

2016 Annual Report

*For The Period
July 2015 to June 2016*



Dasher River and Mount Roland

From the President

I would like to thank past and present committee members for all the support and effort that they have put into the many projects we have undertaken over the last year.

On behalf of the Committee I present the annual report for 2015 – 2016, which details the operations of Mount Roland Rivercare Catchment Inc.

Richard Sands
President, MRRCI

September 2016



Committee members

President	Richard Sands
Vice President	Greg Taylor
Secretary	Petra Wilden
Treasurer	Robert Van Der Weide
Committee	Clive Bott, George Callas, Barbara Alsop, Robert Harcourt-White, Charlotte King, Tim Wilson (Council representative).

Rivercare Coordinator

Richard Sands

Weeds Coordinator

Greg Taylor

Administration Officer

Julie Hargreaves

Contacts

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Natural Resource Management Activities

Weeds

MRRCI was successful in obtaining some further funding through the Tasmanian Landcare Fund (Round 19) to continue the work to protect the Mount Roland Reserve and Cradle Mountain World Heritage Area from weed invasion. This has focused on *Kunzea Ericoides* in particular but has also enabled follow up work to be done on previously controlled sites that were mapped in earlier weed projects.

Part of the project also involved raising awareness of weed issues as well as encouraging involvement by the community. This included information postcards on *Kunzea Ericoides*, articles in *The Kentish Voice*, a pop-up weed information stall and two weed working bees. One working bee was to hand pull small Broom seedlings in an area near to the Mount Roland walking track off O'Neills Road. The other site was along McCoys Road where a similar mass germination of Broom seedlings had occurred.



The pop-up weed display at Claude Road market was an opportunity to share information with local landowners in the catchment about weeds and the work that MRRCI has been doing to control them. The group also continues to liaise with other stakeholders in the catchment and is playing a role in efforts to have *Kunzea Ericoides* added to the declared weeds list in Tasmania.

Further weed control work will take place over spring as part of this project, and is due to be completed by the end of 2016. While this specific project will have been completed, ongoing monitoring of the controlled sites will be needed for some time to come. The importance of each landowner and stakeholder controlling weeds on their own properties will be vital to ensure that the work done to date is not lost. Mount Roland Rivercare Catchment Inc will also continue to look for funding to continue the weed control programme in this area.

Dodder Rivulet Project

Funded through the Cradle Coast NRM *Natural Landscapes Program*, the project aimed to rehabilitate the stretch of river which runs through Sheffield and joins into the Dasher River. The initial phase of the project focused on a River Field Day held in May 2015 (the video of this can be viewed via the MRRCI web site at www.rivercare.org.au).

The second phase of the project was implemented during this financial year for the



associated on ground works which were planned to improve the river eco-system along the Dodder Rivulet. Most of this work occurred on the property at the junction of Formby and Main Streets, where fencing and stock troughs were installed as well as 3 rock fords. The purpose of this was to reduce the impact on riverbanks from stock accessing or crossing the river.

In addition to the infrastructure works, a range of native species have been planted in the riparian zone on a number of properties in the catchment as well as weed mapping and some strategic weed control work (mainly of Hawthorn and Willow).



Rock ford across the Dodder – constructed to provide a harder surface for horses to cross the river and reduce the impact on riverbanks and the riverbed from their hooves.

Working bee with Cradle Coast NRM staff assistance to plant trees



Some of the willows that were controlled. Waders were required for some of the more inconveniently located willows.



Section of roadside verge adjacent to the river on Paradise Road. This was covered with weed gunnel and planted out with native sedges to reduce the need for weed spraying as part of road maintenance, therefore reducing chemicals entering the watercourse.

Re-vegetation plantings

As part of the Dodder Rivulet project, 1000 plants were purchased and planted on a number of properties in the Dodder catchment, along Formby Street, Johnson Street, Paradise Road as well as at the Mens Shed/railway site and the Waste Transfer Station.

Species planted included:

<i>Nothofagus cunninghamii</i>	<i>Eucalyptus obliqua</i>
<i>Atherosperma moschatum</i>	<i>Grevillea australis</i>
<i>Anopterus glandulosus</i>	<i>Hakea decurrens</i>
<i>Notelaea ligustrina</i>	<i>Hakea epiglottis</i>
<i>Acacia Melanoxylon</i>	<i>Hibertia riparia</i>
<i>Acacia riceana</i>	<i>Leptospermum scoparium</i>
<i>Acacia mucronata</i>	<i>Leptospermum lanigerum</i>
<i>Acacia dealbata</i>	<i>Melaleuca ericifolia</i>
<i>Banksia marginata</i>	<i>Melaleuca squarrosa</i>
<i>Bursaria spinosa</i>	<i>Olearia phlogopappa</i>
<i>Callistemon pallidus</i>	<i>Lomandra longifolia</i>
<i>Eucalyptus viminalis</i>	<i>Carex appressa</i>
<i>Eucalyptus ovata</i>	

Minnow Catchment Plan

As a result of significant survey work done in the Minnow catchment by Barbara Alsop, as well as reports being received of river damage resulting from off-road vehicles use, the committee determined that a catchment plan would help to guide decision making by the committee and other stakeholders.

Expressions of interest were sought from suitably qualified professional consultants and after a rigorous assessment, the consultant Peter Stronach was engaged to prepare a catchment plan of the Minnow River and tributaries.

With a wide variety of land uses in the catchment, including forestry, agriculture, tourism, rural residential and native reserves, the catchment plan would be the first step in progressing natural resource management issues with a multitude of stakeholders.

Work on the plan commenced a few days before the June flood.

June 2016 Flood

Impacts in the catchment

With unprecedented levels of flooding in the catchment in June, many landowners have been affected - with fences washed away, fallen trees, bridges lost and tonnes of rock and shale deposited over pastures.



Flood levels on the Dasher River - June 5th

The toll on rivers and land seems to have been the greatest on hard infrastructure such as roads, bridges (particularly the log and gravel bridges), as well as riverbanks that had little vegetation. There have been many examples seen of severe bank erosion on one side of a river with grass paddocks, but no damage to the other bank which was lined with ferns, reedy plants or native bush. Flood plains generally suffered damage from the deposited rock and debris from upstream erosions.

The instream structures that had been put in place 15 years ago through Natural Heritage Trust funding and which had previously withstood the 2011 floods, in some cases have been affected. The Telstra riffle on the Dasher River and the one downstream of it appear to have been the most affected.

Some of the longer term impacts in the river catchment will be from weed spread such as Willows being spread downstream and carried much further by flood waters. Hawthorn was in berry at the time and is also very likely to spread further in the catchment. There will no doubt be others.

Flood recovery work

MRRCI's first response was to help connect landowners affected by the floods with potential sources of assistance. This included organizing a meeting of landowners in the catchment as well as providing information about government Emergency Flood assistance programmes, Blaze Aid, and others.

MRRCI committee members also started a process of assessment of the damage to instream structures and the river eco-systems more generally. Work continues on this assessment and in looking for ways to effect repairs.

Administration Report

Membership

Membership in 2015/16 increased from 35 to 41 members.

The membership fee for Mt Roland Rivercare Catchment Inc is still the same modest fee that was set 16 years ago i.e. \$5 plus GST. Membership categories are:

- Individual member (\$5.50);
- Family member (\$2.20);
- Institutional member (\$11.00);
- Associate member (\$2.20); and
- Life member (no cost) – awarded to a long-standing member who has contributed significantly to the work of MRRCI.

To date, life membership has been awarded to George Kelly; Christine Fraser; David Fraser; Richard Sands and Arthur Ford.

Kentish Council Partnership Agreement

The previous 5 year partnership agreement with Kentish Council expired July 2015.

A submission was made to a Council forum in February 2016 to illustrate the work that MRRCI does, as well as to highlight the benefits that this collaborative arrangement delivers for Council, MRRCI and the natural resources of Kentish. Further work was done between Council staff and MRRCI committee members to review and revise the specific details of the partnership agreement.

Subsequently a further 5 year partnership agreement was agreed and signed for the period Sept 2015 to Sept 2020.

MRRCI Strategic Plan 2016-20

After 16 years of operation, it was deemed appropriate to review the strategic direction of MRRCI and make sure that it was still aligned with community aspirations and current environmental needs.

Considerable work has been undertaken by the committee over the year to review and revise MRRCI's strategic documents. This commenced with a strategic planning workshop in October 2015, where committee members workshopped ideas and strategies for the long term. The objectives of MRRCI were reviewed, as well as the administration of the group, its activities, the scope of its work and the catchment that it covers.

Further work was then done by the committee to take the output from the workshop and turn it into a document to guide the future activities of the group. The end result being the Mt Roland Rivercare Catchment Inc Strategic Plan 2016-2021.

MRRCI Constitution

A review of MRRCI's constitution has also been completed this year, to ensure it met the needs of the group in light of the revised Strategic Plan. This included some changes to the wording of the Objects of the Association to make it more inclusive of all land care and with a slightly expanded scope, i.e.:

- a) To be a focus for river/land care and natural resource management in the Mount Roland Rivercare catchment area as defined in Annexure A; [i.e. the Mt Roland catchment map]
- b) To contribute to natural resource management at a local, regional and state level.

Revisions were also made to reflect current operational needs, such as the handling of electronic payments.

These changes are subject to approval by MRRCI members at the Annual General Meeting.

Grants and funding

Administration Funding

Landcare Assistance Program from Landcare Tasmania contributed \$440 for 2016.

Kentish Council

MRRCI received \$6,600 from Kentish Council under the partnership agreement as a contribution towards a range of natural resource management activities.

These funds have assisted MRRCI with a number of projects, including the weeding project being undertaken in the catchment, grant writing and acquittals, strategic plan development and consultancy for the development of the Minnow Catchment Plan.

Cradle Coast NRM

The final payment of \$9,438 was received for the Dodder Rivulet project under the *Natural Landscapes Program*. This project was commenced in the previous financial year and completed and acquitted during this financial year.

Landcare Tasmania

A submission to the Tasmanian Landcare Fund (Round 19) was successful and \$8,343.50 was received for the project "*Continuing protection of Mount Roland and Cradle Mountain from weed incursions*".

Future Projects

Flood recovery work

MRRCI will continue with assessment of the damage to rivers and the surrounding catchment and look for ways to continue to remediate eroded areas.

Telstra riffle – MRRCI will continue to lobby all relevant stakeholders and government agencies with the aim of re-instating this riffle and stabilising the banks, particularly around the Claude Road bridge.

MRRCI is in the process of coordinating some remediation work for small scale landowners/hobby farmers. Through a collaboration with Cradle Coast NRM and Conservation Volunteers Australia, a team of volunteers will be able to help with clean up tasks, fencing, tree planting, etc.

River Interpretation site

The planned picnic site on Bridle Track Road is still planned to go ahead, but the major flood event has given cause to revise the location of where any infrastructure might be placed.

Strategic and NRM plans

With the development of the revised Strategic Plan for 2016-2021, further work will be done to outline a more detailed Action Plan for each strategic area of interest. This may include items such as:

- a name change for the group (e.g. Mount Roland Land and Rivercare);
- Minnow Catchment Action Plan – prioritise and progress recommendations;
- working with Council on an NRM plan for Kentish;
- progression of declared weed status for Kunzea Ericoides;
- maintenance of previous works e.g. weeds projects;
- and others...