



News letter of the
Friends Of Whyalla Conservation Park
PO Box 805 WHYALLA SA 5600
Web: www.fwcp.org
Volunteers Working For Conservation

The Myall Post



July 2005



President's Message

Did you hear the word environment mentioned in the Treasurer's 2005 State Budget speech? I am not surprised if you missed it. You needed to do some digging in the budget papers to find a listing of environmental initiatives. New spending over the next four years includes:

- \$6.2 million for sand management along the metropolitan Adelaide beach system;
- \$4 million for a sterilisation and relocation strategy of koalas on Kangaroo Island;
- \$2.7 million to establish the Australian Energy Market Commission
- \$2.4 million salt interception schemes to reduce salt loads from natural groundwater inflow, mallee clearing and irrigation from reaching the floodplain and the River Murray;
- \$1.8 million in 2005-06 toward a number of projects along the River Murray
- \$1.4 million to expand support to the Natural Resources Management Boards.
- A further \$1 million in addition to the \$6 million allocated during 2004-05, to buy back commercial marine scale fish net licences.

Much of that money is being used to treat symptoms of environmental damage rather than treating the causes of that damage. I accept that the damage done on Adelaide's

beaches is so comprehensive, that other than buying back all development in the immediate coastal zone, sand management is the only alternative. However a rise in sea level will negate any sand management that humans can do.

Spending money on sterilizing Koalas will still allow the population to increase because the number being sterilized will be more than offset by breeding of the remaining koalas. ie the damage will increase.

So far as the salt in the River Murray is concerned, a major cause is rising water tables due to over clearing of the mallee regions. Lowering the water table by replanting significant areas of the mallee will take about 5 years before it begin to show an effect (based in WA experience). However the effect is a permanent solution to the problem. It has the added bonus of creating wildlife habitat, reducing wind erosion and absorbing CO2.

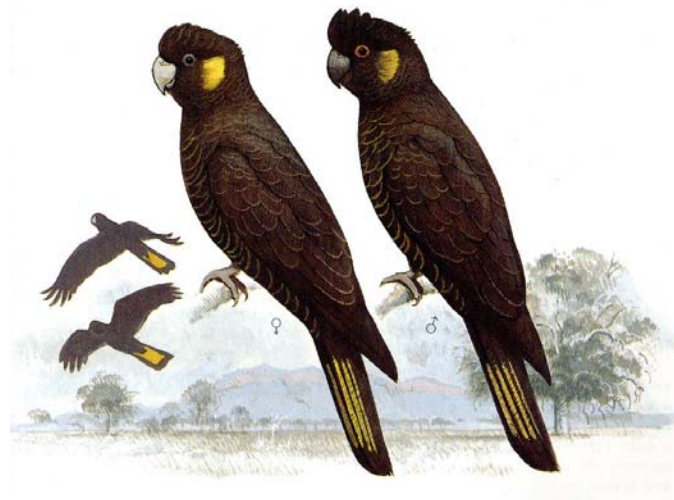
The budget graph (page 3) shows clearly the amount of emphasis that the environment received in the 2005 South Australia State Budget. Isn't it sad that our leaders have still not understood that protecting the environment provides long term economic benefits to the state?

Clint Garrett



Here's a photo that Clint took of some Native Apricot trees that were planted near the western side of Wild Dog Hill in approx 1993 as part of a revegetation project - aren't they doing well!

Important Dates



The only date left for the 2004/05 year is the AGM!

**Saturday 23rd July
5:00pm
Eyre High School Library**

The guest speaker will be Sarah Way who is the DEH Threatened Species Officer for Eyre Peninsula. Sarah will be speaking about threatened species on EP, including the Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo.

A BBQ and some drinks and desert will be provided, however attendees should bring a salad to share.

If you have some spare time, please think about joining the committee - the Treasurer and Minute Secretary positions need filling. No one will be co-opted or coerced into roles, so don't be afraid of landing a job if you don't want one, but if you are interested, it would be greatly appreciated!

Park Roster

The following individuals or families have volunteered to empty the bins, check the toilet, and check the Park on the weekends beginning Friday:

July 22nd - Sharp / Poyner / Smith

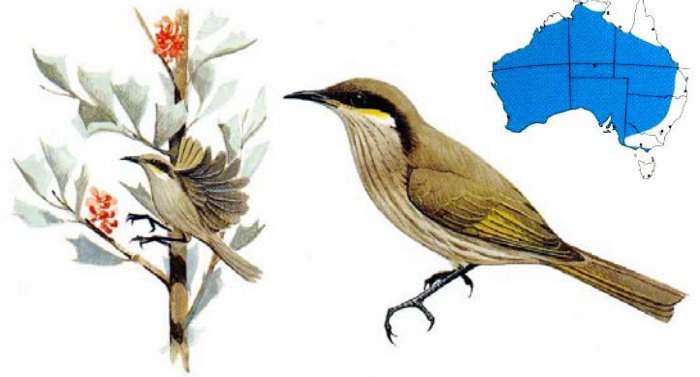
July 29th - Nields

Please remember to wear clothing which will identify you as a Friends member and NPWS volunteer if at all possible. **Don't forget to look out for syringes!**

Remember, if you are not a financial member, you are not insured and you should not be on this roster!

If you would like to volunteer for the roster, please call Denise Sharp on 8645-4442

Bird Of The Month



Field Guide to the Birds of Australia

Singing Honeyeater

The Singing Honeyeater is the smallest of the three common honeyeaters in Whyalla, and along with the other two, the Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater and the Red Wattlebird, among the ten bird species most common here year round. It is not found in Tasmania but is widespread across the continent west of the Great Dividing Range. Habitat preference is open scrubby shrubberies.

It is a basically grey-brown bird washed with olive-yellow-green especially on the wings and tail. Underparts are lighter and streaked. A noticeable black band runs from the bill through the eye to side of the neck, and a yellow streak runs below it.

Although their primary food is nectar, they also feed on a wide range of insects and fruit. Most gardens in Whyalla would be visited by this species provided some suitable trees and /or shrubs are present. They tend to stay in small groups of two to six birds.

While foraging they have a distinctive scratchy little call. Occasionally they will break into a pleasant song, but there are many much better songsters amongst our birds. Normal breeding is from late winter into summer. They place an untidy cup of grass and spider web in the middle of a thick shrub. The two or three pinkish eggs hatch in two weeks with a further two weeks to fledging.

Ella Smith

2005 Friend's Forum

The 21st Friends of Parks Forum will be held in Victor Harbor from August 26th to 28th.

If you are interested in attending and meeting members of other Friends groups, listening to interesting presentations and seeing some projects of interest in the area, then contact Denise who can forward a copy of the registration papers to you.

Meeting Report

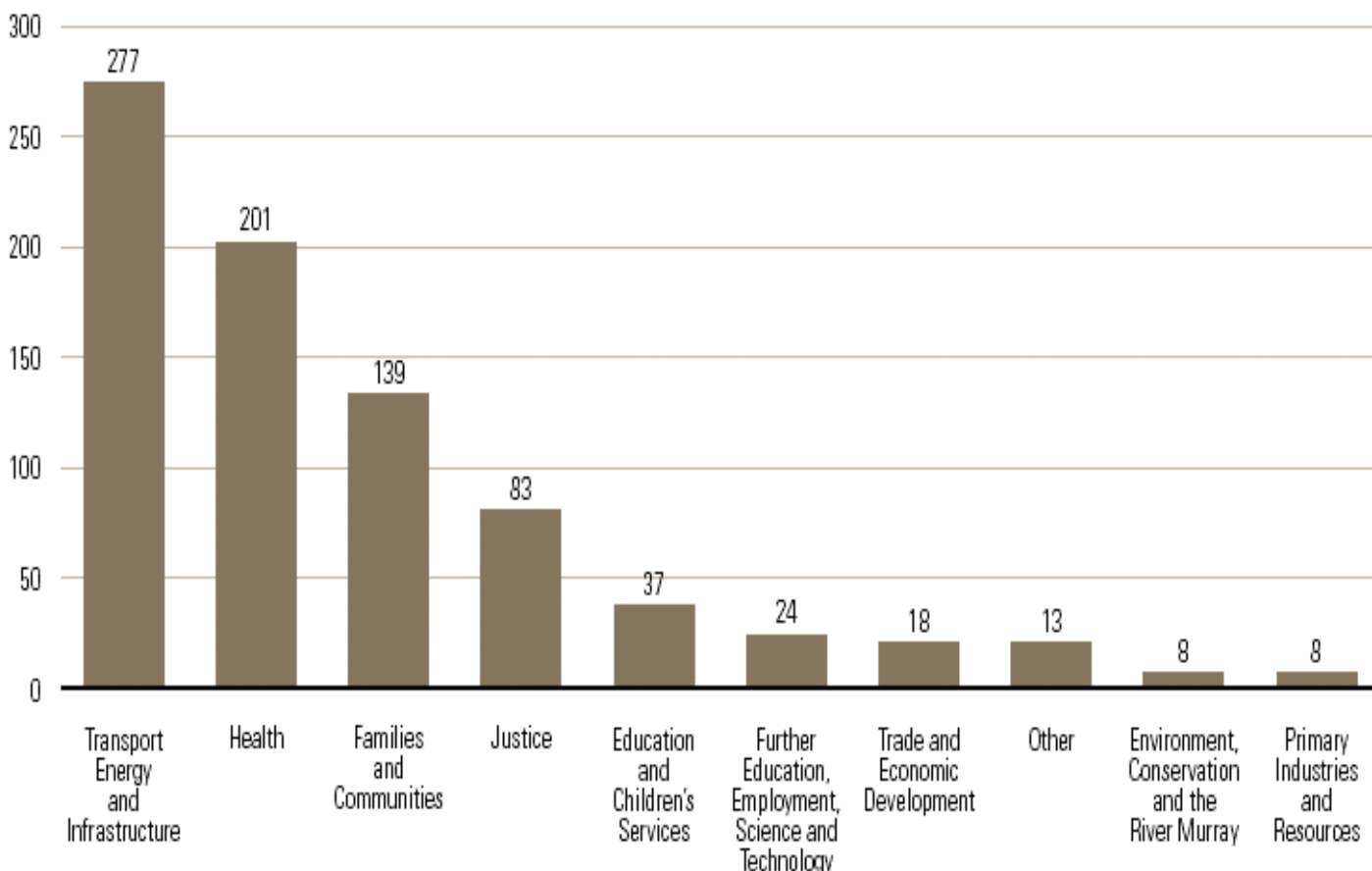
At the committee meeting of June 23rd, the following items were discussed:

- Clint showed Peter Langdon the fencing contractor the eastern boundary fence of the new section of Park during the June 18th working bee. Much of this fence is in good order and the wire simply needs standing up and tying to the droppers as the previous tie wires have rusted away. Clint to get quote from Buttlingara for clearing away the vegetation next to the fence by hand so that the wire can be picked up. Some new fence will be required to be constructed.
- The six members at the June 18th working bee commented on the usefulness of the "picker-upperers" loaned from Council. The committee resolved to purchase \$200 worth of these for use in picking up litter.
- Arrangements were made for the AGM in July. Joan indicated that she would prefer not to continue as Minute Secretary and Lance indicated that he would not continue as Treasurer. Both Joan and Lance have made a positive contribution and put in a great effort for the group during their terms. A big thank you to both of you!
- Now that the weather has turned cooler, the scouts that have been marking rabbit warrens and weeds will be out in the Park again over the coming months.



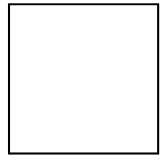
Here's a picture of Pam Charlesworth watering in a plant during the same working bee that the Native Apricots on the front page were planted.

New net spending by portfolio (\$ million over four years) *Refer President's Message, page 1*





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Book Review

Joan Nield forwarded on an email that contained a review of a book that members might find interesting.

'Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Survive'
by **Jared Diamond**
Allen Lane 608pp, \$32.95

Jared Diamond is one of America's most remarkable scholars – a professor of physiology equally celebrated for his contributions to ecology and evolutionary biology. He has twice won the Rhone-Poulenc Science Book Prize for his books 'Rise and Fall of the Third Chimpanzee' and 'Guns, Germs and Steel'.

In 'Collapse', his most recent book, he brings the full force of his impressive intellect to the non-sustainable course of our world society. He states that "Because we are rapidly advancing along this non-sustainable course, the world's environmental problems will get resolved, in one way or another, within the lifetimes of the children and young adults alive today. The only question is whether they will be resolved in pleasant ways of our own choice, or in unpleasant ways not of our choice, such as warfare, genocide, starvation, disease epidemics and collapses of societies".

The 'big-picture' understanding of the sustainability issue and its urgency is invaluable. He examines the collapses of a number of past societies, as seemingly divergent as Norse Greenland, Easter Island, the Maya in South America and the Anasazi Indians of North America; and of present societies, Rwanda and Haiti.

He identifies 5 common contributory factors present in each of the collapses:

- Whether use of the environment was sustainable over time.
- The ability to accommodate to natural climate change.

- The impact of hostile neighbours, causing critical resources to be diverted into warring rather than farming.
- Critical dependency on friendly trade partners, causing collapse if these other cultures are unable to provide important natural resources. .
- The society's capacity to learn and adjust to changing circumstances.

At the heart of each of his stories are cultures that destroyed the ground on which they stood, sometimes literally. Case by case, Diamond shows how population growth and the desires of affluence, deforestation, habitat destruction and over-exploitation of natural resources, together led to erosion and the loss of critical resources for food, shelter and defence, which led to increased hardship, and ultimately catastrophic decline. Or how a failure to learn and adjust to changing circumstances led to unnecessary tragedy, with communities driven to extinction by their inability to adapt.

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