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working with natural processes

AABR Fest returns in 2024

Return of the Regenerators!

Friday November 1 @ 12:00 pm to Sunday November 3 @ 3:00 pm

Location: Kariong Scout Camp, Kariong Scout Camp Trail,
Kariong NSW 2250, Australia.

(NSW Central Coast. Approx 83 km from Sydney CBD)



Join Us at AABR FEST II in November 2024 for a Weekend of Fun and Nature Connection!

Mark your calendars and join us at Kariong Scout Camp for a weekend you won't want to miss! November 1st-3rd!

Get ready for an unforgettable weekend at Kariong Scout Camp, nestled in the stunning landscapes of Brisbane Water National Park just north of Sydney! Join us for an exciting lineup of activities where you can immerse yourself in nature without needing to pick up a single tool!

The location at Kariong Scout Camp is surrounded by bushland of several vegetation types such as Sydney Coastal Sandstone Bloodwood Shrub Forest, Northern Sydney Scribbly Gum Woodland, Northern Sydney Sandstone Rockplate Shrubland, and Lower North Ranges Turpentine Moist Forest further down the catchment.

- There will be engaging talks & workshops covering topics such as bush tucker, nocturnal fauna, the influence of geology on vegetation, rainforest species, microbats, and native bees. Learn About iNaturalist and better your birdwatching skills.
- Learn more about AABR and participate in discussions.
- Other activities will include early bird yoga, trivia, dancing, singing and performing, plus watching movies under the stars
- Kids can enjoy the Bush Kids Zone with nature-inspired activities

Don't miss this chance to connect with nature and like-minded individuals in a beautiful setting. Bring your friends and family for a weekend filled with fun, learning, and unforgettable memories!

AABR Fest is a community-run event. If you would like to contribute by offering a workshop, assisting with setup or pack down, or participating in event operations, please reach out to Charlie whatson@aabr.org.au !

Prices vary - AABR Members \$100. Non-members \$140.

Get your tickets: <https://events.humanitix.com/aabr-fest2-return-of-the-regenerators>

For more information about activities and talks

<https://www.aabr.org.au/event/aabr-fest-return-of-the-regenerators>

President's Perspective

Bush Regeneration has its genesis in volunteerism. Whether we are talking about Albert Morris or the Bradley Sisters, many of the initial concepts of bush regeneration started with volunteers seeing a problem, undertaking trials, learning from experience, modifying their methodologies and techniques, and promoting those that worked and under what conditions.

Volunteers are still a major proportion of bush regenerators, even now when there is a mature and continually expanding professional industry. Anecdotally, many AABR members who are professional regenerators are also volunteers, and there are many AABR members whose only bush regeneration activity is through volunteering.

We should never forget how important bush regeneration volunteering is and, more critically, how important bush regeneration volunteers are.

It is often volunteer bush regenerators who influence and convince local councils to invest in bush regeneration, both through Bushcare and similar programs and through employment of professional bush regenerators. It is volunteers that have discovered and protected a myriad of threatened species within remnant bushland. It is volunteers that are out there maintaining and progressing regeneration month after month after month, whether or not the land managers are also investing in professional regeneration.

Interestingly, some of the Bushcare programs in Sydney had their genesis in contract bush regenerators convincing councils that they would not be able to manage all their bushland through engaging professional regenerators and that they should start and support volunteer bush regeneration programs.

Biodiversity volunteering goes beyond bush regeneration though. The Landcare movement, though Australia wide mostly does not have a bush regeneration focus in its biodiversity focused projects (though I acknowledge that there are many Landcare groups that do excellent bush regeneration!), often concentrating on other approaches. There are programs that restore aquatic habitat, create artificial hollows for fauna breeding, monitor water quality, undertake citizen science, rehabilitate injured wildlife, collect and grow and translocate threatened plant species, and educate the broader public on biodiversity and environmental issues and action.

Sadly, though just as there is a growing recognition and acknowledgement of the need for more and different action to address the extinction crisis and decline of biodiversity across Australia, there is a general decline in the support to best practice volunteer programs.

Anecdotally, some local government run volunteer programs have been 'dumbing down' activities, moving from programs that allowed trained volunteers to carry out high end bush regeneration to weed and plant programs, which are not integrated with internal or contract bush regeneration.

The Australian Government has significantly reduced funding to Landcare programs (and seemingly quietly scrapped the National Landcare Program), and many States and Territories have reduced their funding as well (NSW seems to be the exception here).

Many of the grants programs that supported much of the biodiversity volunteer activity around Australia have been reduced, abandoned or switched to other issues

So, what needs to be done?

In my opinion, we need to create a situation where all the volunteer-based opportunities are mapped to identify synergies, gaps, overlaps and conflict - both geographically and thematically.

We should create a common vision of the role of volunteers in the restoration of ecosystems and the management of biodiversity. We should also agree on best practice and appropriate practice and encourage all programs such as Landcare and Bushcare to move to best practice restoration so that all effort is having the highest impact.

We need the staff who manage volunteer programs to understand bush regeneration and best practice, and to support the move towards best practice, which will entail adequate training and support for the staff and volunteers.

We need the natural resource, bushland and environmental managers in all levels of government to also understand best practice and set up the policies, legislation, grants and programs that will support this happening and support the roles that volunteers can and want to have.

We need seamless integration of volunteers, professionals and also individual land managers so that we move from the shotgun approach to biodiversity recovery and to a strategic approach.

We need our tertiary, vocational and other training programs to be fit for purpose and deliver relevant and meaningful training and education to volunteer and professional bush regenerators, land managers and scientists.

Ultimately, we need recognition of the real costs of reversing the biodiversity crisis and support all actors, volunteer and professional alike in achieving this reversal through adequate funding and recognition of the important role that volunteers will play.

AABR is about to embark on a project, with a range of partners and funded through the NSW Environmental Trust, to collate, develop and make available best practice resources to all decision makers, land managers, volunteers and professionals so that we can start moving towards common visions. I hope that through this project AABR can also continue to advocate for the support, relevance and importance of volunteer bush regenerators in the management and recovery of our ecosystems.

Peter Dixon, President

president@aabr.org.au or call 0478 741 111..

"AABR acknowledges Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Nations of this continent and recognises their custodianship and continuing connection to its land, waters and community.

We pay our respects to the Elders past and present and future, for they hold the memories, traditions, culture and hopes of Indigenous peoples across the nation."

AABR event, Sydney



PALMGROVE PARK
(AVALON BEACH, NSW)
BUSH REGEN DAY WITH
DRAGONFLY

SATURDAY 3RD AUGUST
8AM-NOON

BOOK YOUR SPOT

[HTTPS://WWW.AABR.ORG.AU/EVENTS/](https://www.aabr.org.au/events/)



Don't miss this chance to engage with experts in the field of bush regen, to learn about and contribute to the regeneration of this unique bushland. Reserve your spot today!

Information and booking: <https://www.aabr.org.au/event/palmgrove-park-bush-regen-day-with-dragonfly/>

AABR event, Seal Rocks, NSW Mid North Coast



RAINFOREST RESTORATION AT SEAL ROCKS (NSW)

SATURDAY 10TH AUGUST
9:30AM-12PM

<https://www.aabr.org.au/events/>



Australian Association of Bush Regenerators
Working with natural processes

Join us for an illuminating and informative Walk & Talk where you'll discover what makes a rainforest special, focusing on our unique local littoral rainforest.

Information: <https://www.aabr.org.au/event/rainforest-restoration-at-seal-rocks/>

Booking: <https://events.humanitix.com/rainforest-restoration-at-seal-rocks>

Welcome to new AABR Members

Congratulations on Accreditation

Byron De Jager
Daniel Giannini
Michael Paterson

Members

Bert Heathwood
Bridget Cameron
Caleb Lilley
Chris Currie
Christie Lagos
David Berthon

Elizabeth Powell
Emma Harrington
Estella Xia
Jacqueline Hansen
Janelle Magee
Jason Page
Jeanette Davidson
Jonathon Dykyj
Karen Mudge
Katerina Zissimos
Kyle Ruddell
Laura Butera

Leonie McNamara
Mal Smith
Marcus Cook
Mary-Jane Johnston
Michelle Playford
Nic Mcaffrey
Oriana Licul-Milevoj
Rachel Toole
Rebecca Giddins
Rohan Syer
Sharyn Coleman
Simon Woodley
Steve Gartland
Tilly Zhang

Warren Hilton
Wendy Gleen
William Thomas

Not For Profit

Reforest Now Limited
Moora Moora Co-op
Project Platypus
Bush Workers Collective
Fingal Head Coastcare
Envite Environment (VIC)

Business

Samurai Forestry and Land Clearing Pty Ltd

A Short Story from Switzerland

Ray Thomas continues his comments on making progress in the United Nations Decade of Ecosystem Restoration. With his experience in large-scale restoration/reconstruction works in the Regent Honeyeater Project, there may be some helpful ideas to share... specifically, what were the factors that enabled the on-ground works to scale up to such a large degree?

A highly significant guide for how I approach working with the community was some Swiss research into effective Environmental Education. Rather than design a study that would follow people for the next 20 years, they did a retrospective study. They looked at the background of people who were already engaged in environmental work. The research identified two common threads in the subjects' past experience:

- as children, these people were out in nature a lot, just having fun and enjoying it - not necessarily studying it. That enjoyment of nature became a life-long value, which no-one could take from them.
- somewhere in the past they had been part of a group taking action on some local issue, and together they had pulled it off! Regardless of the focus (social, political, educational, sporting, or whatever), they'd had a win, and trusted that they could do it again.

So when an environmental issue came up, they jumped in!! People's actions are always protecting internalised values, and it's doubly powerful when there is a belief-in-self to take action.

This is empowerment; it is not fear-driven.

For comparison, the Swiss researchers also investigated people whose main environmental exposure was learning about global ecological issues and the serious consequences. These people investigated the problems to understand what it means for them, but it didn't lead to restoration works; it leads to hopelessness or protest actions. (Matthias Finger, *Journal of Social Issues*, Fall edition 1994).

I think this has huge implications for our community engagement work. My nest box work was to benefit the wildlife for sure, but it had a bigger picture benefit as well. Seeing wildlife up so close really touched people's hearts, and they were eager to help in our large-scale projects.

The driving force is bottom-up, never top-down...

The next article will look in more detail at the nitty-gritty of our on-ground works, and how we engaged so many people to help.

Ray Thomas.

Below: Enjoying nature photos supplied by Ray Thomas



What is a bush regeneration mentor?

When delivered by teachers who are themselves experienced bush regenerators, the Conservation and Ecosystem Management Cert III course provides an excellent basis for bush regenerators to gain the knowledge and skills to work in the industry. However it is well understood that Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses are designed to work hand in hand with the employer's mentoring of students in the workplace. This is because while a course can provide appropriate information and demonstrate techniques, the actual competencies of a bush regenerator are only really bedded down in the operator after a period of field experience, ideally under the guidance of a mentor.

The role of a bush regeneration mentor is not simply one where a team member is told what to do and is expected to follow orders. Instead the role involves stimulating the team member to think things through and ultimately understand the reasons why particular treatments are applied in different situations. This places the team member in a vastly better position to make those many micro-decisions needed on a daily basis when working in highly variable natural environments.

AABR has a very short list of volunteer mentors willing to assist people who genuinely do not have access to experienced mentors in the workplace. But a strong industry needs all bush regeneration organisations, commercial or otherwise, to have sufficiently knowledgeable and skilled people in their teams to provide the necessary mentoring

for their own staff. Having good mentors in the workplace leads to much more effective teams and makes it much more straightforward for an organisation's staff to become accredited by AABR.

We plan to produce a 'hot tips' guide for bush regeneration mentors in the future...so watch this space!!

Tein McDonald

Chair, AABR accreditation sub-committee



The ANPC will hold the 14th Australasian Plant Conservation Conference (APCC14) in Toowoomba, Queensland from 13-17 October 2024 at the Oaks Toowoomba Hotel 25 Annand St, Toowoomba QLD 4350

The conference theme recognises how the many Little Things that we do – in science, land management, and community-based conservation – can grow into the Big Things that can save our biodiversity heritage.

For registration and to keep up to date with information go to <https://www.anpc.asn.au/conferences-apcc14/>

AABR National Forum 2024 - what a great day!

AABR Vic was delighted to host the National Forum at the stunning Fitzroy Town Hall in March this year. The event's theme, 'The Rs of Restoration – Restoring biodiversity through resilience, regeneration, reintroduction, and reconnecting to Country', was well received by bushland regenerators, as evidenced by the event selling out days in advance.

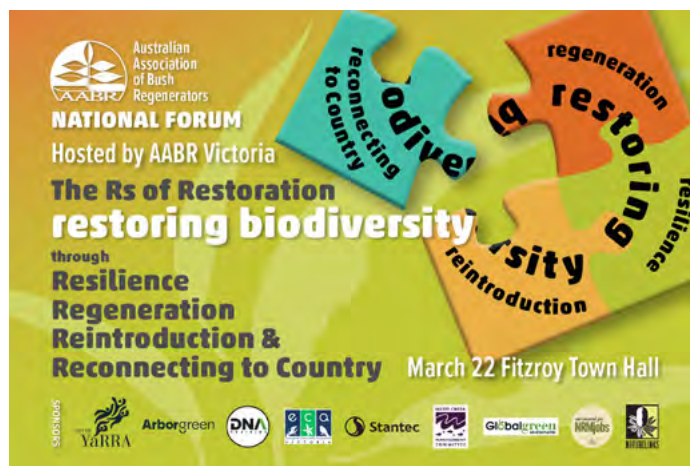
The forum's main goals were to host a successful event for Victorian members to network, promote AABR, emphasise the importance of regeneration, and acknowledge the wisdom and deep connection to country of First Nations people. This acknowledgment is key to increasing understanding and respect.

We want to express our deepest gratitude to all of our exceptional presenters who did an outstanding job during the event. Their efforts to share their wide-ranging knowledge, vast experience, and expertise with us all have not gone unnoticed. These individuals ensured that we were privy to their insights and understanding, contributing significantly to the success of the event. In the very near future, we will be releasing the recordings of these insightful presentations on Regen TV. This will provide an opportunity for everyone who missed the live sessions to catch up and for those who attended to revisit the wealth of information shared. Notes of the talks are also available in this Newsletter and on the AABR web site.

From the feedback we received we saw a great representation of the industry from around the state and some came from even further afield. We had 23 local councils and agencies represented. Attendees worked across the sector, and 80% of attendees rated the event excellent or very good.

Answer Choices	Responses	
On ground practitioner - volunteer	8.11%	3
On ground practitioner - Professional	24.32%	9
Ecological consultancy	5.41%	2
Local Government	35.14%	13
Government Agency	8.11%	3
Not for Profit	10.81%	4
Restoration Business	5.41%	2
Student	10.81%	4
Other	8.11%	3
Total Respondents	37	

Above: 37 Forum attendees showed they work in a wide variety of roles in bushland restoration



Socialising and networking opportunities during and after the event were embraced, with the Napier Hotel being inundated by bushland regenerators after the event. We saw the value of these interactions in creating bonds that could lead to future collaborations, sharing of insights, and collective growth within the bushland regeneration sector. It was a testament to the vibrant and dynamic community that we have, all driven by the same purpose.

AABR Vic perceives this forum as just the beginning. We envision it as the inaugural event of a series of many more to come to Victoria. Our goal is to create a platform where knowledge, experiences and ideas are not just shared, but also celebrated.

We invite anyone with a site or project they would like to showcase to come forward. If you know of an excellent presenter whose knowledge could enlighten us, we would love to hear from you. We also welcome anyone who would like to contribute to the planning and execution of more such events.

Our vision is to provide diverse events, workshops, field days, and networking or social opportunities related to bushland regeneration. This goes beyond just organizing events - it's about creating a thriving ecosystem that fosters learning, exchange and growth. We're excited about what the future holds and we invite you to be a part of this exciting journey.

Kylie Robertson,
on behalf of the organising group from AABR Vic



Forum attendees enjoying the company and the talks.
Photos: V Bear. Little Gecko.



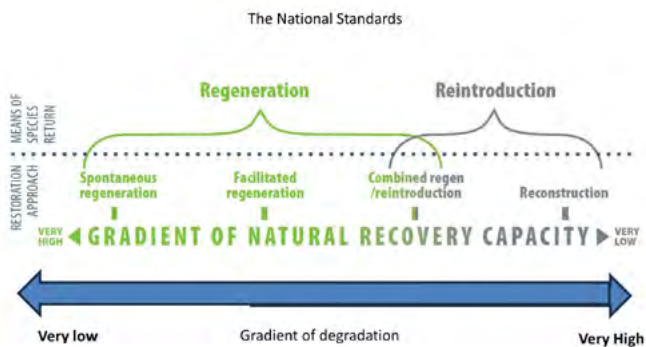
It's all about resilience assessment – but accurate prediction requires ongoing trial and error

Tein McDonald Presentation to AABR Forum, Melbourne March 2024

Tein McDonald led the team that produced the National Standards. Tein draws on the ecological literature about resilience and disturbance and her experience in restoration of sclerophyll, rainforest and grassland sites in eastern Australia.

The SERA Standards identify four approaches to restoration.

The diagram below shows that the spectrum of degradation is inverse to the spectrum of recovery potential, i.e. the higher the degradation the lower the potential for spontaneous recovery after the removal of impacts. It shows the gradient of natural recovery potential.



Often it is (wrongly) assumed the presence of trees and other native vegetation is a foolproof indicator of buried seed banks - and if regeneration doesn't happen spontaneously after the cessation of causes of degradation, natural regeneration is not at all possible.

However, resilience is largely invisible, and if spontaneous natural regeneration doesn't happen after the removal of causes of degradation, this is where facilitated regeneration comes in, meaning that more active intervention is often needed to remove obstacles, recreate conditions and cue germination. A facilitated regeneration approach may be sufficient alone or some level of reintroduction may also be needed, i.e. combined regen/reintroduction.

In recent decades we have learned regeneration potential can extend quite a distance from a remnant if treatments are applied that mimic the natural disturbances and other environmental conditions to which the species are adapted.

My talk - accessible online - draws attention to lessons learned over time about the potential and limits of regeneration beyond a remnant 'edge'. Two examples are given - one a forested wetland in northern NSW and the other a grassland/grassy woodland in the NSW southern tablelands, north of Cooma.

Gap Road wetland, Woodburn NSW



Left showing the site before work - 99% weed (*Setaria*) after decades of grazing.



Right shows the area after 3 years of active facilitation - a burn and rigorous spot spraying - around 49 native species

This site included a previously long cattle-grazed paddock (between two remnant patches) that was entirely dominated by South African pigeon grass (*Setaria sphacelata*). Searches found only small fragments of three native herbs among the grass swathe and we assumed it would need planting. However, we had the opportunity to conduct a trial burn, so sprayed the tall weed grass to create suitably dry fuel and then burnt it with the assistance of the local Indigenous ranger team who were subsequently engaged to carry out the follow up spray treatments. The regenerators found that some natives emerged from the soil seed bank after the first follow up spray - but substantially more appeared after the second follow up. After 3 years of active follow up spraying, the site had an extensive cover of natives including 21 forb, 7 sedge,

8 grass, 2 shrub and 11 tree species. (Total = **49 species in 0.5 ha**)

Scottsdale Reserve Bredbo, NSW

AABR was aware of the results at Gap Road when carrying out AABR's 'First Aid for Burnt Bushland' effort to assist recovery at the property's long grazed and weed-dominated 5ha Rutidosis Ridge after the February 2020 wildfire. We readied ourselves for intensive follow up spot spraying over a long period and that paid off as expected - around 86 mainly herbaceous native species have returned and weed presence is reducing enormously. What was not expected was the gradual recovery in the 'buffer zones' beyond the grassy 'remnant' where we thought boom spraying followed by

direct seeding of grasses would be needed. Because there were small fragments of quite a few native groundcovers (that could not be sown) the manager decided against boom spraying and sowing, and requested a spot spraying 'regen' approach be carried out. This resulted in very high frequencies of 24 native herbaceous species across that buffer zone over 3 years, capturing the site for natives and reducing weed presence.

While it was clear that no planting or seeding was required at all in the Woodburn wetland site or the main core of Rutidosis, we can discuss whether some direct seeding could have been profitably carried out alongside the regeneration intervention in the buffer zones at the Bredbo site. I conclude that sowing was unlikely to have improved the results (as weed control was needed anyway and the early colonisers proliferation in subsequent seasons) - but that reintroduction of missing species may well assist in building diversity in years to come.

While ecosystem type and comparative costs of each treatment need to be considered, the results add weight to the general rule of thumb that managers should always try regeneration prior to assuming planting is needed. This seems to be the case even at substantial distances from remnant edges as long as the soil profile remains intact.

Photos: Tein McDonald

Watch the video of Tein's talk here



Above Scottsdale. April 2018 - dominated by Africal love grass - after aerial spraying and before March 2020 fire.

Below: The site in 2021 after work after spot spraying as part of AABR'S First aid for burnt bushland program.



Applying the 12 elements from the National Standards to contract specifications

Craig McGrath

Craig is the Biodiversity Officer from the City of Yarra.

The principles of the SERA National Standards pretty much underwrite the City of Yarra's contracts. Back in 2016, I thought that when we write our contracts, we needed to use these principles, and get these elements in the contracts. There are 18 elements in the recovery circumplex we use.

12 Elements from SERA's National Standards

6 x SERA Principles

1. Ecological restoration practice is based on an appropriate local native reference ecosystem
2. Restoration inputs will be dictated by level of resilience and degradation
3. Recovery of ecosystem attributes is facilitated by identifying clear targets, goals and objectives
4. The goal of ecological restoration is full recovery, insofar as possible, even if outcomes take long timeframes or involve high inputs
5. Restoration science and practice are synergistic (SMART)
6. Social aspects are critical to successful ecological restoration

6 x Progress Evaluation Attributes to achieve ecosystem goals

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Absence of Threats | 2. Physical Conditions |
| 3. Species Composition | 4. Structural Diversity |
| 5. Ecosystem Function | 6. External Exchanges |

In 2016, we had Lincoln Kern's team from Practical Ecology put together this amazing work over 2 years. Combining Victorian Government data bases and ground truthing, over 200 floristic species were identified as indigenous to the City of Yarra. A lot of this data when broken down, fitted into this circumplex. We had also been through 15 years of on and off drought, which provided insights into how each system was reacting through some of the harshest times. This initiated further thinking about how to embed adaptive management responses to climate change.

Different states use different descriptors like NSW's 'Plant Community Types' (PCTs). The Victorian Government's terminology 'Ecological Vegetation Classes' (EVC) classifies one or several floristic communities that can be distinguished within an environmental niche and has similar habitat and



Social Engagement Circumplex c.2022



Original Recovery Circumplex c.2016

Ongoing Monitoring

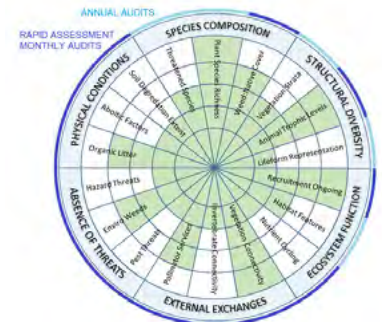
The SERA Standards have been revised since 2016. By and large, the City of Yarra is in the reintroduction phase because a lot of our areas are highly modified. Many of Yarra’s urban reserves harbour ‘fill’ that may be contaminated. Remnant areas are hard to find, but there are some small patches.

In terms of the generic standards for one to five-star recovery levels, the levels of degradation and site resilience, all Yarra’s sites fall below that condition classification, so we work from four-star and below.

Developing the contract, we needed to set some achievable targets, and 80% of the EVC benchmark seemed to be as good as we were getting. Going down to our poorer quality sites, our maintenance plans tended to focus on reducing threatening processes. Yarra’s better sites focus on improving biodiversity.

Annual Audit (e.g. case study Halls Reserve)

Every year we have ecologist consultants perform an independent annual audit using a rapid assessment tool and combine that information with our contractor’s fieldwork with audits from both contractor and council staff. We pass that information over to the consultants, and they (for example) quantify how many life forms and the percentage each species covers.



Yarra’s Modified Circumplex

- Rapid Monthly assessments review conditions across 13 elements
- Annual Audits review all 18 elements in the Recovery Wheel circumplex

Auditing drives evolving the circumplex and we add new things in there (to reflect EVC condition changes) e.g. the percentage of life-form cover. We are monitoring outcomes with the annual audit and trying to collect information about Bioindicators. For quick assessments, it’s really easy to take photos and put them onto ‘iNaturalist.’ This involves some citizen science and getting people interested in your projects and reflects the 6th element of the SERA Principles.

I love the idea of the ‘Incomplete Puzzle Hypothesis.’ If you are doing a lot of the right work, you’ll pull together these pieces of the puzzle, and this means that ‘only the understanding of all possible pieces will allow an adequate view of restoration potential of the image.’ The defined goals must be conditioned on how complete this puzzle is.

References and useful sources:
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolind.2021.107458>
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/ecological-indicators>



Click here to see Craig’s talk

The final word to think about is trust. Trust is a big word, but trust doesn’t exist without ‘results driven the right way’.

ecological processes operating. In highly degraded urban areas, where remnant vegetation has negligible coverage, this synthesised context is our next best option when reflecting upon restoration efforts to ensure an appropriate cover from different strata is represented.

We use this to describe what our sites might look like to address the 1st SERA Principal – appropriate local native reference ecosystem.

What do you need to do to make a good contract?

Nine years (contract) was daunting, but to get long-term change, you need to plan long-term, reflect on what’s happening and project what might happen in the next few years. Our contract structure starts with a Bushland Service plan to cover the first four years for each reserve. Then we develop annual plans within reserves for each EVC which have separate management plans. Ongoing monthly contract meetings reflect upon auditing criteria that align to the recovery circumplex and are reflective of service levels in the annual plans.

Yarra’s New Contract: 9 years lump sum.

Moving away from the inputs & rates model, this contract asked vendors to price each site/EVC to deliver a range of outcomes related to the recovery circumplex. This Outcome Focused contract is generically structured to classify EVC/sites within reserves into aspirational/achievable service levels over time.

Rates Per Site m² & Condition Classification (4 star & below service level)

Bushland Maintenance Service Plans

- Strategic bushland restoration objectives
- Site specific approaches and issues
 - Annual Works Plan

Monthly Contract Meetings

- Programmed Works Complete/Arising
- Rapid Assessment Results
- Maintenance Record Keeping

Establishing benchmarks and targets are reflective of levels of resilience and/or sites exhibiting accelerated degradation so the objectives within these plans need to provide specific goals. (These plans address the 2nd & 3rd SERA Principles).

Yarra Contract Goals

A feature of the contract is that by creating EVC condition targets we also apply timelines for those targets to be achieved. Ideally, we would like to achieve ‘full potential recovery.’ However, we also acknowledge that there are constraints like budget and ‘edge effect’ (i.e. threatening processes outside our control). Maintenance Plans classify EVCs into their potential level of improvement and assign a timeframe for that outcome to be achieved.

Igniting change: Collaboration for cultural fire

Liam Gallagher

Liam Gallagher has a Masters in Disaster and Emergency Management from Charles Darwin University and has been with the Victorian Department of Energy Environment and Climate Action for three years working previously as a forest and fire operations officer. Liam's role as a cultural burn officer is to support the cultural fire and land management goals of traditional owners across the Port Phillip region.

Fire is a powerful and enduring force that has had a profound influence on the Australian landscape. The method of managing country using fire has been employed for over millennia by Aboriginal people. In regions across Australia there is a proliferation of Indigenous communities applying, adapting and rejuvenating Indigenous fire practices and burning regimes through a range of land management activities and partnerships. The proliferation of cultural fire practices across Australia has led to a collision between traditional fire management and the risk averse management strategies of government agencies.

I'd like to acknowledge groups and organisations that I have the privilege of working with on a daily basis, with their connection to the land and waters and their unique ability to care for country through the spiritual act of applying fire. I'd like to acknowledge the ancestors that have walked the path before me and I know we walk on the shoulders of giants.

Aboriginal people have been using fire for managing country for many many years. There is a growing range of scholars who have identified how Aboriginal fire practices have changed and shaped the Australian landscape. The first colonists have described the intricate linkages between Aboriginal use of fire and the intrinsic management of the Australian continent. In January 1802 off Cape Shank and in the Port Phillip Bay area it was impossible to survey any part of the coast because of the numerous native fires which covered the low shore in one continuous volume of smoke.

Early European settlers often described the continent as wild and an unfamiliar environment. But what they actually encountered was a landscape that had been very consciously and deliberately shaped by fire in what could be described as a continent wide economic and social strategy to support human life and protect faunal and floral species.

In the wake of the black summer bushfires in 1920, the hot and dry conditions over time since then combined with the existence of large areas that were not being managed through local fire and land management practices. This resulted in 126,000km square or 12.6 million hectares of Australia burnt between August 2019 and March 2020. The impacts of this have galvanised the Australian community in terms of learning from Aboriginal communities in terms of fire.

What is cultural fire?

Indigenous fire practices are holistic in nature. They incorporate an intricate number of dimensions that are intertwined with the spiritual and physical nature of the world. This encompasses customary lore, economies, social relations and structures, ecology and diverse technology such as season indicators.

The importance of fire is coupled with the innate knowledge and understanding of the interplays of local environments.

As one elder describes it - fire creates new life. Burning was part of the daily routine. You burn grass, you get new shoots coming up, you get wallabies and kangaroos coming on, and emus feeding and that's how people survived. That was the main reason for fire.

Fire is more than a complex knowledge system connected to one's environment and maximizing it for ones survival. It is connected to lore and spiritual and kinship relationships. To put it simply, cultural fire has many tangible and intangible benefits to the environment and to people. These included:

- Care for country. Fire provides a fundamental way to re-connect to country, reinvigorate culture and share knowledge, and there are related cultural, health and wellbeing outcomes.
- Regenerate and protect native species, and to manage invasive weed species via mosaic and patch burning. This has related ecological and environmental outcomes.
- Fuel reduction to protect important places. These places can include cultural heritage or internationally-significant wetland areas, threatened species and ecological communities, infrastructure such as buildings, powerlines, and neighbouring properties.
- Meaningful employment, related social and economic benefits and outcomes.
- Improved decision-making power on traditional estates.

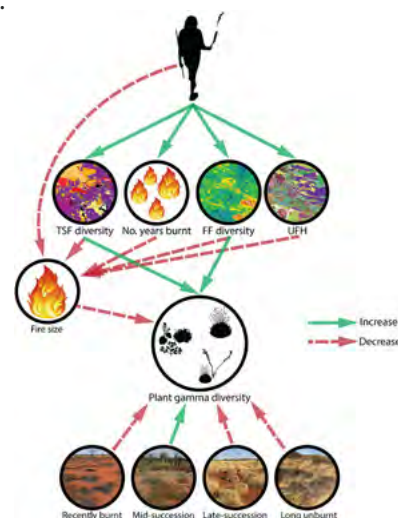
Case Study – Martu burning

I'd like to refer to a case study conducted by Greenwood and Co that was delivered on Martu country (in the Western Deserts of central Western Australia), which found

- fire increased the richness and diversity of plants and some plant (e.g. sub-shrubs) groups in the Western Deserts,
- that the maximum extent of large wildfires appeared to reduce plant richness, while the extent of mid successional vegetation tended to enhance the diversity of several plant groups, including edible species richness,
- and that findings underscore the importance of Indigenous fire regimes for promoting plant diversity in this fire-prone ecosystem.

Although this is only one example of the benefits of cultural fire from a purely ecological objective, as an Aboriginal person myself, the innate connection to country and spirit that arises when delivering fire is something that can not necessarily be tangibly described.

Many land and emergency management agencies have only recently begun to acknowledge that they have obligations to work towards partnerships with First Nations peoples. This has led to some successful partnerships and policy interventions here in Victoria such as the Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Fire Strategy.



Many gaps and significant improvements are required to meet Indigenous expectations around fire management.

These include:

- Different attitudes and perspectives in understanding fire
- Legislation and regulation
- Land tenure and access to land
- Funding and resources
- Accreditation and training
- Liabilities and insurance

To overcome barriers to collaboration, agencies and organisations need to begin to take active steps to support the fire aspirations of traditional owners.

Maintaining intercultural collaborations can present many obstacles and there needs to be guidance on how to work together. A good resource has been recently produced by Natural Hazards Research Australia in a project titled '[Cultural land management research and governance in south-east Australia](#)'.

It produced a guide *Principles and Protocols for Cultural Land Management* for people who are engaging with traditional owner groups, which is relevant to government organisations, non-government organisations, and research institutes.



In Victoria, a cultural fire support network has been developed bringing together many agencies - four individual water corporations, five fire rescue Victoria Districts and 31 local government areas to discuss the challenges agencies are having to better support cultural fire. Some land managers are collaborating to adopt standard approaches across land tenure and start to break down some of those barriers that we have.

Organisations are at different stages and have different relationships, which means that not all have the appetite to be involved.

Where to?

- Continue to collaborate with all agencies and organisations to continue to break down some of barriers at a regional level.
- Advocate for further reform as a collective and in genuine partnership with Traditional Owner organisations.



[Click here to see Liam's talk](#)

- Apply principles and protocols for cultural land management to ensure we overcome barriers to intercultural collaboration.

Sorting out the R words:

Using the SER Standards to improve restoration project design

Lincoln Kern

Lincoln is an ecologist with a keen interest in indigenous biodiversity conservation and environmental issues. He trained in botany and environmental science in the USA, before studying environmental management at Deakin University in Melbourne. After gaining experience in Victoria, in 1993 he set up, owns and manages Practical Ecology P/L, an ecological consultancy and restoration contractor.

I wanted to reflect just a minute on the 30 plus years I've been doing this. In the early 90s I started my business, and I was probably the first regeneration business in Melbourne. There are lots more now. We had a community who wanted our environment treated better and they asked government to pass laws in the planning system, and to encourage people on the ground to better manage the environment. But the service providers weren't there.

Today I can speak to a big group of professionals actually doing the work, and the volunteers who are contributing to the work as well. We need the people with the skills and the motivation to provide the services to get the job done.

Another point is that the drive for restoration and better protection of vegetation etc. used to be very personal - a council might have an officer who decided they care and would make the effort. Now, what has been achieved is institutionalisation, meaning we have legal and institutional frameworks that drive restoration work, not just one keen person.

Sorting out the R words: Using the SER National Restoration Standards to improve Restoration Project Design

Those of us who love indigenous vegetation and want to restore it have got ahead of ourselves. There's a drive to do restoration and a lot of money gets spent on it. Many projects are nominated, but we end up with poor design and poorly thought through projects. We need a process to help plan better quality projects. I was very happy when the National Ecological Restoration Standards were developed because to me this is the tool that we can adopt and use to guide better quality projects.

Getting beyond "tree planting"! Lifting the quality of restoration projects...

Focusing on tree planting is often problematic - it sometimes destroys other rare ecosystems!

We have in society a focus on tree planting, as if that's where we start. It's not that we shouldn't plant trees, but it is problematic when people think that it is the primary approach to restoration. Internationally there's sincere people and multinational conservation organisations doing big world scale maps about where there's no forest now, and we could reforest and address the climate crisis. An article in *The Conversation* talks about this in Africa where they mapped heathland, veldt, and savannah as a place to plant trees.

I thought we were beyond this in Australia, but recently I uncovered a report that highlighted a site in the Mallee region where they ripped arid shrubland, planted some trees, didn't maintain or water it, and they all died. I'd hoped that



Read this article at

<https://theconversation.com/when-tree-planting-actually-damages-ecosystems-120786>

Australia was not disregarding what was already present on a site, but it seems there are still people not respecting the resilience that is present on sites. We are also ignoring that other ecosystems besides forest, such as grasslands, wetlands and shrub lands, lock up lots of carbon. They also provide greater biodiversity. It's important for us to upscale restoration work, and natural regeneration/assisted regeneration is what gets us there.

'Tree guard dreaming'

I'm going to borrow the term from Darcy Duggan, who has left us but was always a pioneer in the regeneration industry in Melbourne. 'Tree guard dreaming' - if the tree guards are up, you must be growing habitat. This approach has issues.

Issues of restoration design:

- Councils, Greenstar rating system, etc are requiring local indigenous species for landscaping and open space but reference to local provenance plants, habitat and restoration design is not included in the process.
- Little thinking beyond the planting of the trees and shrubs.
- Is natural regeneration of some species possible on the site and considered in design? Less cost and better outcomes are possible...



An example from 2018 in Northern Victoria of poor planning – Arid Shrubland ripped to plant trees that subsequently died...

- Will further steps of habitat improvement be considered, i.e. additional life forms, logs and rocks at some point?
- Transition to maintenance phase? Stages of restoration over time?
- Can natural regeneration of remnant and planted species be recognised during maintenance?

I'm sure we all drive by some sites which you look at and see a lot of mulch and trees and a few shrubs. But have the designers of this project really thought about the future of this project eg. what kind of habitat will it be in 20 years? Tree planting and restoration projects are driven by government and not by practitioners. Tree planting is the big event and maintenance is forgotten.

Sorting out the R words?

- **Revegetation:** is used where the ecosystem is too damaged to regenerate naturally and the appropriate plants have to be reintroduced, for example by planting or direct seeding.
<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/cpp/RestoringVeg.pdf>.
- **Rehabilitation:** the action of restoring something that has been damaged, to its former condition.
- **Reforestation:** the natural or intentional restocking of existing forests and woodlands (forestation) that have been depleted, usually through deforestation but also after clearcutting. (Oxford Dictionary).
- **Regeneration:** renewal or restoration of a body, bodily part, or biological system (such as a forest) after injury or as a normal process*
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/regeneration>
*This word is widely used by practitioners: bush regeneration, natural regeneration, assisted regeneration and is accurate and useful
- **Ecological restoration:** a useful overarching term? Ecological restoration is the **process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged, or destroyed.**
<https://ser-rrc.org/what-is-ecological-restoration/>

I like that AABR Victoria's committee has reinvented the R words. We've got some better ones to guide us. *Regeneration* has always been the good overarching term, but too often it's forgotten - assessing regeneration is the first step. *Revegetation* makes you think of planting so is limiting. *Rehabilitation* and *Reforestation* are also limiting the words. *Restoration* gives us the general approach that we need.

I would throw in another R word, which has problems for me. It is **Rewilding** - a word that we're starting to use. It's the Indigenous First Nations perspective that makes me think we should hesitate using rewilding as a term. It does refer to habitat and animals, but rewilding can be a problematic word because it continues colonisation to some degree, and this was based on the myth that our ancestors colonised empty wilderness, so helps perpetuate the myth of *terra nullius*. But it was someone's home that they were managing. So we are not going to rewild it - we should restore the ecosystems and the habitat and the place that it was before colonisers arrived. So let's be careful about the R words.

Horticulture/Gardening vs Ecological Restoration?

Too often we just do horticulture or landscaping with indigenous species and don't see the opportunities to make it restoration.

To me there are two issues about gardening versus restoration:

- Mulch - in horticulture, you put mulch down, you replace it. In restoration we shouldn't put mulch down if we can avoid it and we should let it deteriorate and not replace it. Mulch might control weeds, but it also prevents regeneration. We can only afford to plant 6 to 10 plants per square metre, so if we don't facilitate natural regeneration, we don't get ecosystems back where 40 plants per square meter existed naturally and 40 plants is probably an underestimate as well.
- In horticulture we say humans will replace plants over time. In restoration plants will replace themselves. This is about upscaling too. With restoration, we move on when sites have been restored to where they just need a bit of maintenance. There is a difference between gardening and restoration, and we tell people about this difference to get more restoration and maybe less gardening.

Horticulture or Gardening

- Desired vegetation is imposed on a site and often based on artificially "improving" site conditions
- Mulch is used to control weeds and replaced over time
- Weeds are controlled as they appear, and herbicides may be part of the long term system
- Humans will replace plants over time!

Ecological Restoration

- Site conditions and context guides design objectives for habitat and indigenous biodiversity or hybrid ecosystems appropriate to the circumstances
- Mulch is only used initially and allowed to decompose without being replaced or not at all
- Weed propagules and populations are managed over time so that they are replaced by desirable indigenous plants – herbicides are tools at the beginning and hopefully not needed over time
- Plants will naturally regenerate over time!

Latrobe Uni - Eco-corridor Design Guide

I did this design guide for the restoration of the Latrobe Uni Eco-corridor. Latrobe Uni has an amazing campus full of big old red gums etc. and lots of habitat beyond the eco-corridor. They have defined a certain zone that will be managed as native vegetation and will be restored.

The objectives of the corridor and design guide included:

- Formally indicating conservation areas with significant areas of native vegetation occurring elsewhere on campus
- Developing a consistent approach to restoration across the Eco-corridor
- Providing guidance and resources to support well designed high quality restoration projects.

What I was able to do in this guide is hopefully provide detailed information and inspiration about how to do high quality restoration projects and to address the issue of poor design.

It includes the six principles from the National Ecological Restoration Standards for Restoration and Regeneration.

If you were thinking of introduction plantings, you would have to figure out the reference ecosystem. It's a complicated site with lots of different geologies and different habitats. This

is why we needed the design guide.

So what I tried to do at Latrobe was give them a check list to make it idiot proof to guide the design of a project. We also did some flow charts to help people make decisions because I was conscious that we might have people with very little experience and knowledge actually designing projects. We talked about habitat components. This is what doesn't happen too often on projects. We are going to reintroduce rocks, logs and physical habitat components.

Take Home Points

- We need to get beyond gardening/horticulture with indigenous species and simple "tree planting" AND develop "restoration" projects that develop diverse fauna habitat and flora diversity.
- Follow the *Principles of the National Standards for the Practice of Ecological Restoration* which can be the tool to help guide best practice restoration project design to whatever level is possible.
- Implementing the Principles can take much research and design beyond the skills of many land managers – local restoration project design guides can promote good quality consistent projects based on the National Standards.
- Landscaping projects using local indigenous species could/should often be ecological restoration projects if the design is based on the Standards. This applies to a lot of public landscaping sites which are urban and rural habitats.
- All ecological consultants and land management authorities should adopt the *Principles of the National Standards for the Practice of Ecological Restoration* as the basis and guide for all ecological restoration projects and many landscaping projects – they give us the principles to help improve the quality of the projects. They prompt us to ask all the right questions along the way. So we have taken the opportunity, in my business, to use the Standards whenever possible to guide the design of projects. It's incredibly useful.
- We should collectively start to see the Standards as the required framework for developing ecological restoration projects in tenders, Landcare projects, landscaping, etc.

To me the *Principles of the National Standards for the Practice of Ecological Restoration in Australia*, should be used in most projects with indigenous flora because they provide a framework for integrated and conscious restoration design and development of sites as habitat over time.

Lincoln talked in depth about his work at Latrobe University and for the Yarra Riverkeeper Association at an AABR Webinar.

This is available on the video link right starting at 30 minutes.



Lincoln's Forum talk can be seen by clicking on the video picture left

COVRAM – a simple tool for better native vegetation management

Ian and Michael Davidson

Ian is an ecologist with over 30 years of experience in native vegetation assessments and providing land management advice. He's the developer of COVRAM

Michael is the tech guy, with a background in engineering. Previous experience includes reviewing emissions calculations. He is the cofounder and CTO of an e-commerce company.

Ian's Presentation

I started as a ranger, became an ecologist working for government and moved from that. I got to know a lot of farmers and land managers. Since 2002, I've run my own business working with land managers.

Land managers are an unlocked resource. They manage a lot of the native vegetation but generally are not in any of the conversations - experts tell them what their goal is. We do need experts, but there is expertise locked up in those people who live on the land. These include elders who walk country through to those who have been involved in forestry. I work on travelling stock reserves throughout NSW and Queensland for people who understand grazing effects, and individual landholders and councils.

We haven't advanced the conversation with respect to land managers. There are awesome individual projects or groups of little projects, but making a difference across southern Australia is a much bigger thing, and we need to engage a lot more people.

Using my knowledge and experience, I have developed a system that people can use and build on. It uses inclusive language for those new to this game. It doesn't go into things in infinite detail - it goes into what we have broadly got.

With this tool there are some problems to address.

Knowing the condition (not necessarily the type) of native vegetation at a site is important to ensure that the most appropriate and sustainable land management decisions are made e.g. weed control, revegetation, burning, etc.

There is no standard approach to easily determine the condition of native vegetation. What is available is time consuming, generally requires a high degree of botanical knowledge, and the results are not broadly comparable across sites.

Our solution

Covram stands for Condition of Vegetation Rapid Assessment.

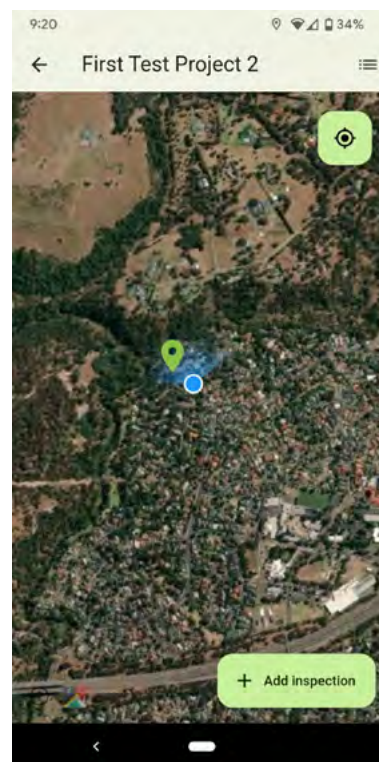
The Covram mobile App empowers land managers and practitioners to complete self-assessments of their native vegetation in minutes, with suitable training and experience.

The Covram assessment can identify sites with a high potential to regenerate naturally or require active revegetation techniques and provide other land management recommendations.

We are all on the same page here i.e. to unlock nature. We are not going to treplant our way out of this. The Covram assessment can identify sites with high potential to regenerate naturally or using other land management recommendations. With Covram there are five condition

states. The highest state is to protect and maintain. The worst state means it's really bad and you need to question why you're doing anything there. You have three states in the middle - the upper (needs a slight tweak); middle (needs a bit of assistance to stimulate and get those seeds, or what you require, back into the system plus other management techniques such as burning to be applied), the lower one (where you have to actively do it - decide what to do from a triage of what's available).

Covram is a mobile App for field assessment and data collection. A smartphone is big and smart enough to collect the data needed. It automatically locates where you are and has an offline capability so an offline map can be downloaded.



This feeds into the Web App, and automatically syncs and uploads the data and photos to the Cloud as soon as you come back into connectivity.

The Methodology

You collect some basic data. For example, if it is a woodland, its information on the structural layers: Has it got large old trees? Are there woody weeds or vines and how weedy is it? We use language like: are the weeds sparse; are they common in parts or throughout; are they abundant?

- A proven methodology developed over 30 years of experience, and currently used by government and industry.
- Flexible - A standardised, repeatable approach that has been successfully applied to 1,000's of diverse sites.

It's been used across Travelling Stock Reserves in New South Wales, which is in the thousands covering more than 500,000 hectares.

- Applies a numeric score to characterise key vegetation values to determine condition rating which integrates with a modified state and transition model rating. This helps you understand the regenerative capacity of that land.
- Ability to collect up to 20 data points, however only a handful are mandatory.

The Benefits

Improved decision making

- Utilising a broader range of people e.g. volunteers, council staff, etc. The use of inclusive language increases the potential workforce able to contribute valuable information.
- The standardised approach allows easy site benchmarking.
- Detailed and comparable site data to enable improved priority setting.
- Provides key data relating to the recovery wheel. Some of this data collected goes directly into that recovery wheel.

Improved coordination

- A consistent framework enables clearer communication between land managers, researchers, and volunteers. You can all talk about the same thing. Have the land manager involved and be part of the conversation.
- Tools to better analyse data at a site to landscape and statewide scale. Filter the data for various things, e.g. for threatened species. The landholder and you can look on the computer at the same site and talk about it.
- Simplifies short and long-term monitoring to provide evidence of the benefits of grant activities. What has been achieved? We often have no evidence to show that we're actually improving.

Simplified record keeping

- Automatic syncing of photo and data records, which simplifies record keeping.

9:22 32%

Vegetation Information - Mandatory

Original (pre-clearing) habitat type
Woodland

Vegetation structure
Partially intact

Large trees (Mature hollow bearing trees)
Common

Non-indigenous woody weeds and vines
Sparse

Weediness (Exotic ground cover)
Common in parts

Nativeness (Native ground cover)
Diverse throughout

Vegetation Condition Score: 14

VAST Rating: High Quality (Woodland): 14-16 Modified B

Who is using this

- Local councils managing natural reserves and roadsides.
- Local and statewide environmental groups e.g. bush regenerators, Landcare to maintain and improve their local environment (currently negotiating with NSW Landcare across the state).
- Individual land managers looking to more sustainably manage their land.
- Traditional owners to build capacity and foster 'caring for country' outcomes, e.g. The Nari Nari Tribal Council in the Riverina are using the program to monitor their 88,000 hectare property.
- State government agencies to facilitate improvement in land management operations and outcomes.

Next Steps

- Download the App - Search 'Covram' on the App Store or Google Play
- Visit covram.com.au to view data collected.
- Visit our stall to chat and view a demonstration.
- Email us.
ian@covram.com.au
michael@covram.com.au

Cost is currently free. It is a legacy project.



Click on this link above to find out more about Covram

Book review

Amazing Annoying Birds

Living with Australian Brush-Turkeys

Ann Göth

Could a book title summarise any better the community sentiment felt towards these birds! Love or hate them, the way we feel about these avian critters tends to be quite polarised. I remember when we chose Brush Turkey Enterprises as the name for our business 25 years ago, it drew a mixed response. We also figured it was memorable and apt, considering we started off as a rainforest seed collection business and spent lots of time scratching around in rainforest leaf litter for seed, and Brush Turkey's are also important in the development and spread of rainforest, so a worthy emblem for our business. Twenty-five years on I've even been honoured with the Jinibara name of Wawun-Dja "Scrub Turkey Man" for our ecological restoration / healing country work on our adopted home country of the Blackall Range, Queensland.

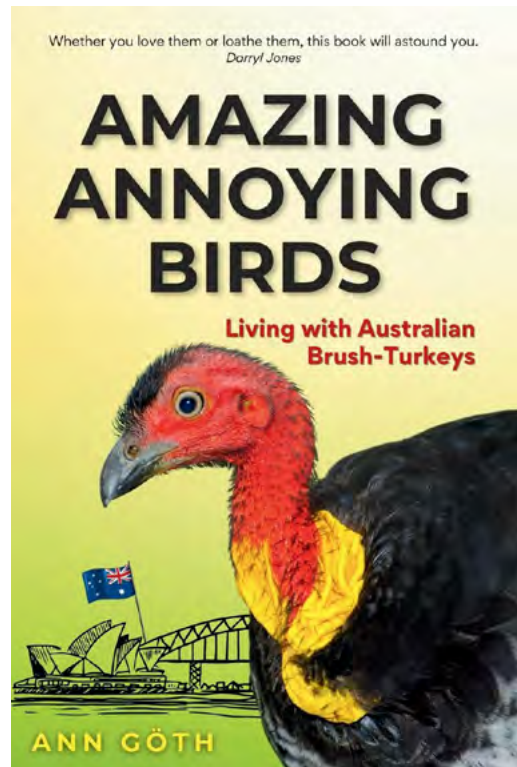
Twenty or so years ago I was fortunate enough to meet Ann Göth in the earlier stages of her research into these Amazing Annoying Birds while she was based in Maleny, SE QLD looking for Brush Turkey mounds. I've followed with interest her research over the years - research that well and truly should tip us all into using the 'Amazing' epithet, because the story of the ecology and lifecycle of these birds is well and truly amazing. That said however, I've also lost crops of potatoes, taro, Queensland arrowroot, yacon, banana etc... to our namesake, which again leaves one feeling somewhat conflicted...

But let's get back to the book. It was great to hear from Ann earlier this year about her recent publishing of this book, which after reading it, I think should be on the bookshelves of all the gardeners who have perceived conflicts with Brush Turkeys or bush regenerators in rainforests or other vegetation communities where these megapodes are a keystone species.

This book is a first-ever comprehensive summary of all things Brush Turkey *Alectura lathamii*. It covers all the current scientific knowledge on these megapodes, but in an engaging easy to read format. Chapters cover all things Brush Turkey, from First Peoples culture and stories to the impacts on backyard gardener's to the science and ecology that Ann is one of the best people to be talking about! A particularly engaging aspect of this book are the many interviews of people living and working with Brush Turkeys, which brings a genuine community feel to this publication.

As outlined by Ann, topics covered in this book include:

- Reasons behind their relentless and daring move into our suburbs
- How the media portrays them as fearless invaders and other things
- Little-known secrets about an unusual incubation method and approach to child-rearing
- Promiscuous and mischievous happenings on the incubation mounds
- Devoted parents who invest in their young so differently from other birds



- Indigenous and other knowledge about these native birds
- Methods for deterring them
- Insider confessions from managers dealing with Brush Turkey conflicts
- How you can help them in the city

I must admit I'm biased, having a long-term love affair with the Brush Turkey, but this book is well worth a read and adding to your bookshelf.

Spencer Shaw

For more info on this book visit Ann Göth's website
www.anngothauthor.com

Published: Natural Publishing, December 2023, 158 pages, RRP \$24.95
Paperback ISBN: 9780648603702

Watch AABR's Latest Video 'Rescuing Wingham Brush'

This is the third short film in AABR's documentary series: 'Bush Regen Heroes', and tells the story of restoration of highly degraded rainforest. The bush regeneration work required a new approach which was not without controversy.

Thanks to our sponsors.

The Paddy Pallin Foundation, BARRC (Bushland and Rainforest Restoration and Consulting), Robyn Becket, Marion Lugg, Georgina San Roque, Janet Fairlie-Cuninghame, and to voluntary contributions from Tein McDonald, Virginia Bear and other AABR project team members.



What's happening

25 - 28 August 2024

Australasian Weeds Conference

Breaking the Cycle

Towards Sustainable Weed Management

Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre in Queensland.

Weeds continue to impact biodiversity, agriculture, and public spaces, posing challenges to productivity and land use.

More information <https://icebergevents.eventsair.com/awc24/>

27 to 29 August 2024

3rd Australian Biosecurity Symposium

Sea World Resort Gold Coast, Queensland

Call for abstracts, registration and sponsorship opportunities now available.

Further information <https://www.biosym.com.au/>

The Great Southern Bioblitz: 20-23 September 2024



The Great Southern BioBlitz (GSB) is an exciting international initiative that embarks on an intensive biological survey during the vibrant spring season of the southern hemisphere. The GSB was established in 2020 during the global pandemic, by a group of bioblitz enthusiasts in Australia. The goal of the GSB is to document the flora, fauna, fish and fungi of the southern hemisphere while

providing a platform for groups, associations, local government and individuals to encourage engagement in citizen science. This collaborative effort is facilitated through the online platform iNaturalist.

Join in the biggest biodiversity survey in the southern hemisphere:

If you haven't already, please join the iNaturalist community - download the iNaturalist app or upload your photos onto the iNaturalist Australia website (<https://inaturalist.ala.org.au>).

Make nature observations during **20-23 September 2024**. You can upload your observations until 7 October 2024.

Register as a Great Southern Bioblitz participant (link: <https://www.greatsouthernbioblitz.org/how-to-participate-in-the-gsb>) to receive project updates and a certificate at the end of the bioblitz.

Join your local area Great Southern Bioblitz project page (link: <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/great-southern-bioblitz-2024-umbrella>), see what has been observed and help identify species.



Australian Association of Bush Regenerators

Australian Association of Bush Regenerators
working with natural processes

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The Australian Association of Bush Regenerators Inc (AABR)

was incorporated in NSW in 1986, and has several hundred members from all over Australia. AABR is pronounced 'arbor'.

Our aim is to promote the study and practice of ecological restoration, and encourage effective management of natural areas.

All interested people and organisations are welcome to join. AABR members include bush regeneration professionals, volunteers, natural area managers, landowners, policy makers, contractors, consultants, nursery people, local, state and commonwealth government officers—and lots of people who just love the bush and want to see it conserved.

AABR also offers accreditation for experienced practitioners.

AABR News is usually published in January, April, July, and November.

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Membership fees

Individuals \$35 (unwaged \$20)

Organisations (*does not confer membership to individuals in the organisation*)

- business (< 5 staff) \$120
- business (5-20 staff) \$300
- business (> 20 staff) \$480

Government/Agency \$480

Not for profit \$30

Benefits of Membership:

- discount admission to all AABR events
- four newsletters per year
- increased job opportunities
- discount subscription to the journal Ecological Management & Restoration
- opportunities to network with others involved in natural area restoration
- helping AABR to be a strong and effective force to promote natural area restoration, and support the industry.

Newsletter contributions and comments are welcome

Contact Louise Brodie newsletter@aabr.org.au 0407 068 688

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of AABR