

NVCAnews

MARCH/APRIL 2014



www.nvca.org.au ~ nvca@nvca.org.au ~ PO Box 123, Bowraville NSW 2449 ~ # 2/2014

A gentle reminder that 2014 NVCA Membership Fees are now due . . .

You can pay your Membership Fees directly into NVCA's BCU account.

If you are a BCU member doing a funds transfer, you will need to quote the *Account No.:* 53152 and *S1;* *Account Name:* Nambucca Valley Conservation Association Inc.; *Reference:* Your initials and surname.

If you are transferring funds from another institution you will need to quote the *BSB No:* 704328 and *Account No:* 53152 (**no S-type**) *Account Name:* Nambucca Valley Conservation Association Inc.; *Reference:* Your initials and surname.

For those who still like to do things the way we used to, there's a Membership Renewal Form on the back page of this newsletter.

Deep Creek Entrance Management Policy

Deep Creek in the Valla area is recognised as Intermittently Closed or Open Coastal Lagoon (ICOLL), the Deep Creek system is largely open to the coast but does close during periods of low rainfall and the correct coastal conditions. In late 2013 Nambucca Shire Council in association with the Office of Environment and Heritage prepared a Flood Study for Deep Creek. A component of this study was to investigate processes which lead to the entrance of Deep Creek closing to the ocean and the associated impacts of this. Using this information, an Entrance Management Policy has been developed and adopted by Council. The policy provides a sustainable approach to opening the lagoon entrance, aiming to achieve a balance between, critical infrastructure, community use, impacts to private property and the natural process of inundation which occurs on state significant wetlands, and Endangered Ecological Communities that are located in the system. The policy is presently awaiting approval from the state government. Upon approval the policy will be available on Council's website

www.nambucca.nsw.gov.au

NSW freezes new CSG exploration permits and ups fees

Coal seam gas (CSG) exploration applications will be frozen for six months across NSW while the state government reviews the controversial process.

Premier Barry O'Farrell accused the former Labor government of granting petroleum exploration licences "like confetti" and warned the government would also audit existing licences.

Mr O'Farrell pointed out that three quarters of the licences granted under Labor were issued by former ministers Eddie Obeid and Ian Macdonald, who were found to have acted corruptly by the ICAC.

He slammed Labor for only charging \$1000 for exploration applications, that fee is now being raised to \$50,000.

The six-month freeze will also allow the government to introduce a "new thorough regime" for allocating future licences, the premier said.

The government is concerned about the application process, which has seen small companies - sometimes run by one person - being allowed to explore large areas, despite not having the experience or financial backing for the projects.

The Greens welcomed the decision but said the premier must go further on cracking down on CSG applications. "The key issue remains the rights of farmers and the community to say no to CSG," Greens mining spokesman Jeremy Buckingham told AAP. "Until that right is given to communities and farmers, this will continue to be a headache for the government."

The announcement comes after Mr Roberts announced the government had knocked back five CSG exploration licences applications by Grainger Energy for a 43,100 square kilometre area in the Riverina region.

President's Report on NVCA web site

The Annual General Meeting of the NVCA was held on Saturday, February 8th at Stuart Island.

We all enjoyed a pleasant day of sunshine, shared food and friendship. At the meeting all committee positions were declared vacant and a new committee voted in. The new Executive Committee for 2014 is *President:* Georgette Allen; *Vice President:* Philip Margolis; *Secretary/Treasurer:* Carol Margolis; *Committee Members (3):* Lyn Orrego, Alyson Shepherd and Wendy Wedge and our *Public Officer* is: Joy van Son.

Help rescue wildlife in NSW: New app

Have you felt helpless not knowing what to do after coming across injured or orphaned native wildlife? The Wildlife Rescue App is a free mobile phone application and is the first of its kind in Australia. The aim of the App is to empower people by putting them in direct contact with the nearest rescue organisation in NSW, at the touch of a button. Downloading and using this simple, yet effective App is an easy and direct way to help our native wildlife. The Wildlife Rescue App is available on the Apple Store and the Android Market, by

The minister said the company had one director and was formed just six days before lodging its application.

It also had "no history of conducting petroleum exploration activities" and had submitted a "manifestly deficient application".

- www.smh.com.au, 26th March, 2014

Greens demand to see Metgasco boss's letters

Letters from Metgasco CEO Peter Henderson to various NSW ministers have gone missing, and Greens MLC David Shoebridge wants to know why.

Comments by Magistrate David Heilpern that the case against several anti-CSG protestors were vexatious and possibly politically motivated prompted Mr Shoebridge to lodge a GIPA (Government Information Public Access) request for correspondence from several ministers to see if he could find any evidence of political interference.

His request yielded a letter from Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Emergency Services, Geoff Provest, where he thanks Metgasco for their letters.

Mr Henderson told reporters on December 9 last year that he had written to four government ministers in relation to the protests. He denied there was anything improper in this and that he was requesting the "government's support through the enforcement of existing laws so that our approved operations could proceed safely." But subsequent requests from Mr Shoebridge have turned up blank, with the departments saying they cannot find any letters.

"Metgasco have admitted to sending letters to four ministers, yet the Government has bizarrely denied having any record of this, despite the government's own correspondence with Metgasco referencing the company's letters," he said.

"Failing to produce them is either a bureaucratic stuff up or the deliberate hiding of information, neither of which reflect well on the Government." Mr Shoebridge said he would now take the matter to the Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

"The public have a right to know who, if anyone, is placing pressure on the government to bring trumped up charges against protesters." Mr Henderson said it was "a matter for the government, not the private sector, to evaluate and respond to GIPA requests."

- www.northernstar.com.au

Unfair rules on GM food crops

A landmark trial under way in the WA Supreme Court sees farmer against farmer because of GM crops. Believed to be the first of its kind in the world, the case is being followed by citizens, lawyers, food businesses, the agriculture industry, and biotech companies in Australia, Europe, North America and elsewhere.

It began when WA farmer Steve Marsh lost his organic certification on 70 per cent of his farm and most of his livelihood after his land was contaminated by GM canola patented by Monsanto and grown in the adjacent property.

His only avenue to protect his right to grow what he chooses was to sue his neighbour for his losses in a civil negligence case.

His case may set a precedent for future cases of GM contamination and ultimately determine the future of farming in Australia, New Zealand and beyond.

If Marsh loses, there will be no effective compensation system for organic and conventional farmers who suffer financial losses as a result of ineffective coexistence. The legal precedent established will shift the economic burden of GM farming from those who choose GM to those who don't.

going directly to the IFAW Wildlife Rescue App website

www.wildliferescue.ifaw.org

Plastic Bag Recycling

Did you know you can recycle soft plastics?

The Coles plastic bag and packaging recycling program provides the community with an opportunity to return their plastic bags and packaging to specially marked bins at the front of their stores, which are then turned into outdoor furniture for Aussie primary schools and pre-schools. - *Our Living Coast*

Rare and Endangered Photo Exhibition

Environmental journalist and photographer Roger Fryer, has used innovative technological solutions in the quest to create images of our endangered species which will outlive us all. Opening 6pm Fri 7 March until Sat 5 April 14 at Bunker Cartoon Gallery John Champion Way, Coffs Harbour - open 10am-4pm Monday to Saturday.

Sweden needs garbage

Sweden has always been ahead of its neighbors when it comes to reducing its environmental impact. To make power, the country does something unique: it turns trash into power on a national scale using high-power incinerators. At first glance, it solves two problems: getting rid of trash and generating electricity without burning dirty fossil fuels.

But now Sweden is hitting a wall.

According to the country's Environmental Protection Agency, it needs more trash to feed Sweden's energy habit, and it's begun importing trash—just over 881,000 tons - from nearby Norway to do it. It's an innovative idea that seems to work for everyone. Sweden powers most of its homes and business with a waste product, and gets paid to do so. Norway gets rid of trash it doesn't have space to bury more cheaply than exporting trash elsewhere (it gets the ashes back after incineration, but those take up much less space). And no one has to dig or drill for energy. - www.newswatch.org

Community legal education and resources

Legal Aid NSW has established a

We need to protect farmers from GM contamination as it could result in organic and conventional farmers getting lower returns, because GM canola achieves a lower price than conventional canola. Contaminated farmers could also be liable for contaminating deliveries, shipments and markets.

As contamination is unavoidable, the Safe Food Foundation is calling for a moratorium on all GM crops grown in the open air in Australia.

Legislation is needed in states where GM crops are allowed, to prevent their dissemination, to protect organic and conventional agriculture and food businesses and to facilitate clean-up operations and recalls.

Such legislation should also cover the question of who is financially liable in the case of GM contamination. - *Scott Kinnear, Safe Food Foundation.*

Older Trees Grow Faster, Take up More Carbon

A trees' growth accelerates with age, according to a new study in the journal *Nature*, which suggests that the world's oldest trees could play an important role in combating climate change.

The revelation goes against the long-held assumption that trees lose their vigor with age. An analysis of more than 600,000 trees belonging to 403 species found that trees grow more as they get older, which enables them to trap more carbon than their younger counterparts.

"Rather than slowing down or ceasing growth and carbon uptake, as we previously assumed, most of the oldest trees in forests around the world actually grow faster, taking up more carbon," said Richard Condit, staff scientist at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute. "A large tree may put on weight equivalent to an entire small tree in a year."

At one study site, an old-growth forest in the western US, the researchers found trees with a diameter larger than 100 centimeters comprised just 6 percent of trees but accounted for one third of the growth in the forest.

One of the next steps in this research is to determine whether the accelerated growth of an individual tree will translate into greater carbon storage by aging forests.

We already knew old forests stored more carbon than young forests. But old forests contain trees of all sizes and it was not clearly understood which trees grew the fastest, removing the most carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. But now the answer is clear. For reducing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, the more big trees the better - *www.natureworldnews.com*

Off the Charts: 2013 the hottest year on record

2013 was a remarkable year for hot weather in Australia. Not only did we easily set the record for the hottest year since records began in 1910, we also experienced the hottest summer and warmest spring on record; the hottest January and warmest September on record; and the hottest summer day and warmest winter day on record. No part of Australia was spared the heat. For all states and the Northern Territory, 2013 ranked within the four hottest years they had experienced.

Australia's record hot year is part of a global, longer-term trend. Over the past century, the Earth's climate has warmed and continues to warm.

More record hot weather is occurring around the planet. The increasing atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases caused by human activities are the primary cause of the warming. Stabilising the climate requires urgent and deep reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, especially those of carbon dioxide that result from burning fossil fuels.

- <http://www.climatecouncil.org.au>

central online portal of useful information, including links to new LawAccess NSW videos to help self-represented litigants to prepare for court. The videos are supplemented by written plain language legal information and step-by-step guides on the LawAssist website, provided by LawAccess NSW. The portal also contains links to a range of written resources produced by Legal Aid NSW and others which guide people through the process of defending themselves in court. - *EDO February '14*

Reef, Tassie Forests to go

They are two of Australia's most celebrated places of natural beauty, sitting at either end of the country. Both are world heritage protected. And in the eyes of conservationists both have taken significant blows. In Australia's north, a final permit was granted to allow the dumping of millions of tonnes of dredging sludge in the waters of the Great Barrier Reef.

In Tasmania, the Abbott government launched the first ever large-scale bid by Australia to axe world heritage protection.

The loss of 74,000 hectares from the world heritage area would fulfil an election commitment by Prime Minister Tony Abbott to reverse what he said was a "rushed and political" decision by the previous government to extend the heritage area.

No federal government has ever attempted such a large scale wind-back of world heritage protection. The 74,000 hectares represents more than half the forest previously outside national park protection that was included in the total 170,000 hectare extension to the Tasmanian Wilderness Area unanimously approved by the World Heritage Committee in June 2013.

The federal government's proposed changes must be lodged with the World Heritage Committee to go before its member nations at their meeting in June, in Doha, Qatar.

- *www.smh.com.au, February 2014.*

The next meeting of the NVCA will be at 1pm on Friday 11th April at the 2NVR Studios at Tewinga.
for more information: email nvca@nvca.org.au All members are welcome to attend.

2014 NVCA MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

Member Details:

Name/s:.....

Address:.....

.....

Phone No:

Email Address:

Your area of Expertise or Interest:

.....

I would like to be on the e-list: YES NO

The e-list enables members to become more personally involved in local conservation matters by receiving information on upcoming submissions and petitions.

Membership Options:

Single \$8 Family \$12 Group \$18 Donation \$.....

I/We enclose the following amount: \$.....

To assist the NVCA in its work, please tick one or more of the boxes below.

The more of us sharing the load, the lighter it is for us all, the more fun we have, and the better the environmental outcomes.

I/We would like to volunteer for **occasional** assistance with:

Submissions Campaigns Market Stall Surprise Me!

I am very busy but please put me on the "Ring and Ask Me At The Time" List.

I/We would like to volunteer skills in:

.....

.....

I have read **The Aims and Objectives** of the NVCA (*see www.nvca.org.au*)

and I agree to abide by them..... (*please sign*)

Please mail to: The Secretary,
Nambucca Valley Conservation Association Inc.
PO Box 123, Bowraville, NSW, 2449