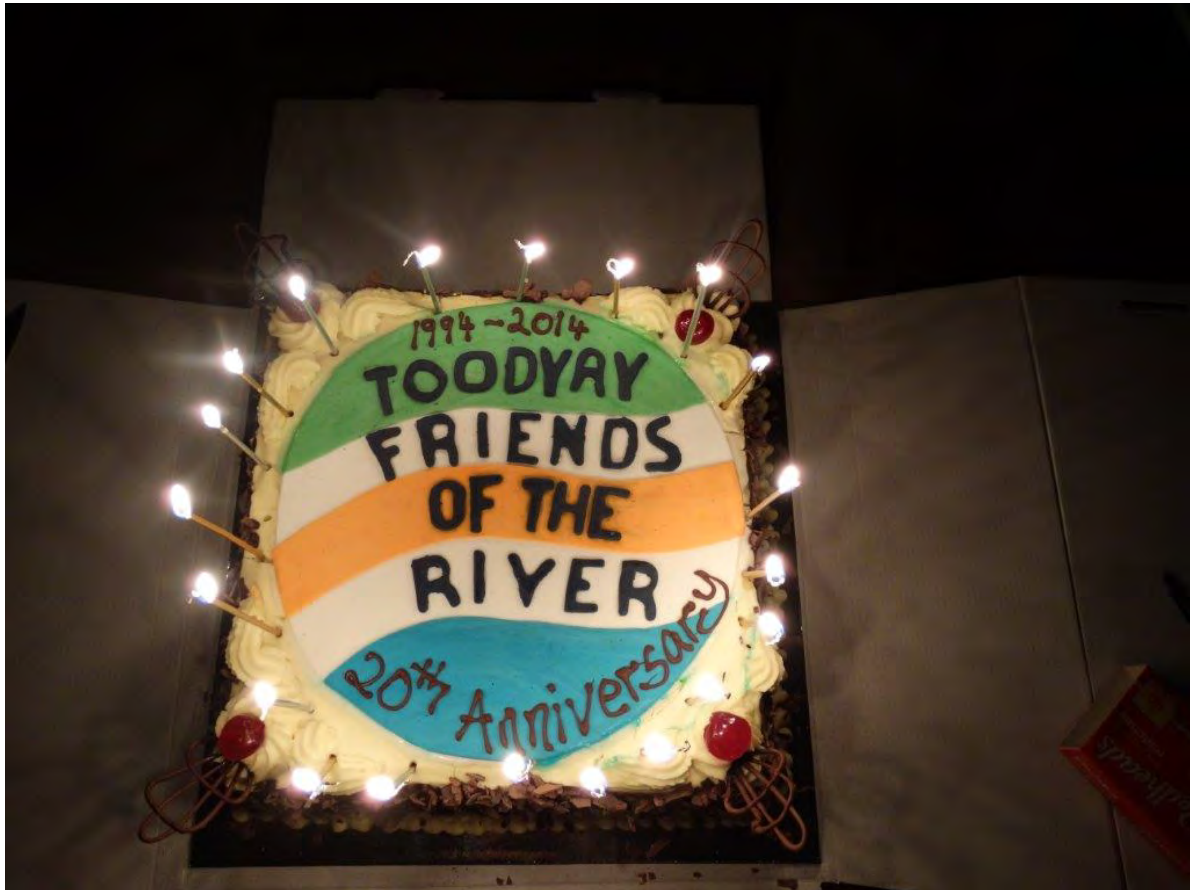


Biddip



Newsletter of the Toodyay Friends of the River

Volume 8, Number 3



Toodyay Friends of the River Twentieth Birthday Celebration

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The Toodyay Friends of the River are grateful to the Wheatbelt NRM for their support in producing the December 2014 newsletter



wheatbelt
natural resource
management

Presidents Report by Robyn Taylor



This is our last issue of *Biddip* for the year and I would like to thank everyone for supporting the Friends at our working-bees, or for simply being a paid up member because you believe in what we want to achieve with our beautiful Avon River.

While we have been very pleased to gain some new members this year, we were sad to lose dear members Brian Shepherd and Richard Brouwer who decided to leave for the cooler climes of Launceston. In October a joint TFOR farewell party with the Toodyay Historical Society and assorted friends was enjoyed at B&R's historic home 'Cascades'. We presented them with a photo album of the many events and excursions they had attended over the years, plus some snaps of the town and its surroundings – *lest they forget* our hot yellow summer landscapes and shimmering blue skies. We hear Brian has become aware of a group that cares for the Tamar River. No doubt it won't be long before he investigates what they are up to.

It's been a year of environmental issues and successes. The Bauxite Alumina Joint Venture's controversial proposal to establish open-cut mines in the Morangup region is being hotly protested by community groups. TFOR has an interest in this because of possible impacts on the Avon River. BAJV wants to establish a Community Advisory Group so at our November meeting we agreed to have our Project Officer Greg Warburton represent TFOR's interests. While this doesn't mean we agree with the proposals, we decided it was better to have a presence on the group to give us more of a chance to have input.

Now for the successes! Congratulations Toodyay for being the State winner of the 2014 Tidy Towns Awards. Our win was, in no small measure, due to the hard work of members Greg Warburton (Chairman, TTT) and Beth Frayne (Secretary). Our environmental credentials were well up there on the final scoreboard. Hot off the press while I write, is the good news about the EPA's decision not to allow the iron ore mine in the Helena Aurora Ranges. While the location is far from our Avon River, the plight of the HAR was highlighted by Greg's long trek to the region pushing his environmental barrow. Greg has also represented TFOR at various conferences. He's been a busy boy this year.

Our last working-bee was held in November with a much needed cleanup at Nardie Cemetery. Winter rains had produced a fine crop of wild oats, so with a good roll-up of members with rakes and whipper-snippers we soon had this fire hazard under control.

As usual we will be having our planning day on Australia Day, 26 January 2015, following the celebrations in Duidgee Park. Members will be advised about where we will be meeting and what to bring.

Before I finish, I would like to say it was good to see members Desraé and Wayne arrive back home safe and sound, and looking very relaxed, after their globe-trotting adventures.

It's December and it's the party season! Possibly by the time this issue of *Biddip* comes out we will have **celebrated our 20th anniversary** at our end of year get-together at Kerry and Fletch's home at Millard's Pool. Its just a thought, but our memorial to Gaven is nearby so I wonder if he might visit us in the spirit of Christmas just to check out what we are up to and **wish us well for the next 20 years**.

And on that note, I would like to wish all our Friends a joyous festive season and a happy, healthy and safe 2015.

Cover Photo: Greg Warburton, 2014

Toodyay wins State Tidy Towns Title with 'Near Perfect' Entry

Beth Frayne and Kim Angus

THE TOODYAY TIDY TOWNS Committee (TTTC) is overjoyed to announce that on 21st November Toodyay won the State Title at the Tidy Towns State Awards at a ceremony held at the Royal Perth Yacht Club. Toodyay also won the State Category Award for Waste Management and Litter Prevention.

TTTC member Shelley Kingston gave an inspiring speech of thanks on our first visit to the podium, acknowledging the great community effort our volunteers have undertaken to earn the Waste Management and Litter Prevention Award, through our Adopt-a-Spot Program, the Toodyay Op Shop and Lions Auction recycling efforts, and our Waste Transfer Station and Tip Shop.

Quoting the Winners Book: *'Toodyay has demonstrated an extraordinary level of commitment to develop innovative methods and leadership to reduce and manage litter within the community and manage waste.'*

As we enjoyed our luncheon we were honoured when the Governor, Her Excellency the Hon. Kerry Sanderson AO, came to the Toodyay table to congratulate us on our Category win. Amazingly, we later stepped up to the podium to accept our State Award from the Environment Minister, the Hon. Albert Jacob MLA.

TTTC Chairman, Greg Warburton, was deeply moved and gave an excellent speech of thanks, acknowledging all aspects of Toodyay's commitment to the Tidy Towns Sustainable Communities philosophy.

State Winner: Toodyay; Community Action and Partnerships:

Judges impressed by Toodyay's near-perfect entry; 60% rise in volunteer numbers boosts town's performance.

Toodyay has taken out Western Australia's Tidy Towns Sustainable Communities title for 2014 for its residents' attitudes towards solar lighting, cycling, bird watching and volunteering. Environment Minister, Albert Jacob said the awards recognised regional communities for their achievements in working towards sustainability, protecting their environments and preserving and celebrating their cultural heritage. "The awards are about more than keeping towns clean and tidy," Mr Jacob said. "They help create sustainable and vibrant communities".

The TTTC gives congratulations to all the winners:

- Imintji (Kimberley community);
- General Appearance: Cunderdin;
- Waste Management and Litter Prevention: Toodyay;
- Heritage and Culture: Southern Cross;
- Natural Environment Conservation: Harvey;
- Water Conservation: Merredin;
- Energy Conservation: York;
- Young Legends: Exmouth.
- Kimberley community, One Arm Point (Ardyaloon), was awarded a special commendation award for its leadership and strong overall performance.

We thank our Supporters and all the Volunteers in our town that make it such a wonderful place.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, 16/17 December, the National Tidy Towns Judge will be visiting for **hopefully Toodyay to be the 2015 National Tidy Town winner!**

See Page 9 for photographs of the State Awards

Also Page 9 for the National Judges visit

MILLARDS POOL DREDGING PROJECT

by Wayne (Fletch) Fletcher

THE PROBLEM of siltation has been identified in many river pools along the Avon River. Siltation has occurred due to the clearing of the riparian zone and exacerbated by the River Training Scheme over fifteen years from mid fifties, which removed structures (trees, logs, rocks) in the river bed that restricted water flows and so reduced the incidence of flooding. But also, the increased flows mobilised large quantities of sediment which then settle out in river pools.

Siltation has an adverse impact on the ecological health of a pool. Water depth is reduced resulting in greater fluctuations in temperature. Infill of deep pools removes the deep water refuges where water dwelling vertebrates and invertebrates can survive the dry summers. Shallow water is also more likely to be colonised by weed and algae resulting in depletion of oxygen and eutrophic conditions further impacting on living organisms.

Sediment extraction is a method of restoring depth in the pools but this extraction is an expensive and labour intensive activity. The removed sediments do have a commercial value. In parts of Australia where sand is in short supply, such extracted sediments would be valuable and the sediment removal would be self-funding. But in this part of Western Australia, sand is common and the commercial value of the sediment is not sufficient to cover the cost of extraction.

Millard's Pool, being one of the largest pools on the Avon River, is the focus of a number of projects of Toodyay Friends of the River this year. A sub-committee of TFOR has been formed to facilitate the deepening of Millard's Pool. This follows on from the work of the late Gaven Donegan who was very enthusiastic about dredging the pool.

The first role of the committee is to evaluate the sediments for commercial value. This will involve sampling and testing, followed by small scale dredging. Approval must be sort from Local and State Government, Native Title Custodians and local landholders. As well, because the process will not be self-funding, we must seek financial support for the investigation.

Initial biological surveys will need to be conducted to allow comparisons with ecological health parameters at a later stage.

So far, our local Shire have been supportive as has been a local landholder on whose land we will stockpile sediments.

The Sub-Committee consists of Wayne Clarke, Viv Read, Stephen Ferguson and Wayne Fletcher. Any of us would be willing to field questions on the Project.



Left: Maintaining the weir - and Millards Pool. This excavator was tasked to re-distribute the rocks in the weir, 18th May 2000.

This was following the January 2000 flood event, where many of the rocks were dislodged.

*Supervised and photographed by
Wayne Clarke*

THE WA WHEATBELT doesn't appear to have much in common with Maine, the most north eastern state of USA, bordering Canada and the Atlantic. Maine has literally thousands of rivers, 400km of coastline and 5,600km of tidal coastline. No wonder that the famous marine biologist Rachel Carson – author of *Silent Spring* – was drawn here back in the 1950s. However, it was in Maine that Ric and I met a community group that shares the exact same passions as TFOR. Indeed they took a great interest in TFOR.

The Damariscotta River Association (DRA) was founded in 1973 by a group of citizens keen to monitor river/estuarine health and to protect against inappropriate development. Right from the start, their priorities were to assess, monitor and educate. Their stated mission is “to preserve and promote the natural, cultural and historical heritage of the Damariscotta River and adjacent areas for the benefit of all”.

The DRA became a conservation land trust in 1987 and its integrity soon saw it attract donations from the public – enough to start purchasing land. Furthermore, public confidence in DRA is reflected in donations of private land, including the 165-acre Baker Forest property as well as entire islands!

The DRA has 5 core programs:

Protection and Stewardship

DRA owns 38 ‘preserves’ (nature reserves), holds 40 ‘easements’ and co-manages 12 properties – all up, more than 3,000 acres. Easements are agreements with landowners that permanently limit activities and future development in the interests of conservation. Tax benefits doubtless encourage landowners to consider conservation as an option when deciding on the future of their properties. DRA is helped by having a retired lawyer, accountant and real estate agent on its Board. All Board members are passionate about the environment and typically very experienced in the not-for-profit sector. The Board also includes an archaeologist – handy expertise given the 2,200-year-old shell middens left by the indigenous peoples in the area.

Marine Conservation and Water Quality

Volunteers collect and monitor water samples (and even horseshoe crabs!) under the guidance of staff and scientists. DRA works collaboratively with allied groups to compare water monitoring data, thus building a picture that is both regional and local.

Community Facilities

As a result of its hard work and enterprising approach, DRA owns facilities including historic farms and community gardens. Meeting rooms are made available without charge to fellow non-profit groups. Ric and I visited these facilities and it was a joy to see a nature class underway with very young children. We also toured a stunning freshwater wetland that DRA restored and which their Heritage Centre overlooks. The DRA folk gain much pleasure in observing the many bird species repopulating this wetland.



Left: View of the restored freshwater wetland which the Heritage Centre overlooks
Photo Rebecca Meegan-Lowe

Education and Outreach

Nature education and connecting people with the environment are central to DRA's mission. DRA offers a comprehensive program of activities for youth and adults, individuals and families. People with all manner of skills also volunteer their time to DRA in roles including ‘Preserve/Easement Monitor’, ‘Water Quality Monitor’, ‘Community Outreach’, ‘Trail Taming’, ‘Front Office Management’ and ‘Mr or Ms Fix-it’ (I love this one!).

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River Friends in USA ... (cont)

By Rebecca Meegan-Lowe

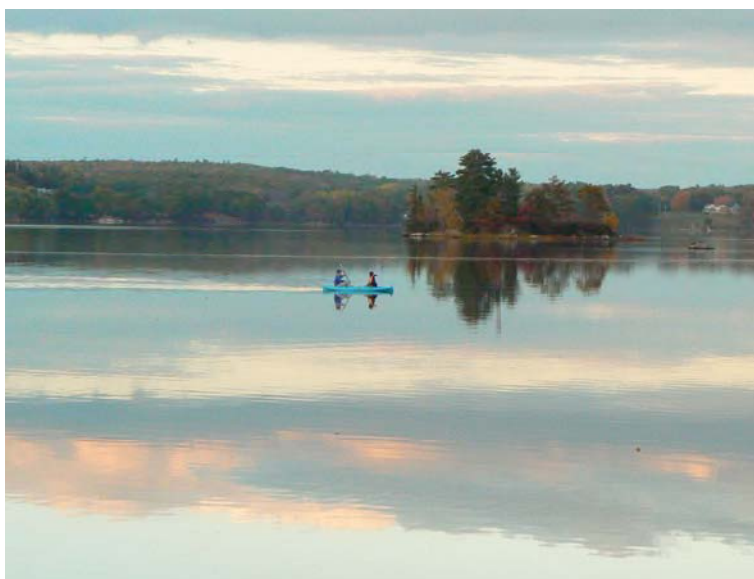
Trails and Public Access

With great sensitivity to the environment, DRA has made available 53km of trails through the lands and islands under its stewardship. Brochures and maps inform visitors how to enjoy these trails while promoting DRA and encouraging new members. In fact, DRA is very active in promoting itself to new residents shifting into the area. It is no wonder that new members are attracted as much by the enthusiasm and vibrancy of the group as by the environmental advocacy it stands for.

It is well worth visiting the Damariscotta River Association website (and its live webcam!): <http://www.damariscottariver.org/> DRA members asked a lot about TFOR and the many things that we share in common as well as the many contrary issues that we face. For example, freshwater is plentiful in Maine but so scarce in the Wheatbelt. The concept of soil salinity was new to DRA.

We met up with friends of the DRA in Washington. They introduced us to the existence of the Riverkeeper/Waterkeeper organizations. Akin to an environmental 'neighbourhood watch', there are now over 185 Waterkeeper organizations worldwide including some in NSW and Victoria. These websites are also worth exploring, including the inspiring story of the involvement of passionate river lover Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. who is the organization's Vice Chair and Chief Prosecuting Attorney.

Many thanks to Peter, Carolyn, Becky, Betsy, Matt and Kirsten for their generosity. I agree wholeheartedly with the importance they place on 'making connections'.



Left: Great Salt Bay Damariscotta

Rebecca has again caught the colour of the moment

Photo by Rebecca Meegan-Lowe

Right: Autumn colour, Damariscotta, Maine, USA

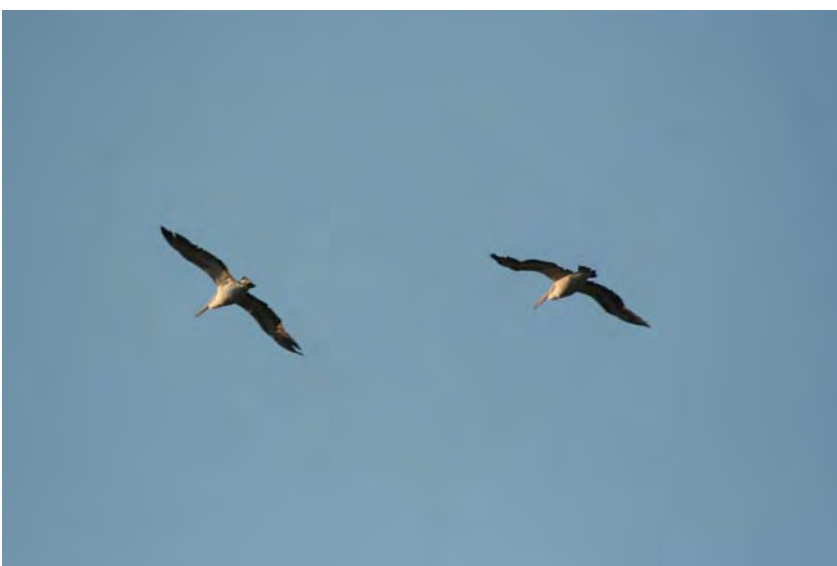
Photo by Rebecca Meegan-Lowe



Members photographs



Above: A delightful image of the motorbike frog (Western green tree frog - Litoria moorei), found in the frog garden of the Fletcher's by Catherine Fletcher.



Left: The TFOR have employed their own 'DRONES' to survey Millards Pool (and those who live and celebrate along its foreshore).

These two pelicans were enjoying the eddies above the pool during the TFOR celebrations at the Fletcher's home.

Photo Wayne Clarke

CANNING RIVER RESIDENTS ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION ASSOCIATION (CRREPA)

by Greg Warburton

TFOR MEMBERS Greg and Vicki Warburton, Ric and Rebecca Lowe (who are members of both groups) and TFOR Patron Viv Read attended an end of year Sundowner event for the Canning River Residents Environment Protection Association (CRREPA) on the evening of Sunday the 7th of December.

Greg was pleased to mark the occasion by presenting the President of the group, Grecian Sandwell, with a certificate acknowledging the restoration and protection work the CRREPA have achieved over the years. Along with a huge range of projects the extensive planting of sedges to control erosion along the foreshore is truly impressive.

Co-incidentally, like TFOR, CRREPA formed in 1994 and it was a great opportunity to highlight both groups 20th anniversary. Founding member, Colma Keating, was presented with an Honorary Life Membership making for an extra special occasion.

It was also a wonderful opportunity to network with the large gathering of environmentalists and to promote the importance of the link between the Avon River and the Swan/Canning. Viv Read made the comment that this cooperation in River Management was essential to the implementation of the Swan/Avon Integrated Catchment Management Initiative.

Left: Grecian Sandwell (CRREPA), Rebecca Meegan-Lowe (CRREPA & TFOR), Colma Keating (CRREPA), Greg Warburton (TFOR) and Ric Lowe (CRREPA & TFOR) at the CRREPA Anniversary.

Photo: Vicki Warburton



Above: TFOR Patron and CRREPA member Viv Read (seated on ground) chatting to members of CRREPA, while Greg and Vicki Warburton (TFOR) and Rebecca Meegan Lowe and Ric Lowe (CRREPA and TFOR) smile for the camera.

Photo: Susan Harris



Above: Environment Matters marquee at the 2014 Toodyay Agricultural Show.

Photo: Beth Frayne

2014 WESTERN AUSTRALIAN TIDY TOWNS AWARDS



Above: Environment Minister Albert Jacob, Bethan Lloyd, Bob Frayne, Greg Warburton, Beth Frayne, Shelley Kingston, Elaine Hall, Kim Angus, Roma Heath, Stan Scott, Vicki Warburton, Mal Hay & Audrey Bell

Left: Shelley Kingston (left) accepting the Waste Management and Litter Prevention Award on behalf of the people of Toodyay.

Photos by Lumiere Photographics 2014
courtesy Keep Australia Beautiful WA



NATIONAL TIDY TOWNS AWARD JUDGING 17 DECEMBER 2014



Above: National Tidy Towns Judge, Jill Grant, speaks with Rob Broderick about Toodyay's excellent Waste Transfer Facility. Also visited was the dog/cat pound, located behind the Transfer Station



Above: Jill (centre) talks to teacher Darrel Orr about the Toodyay District High School recycling programme, with teacher Bev Ellis watching on..

Photographs above (left and right) by Desraé Clarke

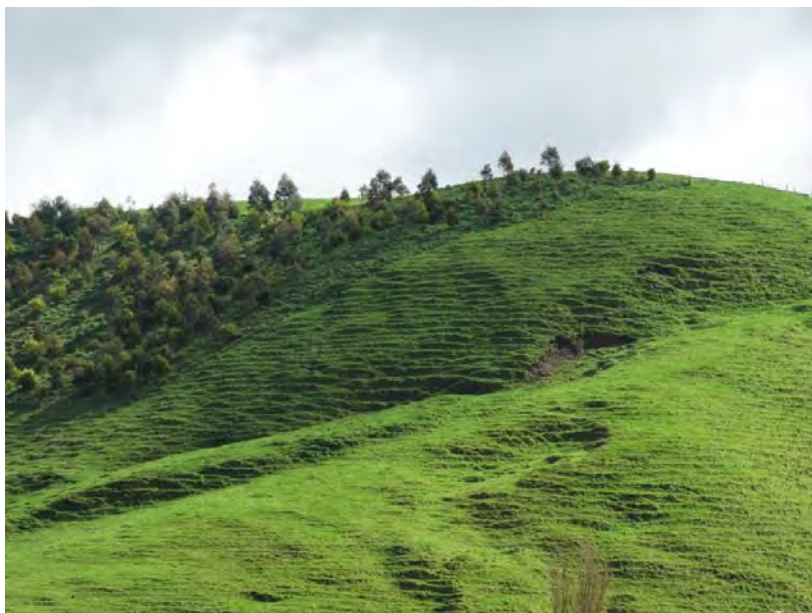
National Landcare Conference September 2014

by Greg Warburton

The National Landcare Conference held in Melbourne 16th to 19th September was a celebration of '25 years of Landcare in Australia' with an emphasis on the future. As a Finalist in the *Individual Landcarer of the Year* category, I was privileged to attend the Conference and represent Western Australia.

The first day of the Conference was a field trip and it was hard to make a choice from the 13 different excursions on offer. Vicki and I joined a trip that took us south east of Melbourne through the Strzelecki Ranges and onto Phillip Island visiting a number of Landcare sites. Highlight for me was the amazing work Paul Spiers has done to revegetate degraded creek lines on his property. Through extensive weed control and revegetation over many years Paul has come close to re-establishing the magnificent forest that was originally there.

Right: Direct seeding the slopes in the Strzelecki Ranges of Victoria. This is where the majestic mountain ash (Eucalyptus regnans) - the tallest flowering plant in the world - and its associated vegetation, once covered these slopes. Land clearing has reduced that to less than 20%



Back at the Conference a succession of expert speakers informed and inspired including Dr Stefan Hajkowitz, Principal Scientist at CSIRO Futures, who spoke of global 'mega trends'. His subject dealt with the significant shift in environmental, economic and social conditions that will play out over the coming decades.

Many of the sessions ran con-currently so it was impossible to attend everything that appealed but, none the less, we came away informed on important land care issues and new ideas. The Awards Dinner was a gala affair at the magnificent Melbourne Exhibition Hall. Honoured guests included former Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, who's Government launched Landcare all those years ago.

Highlight of the evening for us was that three of the major awards went to Western Australian winners!

Community Group Award Rolybushcare, Coastcare Award - Tangaroa Blue Foundation and Young Landcare Leader Award to Perth Natural Resource Management's, Kate Sputore. They are all to be congratulated for their exceptional contribution to the landcare movement.



Left: Vicki and Greg Warburton at the Awards.

Right: Bob Hawke, former Australian Prime Minister, who launched Landcare in the 1980s



National Landcare Conference 2014 ... cont.

by Greg Warburton



Left: Kate Sputore from Perth NRM, who won the Westpac Agribusiness Innovative Young Landcare Leader Award. Kate was one of three winners from Western Australia.

The winner of the Australian Government Individual Landcarer Award was Russell Fry from Queensland, who has sadly passed away since the Award Night..

On the last day the Federal Minister for the Environment, Greg Hunt, addressed the Conference Delegates of 650 people. He sought to assure the audience that the future of Landcare under the current government was secure. The Minister fielded a barrage of pointed questions from the attentive audience. He opportunistically launched the 25th Anniversary Landcare Grants 2014-15 and promoted the 20,000,000 Tree Program and the Green Army.

Attending the National Landcare Conference was informative and, networking with such a large number of passionate Land carers, truly inspiring. I was proud to talk about the work our community has achieved in Landcare in our part of the world. After the conference we took some time to take in the sights and, of course, restaurants of Melbourne.

Right: A stream crossing on Phillip Island.



Newsletter of the Toodyay Friends of the River Inc.

Post Office Box 1266

Toodyay 6566

Western Australia

President: Robyn Taylor (08) 9574 2578

Secretary: Laraine Brindle (contact above)

Treasurer: Wayne Clarke (08) 6364 3609

Editor: Desraé Clarke (08) 6364 3609

Editorial to : editor@toodyayfor.org.au

Contact us at: info@toodyayfor.org.au



*"Make Friends
with our Avon
River"*

The objects of the *Toodyay Friends of the River* are to *work towards the conservation and rehabilitation of the Avon River and its environs. In the bigger picture of natural resource management, we are committed to implementing the Avon River Management Program and its associated River Recovery Plans for each of the four sections of river that pass through Toodyay.*

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The Back Page



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Above: Congratulations to Bev Ellis and her Year 5 Class on winning the WA Newspaper's 'Newspapers in Education' (NIE) Animal Art Challenge, 2014. This competition, held over Terms 2-3, involved creating animal art objects from newspaper, which were judged by the Art Gallery of WA and NIE. TDHS student Nicholas Palmer (Year 5) was also an Individual winner.

Above: Nicholas's winning entry: "Kangaroo Jack (Photo: B. Ellis, 2014)