



**FROM THE CHAIR**

**OUR DISTRICT'S ENVIRONMENTAL WEEKEND**

On the long weekend of March, our District was host to Past RI President Ian Riseley and Juliet. The invitation was the brainchild of the RC St Peters which has been active with environmental projects for many years. President Pam Vaughan was keen to celebrate the many and varied Rotary Club initiatives in this Rotary year, in conjunction with the CATE Committee.

On the Saturday afternoon we held an Environmental Forum, with Ian being the keynote speaker, sharing his long-standing interest in how Rotary can focus on community environmental matters, and as the present World Chair of the Rotary Foundation how clubs can source funds for environmental projects.



My hardest task was to select just five club projects to be featured during the 'soapbox' sessions from my short list of about 15 excellent projects. RC Murray Bridge's Mallee Wren project drew the award for the cutest project, trying to save this critically endangered bird. Ian was blown away with the many and varied initiatives that our District has nurtured over the

last 20+ years. An edited video of the Forum will be on the District website in coming weeks.

Equally enjoyable was our 'road' trip with Ian on the Sunday during which we inspected first-hand the RC Seaford Habitat box for micro bats to enhance the health of organic vineyards. This project was explained in the Spring 2022 edition of the CATE newsletter.

We then proceeded to the Rotary Centenary Park being developed by the RC Goolwa. Whilst a most ambitious project covering over ten acres, and likely to take up to a decade to complete all plantings and infra-structure, strong progress is already evident in less than ideal planting conditions (three holes need to be dug per tree planted due to limestone just below the surface over much of the site) Please visit the site situated just off Beach Road when you are next at the South Coast, and see the pink-flowering eucalypt that Ian planted to commemorate his visit. As always, the country hospitality was much appreciated.



**Mark Huddlestone President RC McLaren Vale and Dr Mary Retallack Project Research Manager**

**Left: Ian Riseley and Mark Huddlestone**



**Right: Ian Riseley, DG Paul Thomas, AG Dini White, President Jen Lawrence and Di Keach (from RC Goolwa)**



In summary, Ian was most impressed with our environmental initiatives, and concluded we are many years ahead of most Districts around the world. Well done to you all.

### **CALPERUM RESTORATION PROCEEDING WELL .... BUT MORE WORK TO DO.**

Elsewhere in this publication are details of what has happened in recent weeks - and I acknowledge the time and efforts of many volunteers, especially Jeff Cluse - and the huge generosity of some Clubs, and sponsoring businesses. Unfortunately, more is still required by way of volunteer hours, and cash donations. Any Rotarian, or Rotary Club that can help, please liaise with Jeff, [jeffcluse@gmail.com](mailto:jeffcluse@gmail.com)

### **..... UPDATE ON OTHER CALPERUM MATTERS**

We were recently advised that 90% of the floodplain is now accessible to vehicles, and that a promotion on eco-tourism opportunities is underway. In addition, Clubs and individual Rotarians will shortly be able to resume a wider variety of volunteer opportunities. Please register such interest with Jeff Cluse, indicating what work you are interested in undertaken, whether it is weekend only, or mid-week, and in what months you would like to go to Calperum. Even Clubs who have previously registered such interest should re-register, so our efforts are fully coordinated.

### **VISIT THE CATE STAND AT THE 3 JUNE ROTARY EXPO**

As a very active District Committee CATE will have a strong presence at the forthcoming Rotary Expo that the District has organised for the first Saturday in June. Please come up to our stand and let us know more about what your Club is doing by way of Environmental projects.

### **NAME OF NEW CATE CHAIR ANNOUNCED**

As with all jobs in Rotary, we do them by rotation, and then hand them over to someone who we suspect will do it even better. After four years as CATE Chair, now is the time for me to hand over the Chairmanship, and Ian Coat (RC Magill Sunrise) has graciously accepted the invitation to take on the job. I wish Ian all the best in this role and have confirmed that I will remain on the CATE Committee for at least another year to ensure a smooth transition. As is appropriate Ian has some great ideas on how the Committee should best operate for maximum outcomes and benefit.

***Don Will – Chair***

#### ***IN THIS ISSUE***

- ***From the Chair***
- ***Rotary House Renovation***
- ***Mallee Emu-Wren Recovery Project***
- ***Onkaparinga Rotary Fencing Project***
- ***Revegetation and Tree Planting***

## ROTARY HOUSE RENOVATION

Flooding of Rotary House and nearby houses at Calperum was narrowly averted in December and January by just centimetres thanks to the work done to raise and extend the levy banks. It was a very close call. All furniture had been removed previously just in case.

Following an inspection in February by Jeff Cluse and Russell Green (RC Regency Park), and Ian Coat (RC Magill Sunrise) it was clear that the walls and floor coverings were tired and in need of rejuvenation. In discussion with Julie Robinson (Calperum Associate Director) and Corey Grogen (interior building designer at Calperum), it was decided to repaint the houses and replace the floor coverings with floating floors.



Between February 19<sup>th</sup> to March 8<sup>th</sup>, teams of Rotarians under the leadership of Jeff Cluse and with the assistance of Calperum staff, Ceobahn, Sam and Mandy, repainted Rotary House, removed the old carpet and installed new floating floors.

It was a great team effort and Rotary House is now completely refreshed.

### **Special mention**

**Paint Supplies** on West Lakes Boulevard donated 80 litres of wall paint and 20 litres of ceiling paint.

**Bunnings** at Berri provided the flooring at a discounted price.

### **Funds Urgently Required to Complete the Project**

An additional \$15,00 to \$20,000 is required to complete House 4, the Small Dorm and the Large Dorm.

The CATE Committee will gratefully accept contributions from \$500 to \$2,000. Payment can be made to the CATE Committee, **BSB 015-029, A/c 088 474 940** and include the reference **Calperum Rectif.**

### **Volunteers**

Volunteer assistance will be required for the next phase of work replacing the flooring in House 4 in late April or May. Please contact Jeff Cluse – [jeffcluse@gmail.com](mailto:jeffcluse@gmail.com) or 0417 573 696.

## MALLEE EMU-WREN RECOVERY PROJECT ROTARY CLUB OF MURRAY BRIDGE

The Rotary Club of Murray Bridge has members who are keen bird watchers with an interest in the environment.

We became aware of the Mallee Emu-wren which has been identified one of the Mallee Threatened Birds. Its habitat in SA was primarily the Ngarkat Conservation Park just south of Pinnaroo along the SA-Victorian border. Mallee Emu-wren have never lived north of the River Murray.

In 2014, wildfires swept through Ngarkat and destroyed the entire population of these birds and the habitat required for them to thrive. Mallee Emu-wren were now extinct in SA.



Tom Hunt Photo

### **About The Mallee Emu Wren**

The Mallee Emu-wren weighs approximately 6 grams or about the weight of a \$2 coin. For survival the bird requires a specific habitat of mainly unburnt spinifex at least eight years old. It lives in family groups, does not dwell in trees but remains close to the ground where

cover is available to avoid predation, feeding on insects and seeds.

It is rated as endangered!

*Tom Hunt Photo*



### **What Did We Do?**

Our Club formed partnerships with Victorian and South Australian Government agencies, Universities, Birds Australia, & Zoos SA with funding from the Federal Threatened Species Commissioner. As part of this program, we initially undertook vegetation surveys in

Wyperfeld National Park in Victoria followed by surveys in the Murray Sunset National Park.

We also provided logistical support during the capture of 78 birds within the Murray Sunset National Park (near Mildura). We then processed the birds and farewelled them to their new home in Ngarkat Conservation Park. Processing included sexing, banding, taking DNA samples and weighing as well as providing a tasty snack of mealworms.



### **Was It Worth It?**

The translocated birds raised young in Ngarkat and have since dispersed.

Our project has raised awareness regarding the requirement of diversity in relation to the understory. Whilst it is important to plant trees to provide a canopy, it is equally important to look at the entire habitat. For those birds who do not regularly roost in trees, a viable understory is critical. As a community we must always consider the total habitat needs of our birds, animals, invertebrates and reptiles.

The Club has now built an aviary in conjunction with Zoos SA at Monarto Safari Park to maintain an insurance population of these birds.

***Robin LeGallez***

***All photos by Robin LeGallez unless otherwise noted.***

## ONKAPARINGA ROTARY FENCING PROJECT

Following the December 2019 Cudlee Creek Fire, the Rotary Club of Onkaparinga immediately started to plan a fencing program to help as many people as possible rebuild their properties and restore some vestige of normality to their lives.

We refurbished the two district fencing trailers we care for, and then started work in mid-January 2020, as soon as we were able to gain safe access to properties. BlazeAid established a camp at Lobethal and started work in the same week. We were working two days a week, with 6-8 volunteers from our 22 members at that time, while BlazeAid had up to 100 daily volunteers, 7 days a week.



After a few weeks we and BlazeAid were called in to a meeting by Alex Zimmermann, State Recovery Coordinator, and told that we would be working together, whether we liked it or not. From then, we developed a strong relationship with the BlazeAid local leadership.

### ***Rolling out mesh***

Our first jobs were based on keeping stock away from roads, giving people control of their properties, and the opportunity start their recovery process. We really had little or no thought about a role in environmental issues, although we were very aware of the damage to both the built and natural environments.

By Nov 2020 BlazeAid had closed their Spring Head Camp, and we had forged a partnership with them. Some 35 BlazeAid volunteers signed on the work with us, and the BlazeAid Board lent us two fencing trailers. By this time, we had use of a loan 4WD Mazda ute from Paradise Motors, and had purchased a tractor, and had started to gain grants to supplement the donations we had received, and the RAWCS money we had been using. Four BlazeAid volunteers joined our club to cover our insurance needs, and we started working 3 days a week, with 12-15 volunteers per day. These numbers have grown slightly now, but only 2 days a week now.

It became obvious to us as we moved into the winter of 2021, that we were not just replacing fences, but really helping property owners to better manage the fuel loads on their properties. After we fenced, stock could be re-introduced to reduce the fuel load. This significantly reduced the fire danger coming into the 2021-22 summer season.

Many property owners in the Hills area now are tree changers from the suburb with no experience in farming or using stock to manage fuel loads. We tend to fence in groups of properties, so we need to bring neighbors' together to plan boundary fences. This gives us the opportunity to link tree changers with established residents. Hence, opportunities for sharing knowledge, facilities and equipment like tractors and slashers developed. In addition, one owner might manage stock over several properties in the area. Much safer for

all. So, our thinking about fencing was changing from just fences for properties, to fences to enable better management of fuel loads to reduce fire danger. We had also completed a couple of jobs for the local Landcare group, fencing areas of importance, which lifted our knowledge of, and interest in, local environmental issues.

After more than three years working in this environment, we were approached by an officer from Landscape SA to fence water courses in the area. Our first fence of this new aspect of our work is planned for April. It will be fully funded by the government, and is a cooperative venture between Landscape SA, the property owner, and our volunteer workforce. The fences will allow property owners and volunteer groups to manage noxious weeds, re-plant the areas, and provide improved management of the water courses.

To date over \$500,000 has been spent on this reconstruction project, initially from local Rotary clubs, then RAWCS, then from all three tiers of government and more recently a number of Foundations, in particular the Foundation for Rural and Regional Reconstruction.

We had been expecting to continue fencing until probably mid-2024, the Landscape SA request could see us out for at least another 6 months. This will give local Rotarians more opportunity to visit us and see what we do, and perhaps even spend some time working with us. Thursdays are best, as we have a Happy Hour back at our shed in Lobethal after work. Call Dick Cuttle, 0428106673 for more information, or for a guest speaker about our work. 'Have a story, willing to travel!'



*Building a "box" at the end of a fence*

***PDG Dick Cuttle (RC Onkaparinga)***

## **REVEGETATION AND TREE PLANTING ROTARY CLUB OF WALKERVILLE**

The Rotary Club of Walkerville's revegetation program was significantly influenced by the strong environmental concerns in the community when the Club was chartered in April 1989. This was reinforced in July 1989 when the Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, made an important policy statement on protecting the environment, establishing the objective of planting one billion trees.

The Club's entire program has involved partnerships with the Wilderness School, the Walkerville Council, Walkerville Primary School, and Wayne Brown's Environments by

Design company. Recently the St Andrews School has joined the project. A number of substantial grants have been received to continue the program over the years.

Initially a temporary nursery was established at the Wilderness School and included a propagation space, several water tanks and irrigation system.

Our first plantings were at Kapunda, Eudunda and Robertstown (1990) followed by Langhorne Creek, Milang, Finniss River and Scales Park (1991-2004). We have also donated and assisted with planting trees in the fire-ravaged areas following the Port Lincoln fire of 2005, Sampson Flat in 2015, Pinery area in 2016 and the following years, and Cudlee Creek in 2020.



***Revegetation at Bagot Well near Kapunda, planted 1990.***

The Port Lincoln tree planting was set up by the late Rex Adams and Allan Wilson as a Disaster Recovery project following the devastating 2005 bushfires in which nine people died. It ran for 4 years and about 24 students from Wilderness accompanied us. It was a one-week program each year and in all up to 10,000 trees were planted.



Much of the propagation and planting has been conducted with the assistance of Wilderness Senior College and by Wayne Brown of Environments by Design who has collaborated with us through the thirty plus years our programme has been running. Wayne has also opened up sales opportunities for us through his work alongside our burgeoning wind and solar energy developments.

The Vale Park Primary students have been revegetating the old Walkerville dump site at Scales Park and it is now well covered with new plantings.

In 2021, our focus moved to St Andrews School where garden beds have been established. It is hoped to expand this to other primary schools in the region. These will include exotic and native foods and butterfly gardens.

***Richard Bentley (RC Walkerville)***

