

# CCSA Briefs



## State Transport Plan



### Inside:

- Dredging of Eight Mile Creek
- Cool Communities
- River Murray Public Meeting
- Sustainability
- Murray Action Group
- Nathan Dam Court Win
- Species Recovery Project

**Deadline for  
September Briefs:  
September 13**



In 2003 the State Government released the Draft State Transport Plan. An aim of the Plan was to shift travel from private cars to walking, cycling and public transport. This is a cornerstone of environmentally sustainable transport, and CCSA was encouraged by this outcome, although the Plan was criticized for its lack of specificity.

The Draft Plan also stated that road funding would focus on safety and maintaining existing roads, and future road growth would be limited. This is vital, as building further roads would counter efforts to encourage people to use sustainable transport.

It is more than a year later and the final Plan has yet to be released. The new Minister for Transport and Planning, Trish White, has announced

that the Plan will be combined with the Planning Strategies.

While the principle of integrating transport and planning is excellent, there is a concern that much of the good material in the Draft Plan will be lost.

In fact, the 2004-05 State Budget contains specific commitments for over \$100M of road projects (over 4 years), but the public transport budget has not increased enough to enable major growth. This is confusing given that the State Strategic Plan requires an average of 4% annual growth in public transport patronage.

Furthermore, reducing car use will be essential to cutting greenhouse gas and our ecological footprint, targets in the State Strategic Plan (SSP).



More walking and cycling also increases participation in physical exercise and reduces obesity, also SSP targets.

Action: Email Minister Trish White at [taylor@parliament.sa.gov.au](mailto:taylor@parliament.sa.gov.au) and ask for a commitment to the original progressive aims of the Plan. Ask when the comprehensive plan will be released

## Hindmarsh Island Bridge Court Case

After six long years the defamation case by the Chapman developers against the CCSA has finally ended. The case reached the Supreme Court and, although unsuccessful in a recent application for leave for appeal to the High Court, there were many positive outcomes.

Most notable, of course, is that CCSA has survived and continues its work enhancing and protecting SA's environment. 17 out of the 18 claims made against CCSA were defeated, the Judges finding CCSA is not liable for these arti-

cles/statements. The case also set important legal precedents in the area of defamation. In the future these precedents could assist community groups to present stronger defences when fighting defamation claims.

How useful these precedents are will also depend on whether the Federal Government implements its proposed national uniform defamation laws.

The proposed new uniform legislation will mean big changes, particularly for states like South Australia that

currently rely on case law rather than legislation. The national system would be based largely on the current NSW Defamation Act 1974, an Act that contains significant differences to South Australian defamation law.

These differences have sparked concern amongst some South Australian lawyers. They are concerned that the change to new defences and legal tests may mean more uncertainty for them.

Our court system may also be faced with the long delays experienced in the NSW legal

system, which in turn results in increased legal costs. There is also the possibility that the Federal Government may proceed with the new legislation without State agreement.

Although the CCSA court case has finished, we are involved in a submission on the proposed national laws and watch this area with interest.

CCSA would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who helped with the case. Without you we wouldn't have been able to achieve our successes.

## Board Member Profile

This month's Briefs profiles Leanne Liddle.

Leanne is currently the Secretary of the CCSA and also holds the position of National Parks & Wildlife Aboriginal Programs Co-ordinator, Department for Environment & Heritage.

Prior to this, Leanne was a Senior Project Officer with the Aboriginal Lands Trust and a Senior Constable in the South Australian Police Force.

Leanne graduated with a Bachelor of Science from the University of South Australia in 1999.

Having recently completed her Bachelor of Laws & Legal Practice at Flinders University, Leanne is planning to be admitted into practice in December this year.

With strong interests in environmental and social justice, human rights and equal opportunity issues, Leanne is also a member of the Association of the United Nations of Australia.

Her career achievements include being short listed for the United Nations Indigenous Fellowship Program 2003 and commendations for efficient and effective service within the Police Force and Service to North West Pitjantjatjara Lands & Community.

Leanne's work at National Parks & Wildlife focuses strongly on the benefits of cooperative management arrangements in parks and is built on a strong commitment to building constructive partnerships with indigenous people.

## Dredging of Eight Mile Creek

Eight Mile Creek in the South East is a critical part of the greater Ewens Ponds system. About 40-50 years ago drains were run into Eight Mile Creek in order to lower the water table, so the surrounding wetlands could be converted to dairy pasture.

In order to maintain the drainage system our predecessors started the practice of dredging Eight Mile Creek as the removal of the waterweed causes the water to flow faster.

The South-Eastern Water Conservation & Drainage Board, with approval from the Government, still continues the practice of dredging the creek. This is despite the creek being the most significant freshwater creek in the South-East, due to its biodiversity and beauty.

## Cool Communities Campaign

Over the past three years you may have seen people walking around the CCSA with showerheads, light bulbs and hot water pipe lagging. No, they weren't preparing for the CCSA renovations, rather the materials were being used to build a culture of greenhouse action in SA via the community engagement program, Cool Communities.

Funded by the Australian Government and delivered in partnership by the CCSA, Cool Communities has worked to foster behaviour change relating to household greenhouse gas production. The way this was achieved was through engagement with households, increasing awareness and building mo-

tion and capacity. Cool Communities has worked with a wide variety of South Australian communities, conducted over 400 home energy audits and installed over 1,500 energy efficient lighting globes, 511 AAA shower heads and 58 solar hot water systems. It has also provided input into the National Energy Efficiency Framework and held many public presentations and forums.

In fact, many of the fish that live in Eight Mile Creek, including the Ewens Pygmy Perch, the Yarra Pygmy Perch, the Galaxias and the Australian Grayling, are listed as 'vulnerable' nationally. There is also damage caused to the native aquatic vegetation from the dredging, as well as the damage caused by the in-flow of nutrients and/or salt.

It should be possible to drain the adjacent land through means that do not interfere with this natural environment. The South-Eastern Water Conservation & Drainage Board should receive every encouragement in finding alternative drainage. The Government must realise this practice is no longer acceptable.

For more information see [www.ccsa.asn.au](http://www.ccsa.asn.au)

At the end of this month Phase 1 of Cool Communities will close, however we're looking to fund Phase 2. The feedback, capacity building, and passion with which communities embraced the program will ensure that its legacy lives on.

## Species Recovery Project

The Murray Darling Basin contains 22 plant species and nine bird species listed under the EPBC Act 1999. A range of processes, including fragmentation, grazing by introduced and native herbivores, altered fire regimes and invasion by weeds, further threatens these species.

Through funding provided by the Murray Darling Basin Integrated Natural Resource Management Group, and the services of EBS Consulting, the SA Dept for Environment is conducting a multi-species recovery planning project for nine floral species and four bird species in the region.

The team has identified nine species which are the focus of the project, five of which are priority species. A combination of collating existing information, and field-based surveys, will identify areas where each species can be found today. New populations will be searched for and existing populations surveyed to identify the current status and threats to these populations.

The challenge ahead is to build on this existing information and implement actions to secure all of the populations of the unique flora and fauna across the Murray Darling Basin.

For more information contact Karina Mercer, Threatened Species Network Coordinator on 8223 5155.



Phebalium lowanense by T. Croft

## River Murray Meeting



Senators Bob Brown, Grant Chapman & Penny Wong attending CCSA public forum

A crowd of over 500 people at the recent River Murray Public Meeting sent a very clear message to Canberra – at the next election, South Australians have little choice but to vote for whatever political party is committed to restoring the Murray to health.

The panel of experts addressing the meeting were adamant that returning at least 1,500 gegalitres of annual flow is the bare minimum to have any chance of saving the River. For a city like Adelaide, reliant on the Murray for up to 80% of its water supply, this issue could not be more serious.

A panel (including Dr Bob Brown, Penny Wong, Grant Chapman, John McLaren and Gary Sauer-Thompson) put forward their party policies:

**Democrats** – Return 1,500 billion litres and hold a referendum to put the Murray under Federal control.

**Greens** – Return 3,000 billion litres, the first 1,500 billion litres over 5 years.

**Coalition** – Return 500 billion litres over 5 years as a 'first step', Commonwealth funding: \$200M.

**ALP** – Return 1,500 billion litres over 10 years, Commonwealth funding: \$200M 'first step' plus extra \$150M.

A commitment to a healthy River Murray is something we owe both present and future generations. See [www.ccsa.asn.au](http://www.ccsa.asn.au) for more

## Sustainability—Wins Across SA

Sustainability is much more than a key environmental theme, it's essential for South Australia's viability. The 'A Just and Sustainable SA' conference report will be released soon and it documents the primary recommendations from our conference on sustainability held in April. This focuses on what sustainability can deliver, not just environmentally, but economically and socially.

One prominent issue from the conference was that of ecological footprinting. This is a process that helps to identify more cost-effective, less resource intensive, but innovative options for living, through the analysis of lifestyle, business and development choices.

When applied to infrastructure proposals, ecological footprinting can help identify the least cost (in economic as well as environmental terms) infrastructure development options and thus help decision making (particularly spending) in areas which benefit both the economy and the environment.

Infrastructure that costs less allows the savings to be directed into other areas, thus decreasing the cost of doing business in SA.

### Murray Action Group

The CCSA and the Australian Conservation Foundation have established a Murray Action Group which meets Monday evenings at 6pm for food and 6.30pm for business. There are many actions you can take including writing to papers, ringing talkback radio, lobbying politicians and distributing information. The group will also be painting banners, placards and making big puppets, perhaps in the shape of fish!

On 29 August the group has also been given permission to leaflet the crowds at the Showdown footy match and at final(s)

Applying the ecological footprint helps develop a competitive edge for South Australian exports. This is particularly true as overseas governments develop and implement environmental standards for imported products (eg carbon levy to reduce greenhouse gas production).

The ecological footprint also aids transport development. It clearly details the advantages of developments which reduce private car use and promote alternative forms of transport such as bus, train, cycling and walking. Adelaide already has excess road capacity (measured against our gross state product). Footprinting would help us develop the most cost effective transport choices.

Ecological footprinting promotes alternatives and innovation. It can help lead to direct investment in alternative 'new' technology such as renewable energy (eg sliver cells). And the list goes on.

At its heart sustainability can help to recreate our society, something everyone's environmental vision has been contributing to for years.

Simon Divecha, CEO

in Adelaide in September. We need any help you can offer, at the match or elsewhere.

There is a big challenge to get this vital issue onto the Federal election agenda. It is important that our community, which is most affected by the Murray's declining health, stands up for its river. Existing Government commitments go only one third of the way to restoring it to health.

The next meeting will be held at 120 Wakefield St. For more information contact Ian Lillington on 8232 0736 or Peter Owen on 8223 5155.

## Nathan Dam Court Win

A recent win in the Full Federal Court by the Queensland Conservation Council and World Wildlife Fund has confirmed the major expansion of Federal environmental powers.

The Nathan Dam was proposed for the Dawson River which flows into the Fitzroy River which in turn flows into the Great Barrier Reef.

If approval had been granted, the dam would have provided water for irrigation of 30,000 hectares of cropping land (mainly cotton) and become the fourth largest dam in Queensland.

However, the Court unanimously rejected the appeal of the Commonwealth Environment Minister, thereby affirming that the Minister must undertake a wide enquiry that may extend to the whole, cumulated and continuing effect of the activity, including the impacts of activities undertaken by third parties.

The decision does not mean the Dam won't proceed, however it does mean that the Minister must require the dam builders to assess the downstream impacts of the proposed dam on the World Heritage Area.

Such impacts may include nutrient and pesticide pollution of the Great Barrier Reef and increased sediment.

These impacts illustrate that dams are not sustainable. Instead we should be looking at improving water efficiency and the sustainable management of our rivers.

For more information contact Toby Hutcheon, Coordinator, Qld Conservation Council on (07) 3221 0188

## Important Dates

- 1 September - Env Education & Landcare Forum Ph: 8226 4602
- 28 Sept to 2 Oct - Aust Assoc for Env Education conference. Ph: 8352 7099.
- 29,30 November - Water Trading Conference, Sydney. Ph: (02) 9080 4307

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Email [dbase@ccsa.asn.au](mailto:dbase@ccsa.asn.au)

Views expressed in Briefs are not necessarily those of CCSA

## Watershed Protection Urgently Needed

Recent exceptional rains and flooding give a timely warning that must not be ignored.

Many properties are at risk of a 1 in 100 year flood and there is urgent need for more stringent environmental protection of watersheds.

Years of poor planning policy (as reflected through some Development Plans), inappropriate development decisions, inadequate compliance, and poor land management practices have, and will continue to, contribute to the current situation.

CCSA calls for an immediate Ministerial PAR with a moratorium on development in flood prone areas until development plans are changed to restrict further inappropriate activities in watersheds.

The Government has taken a commendable step with the Brown Hill & Keswick Creeks Flood Plain Ministerial Plan.

Hopefully funding will now be provided to flood map the whole Mount Lofty Ranges and then the rest of the State.

## A Legacy

For  
The



Future

You care about SA's environment and want to be sure that future generations can experience the things you have. A bequest to the Conservation Council of South Australia is the best way to ensure that our unique heritage is safeguarded into the future.

For information contact Debbie White at CCSA on 8223 5155 or [dbase@ccsa.asn.au](mailto:dbase@ccsa.asn.au).



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