



NATURAL STATE

Conservation : Education : Revegetation

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Welcome to the 5th edition of the Natural State Newsletter ' Spring / Summer-06/07 '

This is our quarterly newsletter aimed at anyone interested in revegetation and nature in general.

Natural State is a private revegetation business started in 2002. We offer a range of services in the SA Murray Darling Basin, Adelaide Hills/Plains, Fleurieu Peninsula and the South East of SA. We don't just talk about it, we actually make things happen on ground!

This newsletter is intended for screen viewing, with links for email and web addresses, helping to reduce paper use.

Nursery is now open by appointment only

Since the start of December we have decided to close the nursery to the public and open only by appointment.

This will continue into the new year until late Autumn when hopefully we get some rain.

If you would like to see what stock we have, check out the website stocklist which is updated monthly. We can then make time to give advise and pack your order for pick up or delivery. Email is the preferred option or else call the office number.

The increased costs of fuel, water restrictions, nursery staff wages and the lack of demand for plants due to the drought have all taken their toll.

We apologise for any inconvenience this has or may cause.

Check out the online stocklist link on the homepage.



Above: *Dampiera linearis* - Common Dampiera at the Royal Botanic gardens Cranbourne, Victoria.



We are all going on a Summer Holiday

Between December 23rd and February 5th we will be having a hard earned break.

This will be the longest break for Matt since starting in June 2002 and is long overdue for all the staff.

The work fax, answering machine and emails will be checked once a fortnight through out this period.

We apologise for any inconveniences this may cause.

We look forward to coming back with a whole new wave of energy eager to take on future projects and challenges.

Happy New Year everyone - Cheers !

Left: Matt and Karina at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Cranbourne near Melbourne.



Left: Joanna the Goanna the latest addition to the Natural State animals

Eco Roadshow

In early October the Eco Roadshow hit the towns of Berri and Goolwa with turnouts of around 65 people over 2 days.

The sessions were following on from the original workshops called the Enviro Holiday Care held earlier in April.

This trial program educated over 200 people during 5 half day sessions this year.

Such issues as Aboriginal culture and basket weaving, Local native plants and animals, Local bushtucker, Sustainable Recreation practices and Waterwatch were on offer.

With more advertising and funding from the SA MDB NRM Board this project has the potential to be one of the best hands on programs available to school kids along the Murray River during the school holidays.



Above: Daniel and David hard at it after collecting sedges for weaving

Native Animal Profile

Recently we acquired another native animal to use in our education sessions, Joanna the sand goanna.

She is around 65cm long and was previously owned by Warrawong Sanctuary in the Adelaide Hills. She was a regular with their education sessions and is used to being handled.

We hope that next year she gets to meet lots of people sharing the plight of her species with the wider community.

Already she is a hit with the current staff, friends and family.



Above: David Vanderbyl shows a Marbled Gecko to a captive audience

Recent staff changes

Over the past few months there have been some changes to the staff at Natural State.

In September Kevin Baxter from Tailem Bend started part time. In late August Daniel Brown went back to being a full time mechanic in Murray Bridge. In November Kate Mason concentrated on finishing her Diploma in Conservation and Land Management.

We welcome Kevin and wish Daniel & Kate all the best for the future and thank them for their contribution to the business.

With the current water restrictions and the dry conditions we will be scaling down nursery operations over this growing season.

The drought has already begun to take effect on the business with around \$35,000 worth of work cancelled until we get a better season!

Fire almost causes \$30,000 damage to plant stock

On the day after Matt and Karinas wedding, 17th September, there was a fire at the Tailem Bend nursery site.

The fire started when a windy day blew embers from the football club which had not extinguished a fire properly. It quickly spread into the nursery site's native grassland towards the depot and nursery.

Two Tailem Bend CFS units were successful in putting out the fires before it caused major damage to stock and buildings.

This photo was taken in the retail nursery 30m away from the fire front.

Be careful in the new year as this season is looking like being the worst ever for bushfires across southern Australia, since settlement.



Above: Tailem Bend CFS crews putting out the last of the fire

Bushcare work on the Bremer River

During late October and December we were involved in Boxthorn and Prickly Pear control along the Bremer River around Callington.

The river has been neglected in town for many years but the Bremer Rehabilitation Group are doing their best to change things for the better.

This is the first step towards revegetation of selected areas to create habitat and restore the river to its former glory.

It's great to see a group actively sourcing funding to make a positive and practical difference to their area. Thank you to the Goolwa - Wellington LAP for funding such a project.



Above: Spraying Boxthorn bushes along the Bremer River

Snake Catching season hot's up

Since September we have had around 30 calls for snakes in people's backyards and in buildings.

It is not always possible to come away with a snake for the customers. Snakes are amazing at hiding and escaping until they feel safe again.

Most customers pay for reassurance and to have the site inspected for snakes. We provide hand outs which go into their behaviour, first aid and how to minimise them being around your dwelling. We can also offer a more detailed report on request.

Currently we have a minimum call out fee of \$110 during the week, depending on what is expected and how long it takes it can cost more. For weekend callouts the rate is \$220.



Above: Snake catching on the Princes Hwy near Meningie



Above: Willow control by excavation at Murranghen in 2004

'56 Flood Commemoration

Between October 25th and 26th workshops were held at Sturts Reserve in Murray Bridge to commemorate the 1956 River Murray floods.

The workshops were aimed at primary and secondary schools from the Murraylands districts.

Over 1000 students attended the two days. We presented Aboriginal culture and Native Animals sessions.

Our role was more as mentors for the River Murray Youth Council participants who helped our sessions.

The project was a great idea and as usual Kathryn Rothe and her gang from the Mannum-Wellington LAP did a wonderful job in making it happen.

Willow control and revegetation at Murranghen

The Karpinyeri Incorporated group from the traditional burial ground property near East Wellington was successful in their Envirofund funding bid.

The site known as Murranghen covers 76 acres or 31 Hectares of both highland and River Murray frontage.

Over the past 5 years around 15 hectares of land has been revegetated. In recent years around 250m of willows were excavated along the river's edge.

The current project will concentrate on drilling / filling the remaining willows and planting red gums on the previously cleared floodplain.

Living in a caravan at this site in 2002, Matt started the business Natural State.



Above: Alex Emmins the River Murray Youth Council chair, helping Matt

Did you know?

Since settlement in Australia 359 indigenous species of mammals have been recorded. These include : kangaroos, bandicoots, dunnarts, possums, wombats, bats, rodents, seals, whales and dolphins.

Many of these animals are at risk of localised extinctions. Like most extinctions the main threats are habitat loss, predation or hunting, disease, bushfires and lack of genetic diversity.

All of the above threats are having an impact on our native mammals today.

You can do your bit to help the remaining species survive and flourish by : learning to appreciate and co exist with them, keeping them as pets, supporting the zoos and private conservation groups breeding and reintroducing native animals. The easiest way to help is by conserving and providing their natural habitat.



Above: A Koala - *Phascolarctos cinereus* in suburban Belair.

The wedding of Matt & Karina Rose

On the 16th of September Matt and Karina were married at the Swanport Sailing Club in Murray Bridge.

The day went off perfectly with great weather and great company with around 80 friends and family enjoying the event.

Guests came from as far afield as the USA, Canada, the Philippines, Malaysia, England, Ireland, Tasmania and NSW.

Karina was originally a born and bred Sydney girl. She currently works as the Sustainable Recreation project officer for the Murray River in SA.

The newly weds went to Cairns and Port Douglas for the honeymoon to experience the amazing Daintree Rainforest and Great Barrier Reef World Heritage areas.

Left: Matt and Karina Rose.



Above: Eucalyptus leucoxylon red flowering form close up

The Big'un file

This edition's big'un is a:

Coastal Banksia - *Banksia integrifolia*.

These trees grow naturally in Victoria, Tasmania and NSW.

This specimen is well over 20m tall and was growing right on the beach dunes near Frankston, Victoria.

They have yellow flowers in Winter / Spring and set seed during Autumn.

The flower cones need fire to open the capsules which allow the seed to float out and for germination to occur.

The timber is great for turning.

Plant profile - SA Blue Gum

The South Australian Blue Gum or *Eucalyptus leucoxylon* is a widespread tree in the wetter parts of South Australia.

The species has 4 separate sub species growing naturally in SA. They are :

E. leucoxylon ssp. *leucoxylon* - *E. leucoxylon* ssp. *pruinosa*
E. leucoxylon ssp. *megalocarpa* - *E. leucoxylon* ssp. *stephanie*

Other popular landscaping species include :

E. leucoxylon "Rosea"
E. leucoxylon "Eucy Dwarf"

This species is a reasonably quick grower, adapting to most soils having either cream or red, bird attracting flowers.



Above: Coastal Banksia growing in the dunes 50m from the Southern Ocean



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Well there is no doubt that the current drought conditions we are experiencing are just the start of things to come. The real impact won't be noticed by the general public until the middle of next year, especially if we don't get a decent season next winter.

The main positive to be taken out of this drought is that the cost of doing nothing is now impacting on Australia's economy. The reality is, this is what it will take for politicians to get serious about global warming - economic loss. Already global warming is starting to take centre stage with the 2 major political parties. The most crucial first step is to sign the Kyoto agreement and to invest in Carbon emissions trading and sequestration works asap.

It's now time we all took a stand and made our future on this planet environmentally sustainable.

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How to get to our nursery

