



# Newsletter

**No. 38 Autumn 2017**

The Torbay Catchment Group is a community-based volunteer organisation whose primary focus is protecting and restoring the health of the lands and waterways and supporting prosperous and sustainable communities within the catchment.

[www.torbaycatchment.org.au](http://www.torbaycatchment.org.au)

## Profile of a local farmer

### Phillip Marshall .....

*The following article is a summary of an interesting discussion with a very well-known local identity – Phillip Marshall and his wife Sheelagh.*

Phillip and his wife Sheelagh arrived on our sunny shores in 1970 as “*Ten\_Pound Poms!*” This change of scenery, from England, followed a preliminary trip in 1969 to “*check the place out*” and to catch up with his late brother Andrew who was farming around the Arthur River area.

They decided Western Australia was the place to farm and bring up their children so the hunt for a suitable property, in an area that had schooling, good land and opportunities was their number one priority and a property on South Coast Highway, Torbay became their new home.

In England, Phillip and Sheelagh Marshall were “tenancy farming” and considered they could not rely on this type of land holding and farming opportunities. Being dairy farmers, growing potatoes, corn, and cabbage greens and breeding pigs was challenging and limited, which was one reason why there was a temptation to emigrate to WA.

Without doubt, England’s loss was our gain!

Establishing their Torbay farm, in 1971, presented many challenges and opportunities, including poor market conditions within the beef industry. Added to that problem they had to learn about our climate, our soil and making their farm a successful business venture.

Around about the same time as Phillip’s

move, brother Andrew purchased a property virtually opposite in Torbay farm.

One sector they were not interested in was dairying as they were of the opinion the UK market was ahead of what the dairy industry was experiencing in WA.

The growing of vegetables and transporting them to market was an expensive risk due to the tyranny of distance. After some unsuccessful trials they decided to expand their mixed farming business to the seasonal growing of asparagus, sweet corn, raspberries, berries, Jerusalem artichokes and horseradish, whilst breeding their Angus and Charolais cattle, was year round.

Growing asparagus was a new venture in WA, as the market was based upon canned product, from the eastern states. The Marshall’s (Phillip and Andrew) were the first commercial growers of asparagus in Western Australia and after some time decided to form an association which attracted a small number of members.

Of interest, Sheelagh and her sister-in-law Liz decided to help educate people of the benefits, including taste and freshness of the locally grown fresh asparagus. Many trips to Perth and the message was getting through to the general populous, *fresh over canned is best*. As one could say the rest is history!

As one of the initial founders and supporters of the Albany Farmers Market, the Marshall’s Asparagus has always been one product in very high demand, when in season. Now, with media savvy Chef’s talking “fresh” the



Marshall’s asparagus from Torbay is often heard mentioned on the airways.

In discussing farming, with Phillip, you get the feeling of a person who loves to be out in the fresh air, hands dirty and his well-worn hat firmly placed on his head! The Marshall’s set out to ensure “good farming techniques” was primary in their thinking and they introduced “shelter belts”, planted trees and fenced off creeks to protect the surrounding vegetation, as a measure to improve their farm.

Phillip stresses the above and confirms the importance of understanding the soil and knowing what it needs. He advocates the importance of leaf sampling, to assess fertiliser needs for the crops; in detecting low levels of nutrients before severe deficiencies occur; and to identify nutritional problems.

Phillip, with his mixed farming interests, is extremely conscious of the domination of supermarkets and how the small to medium sized businesses are being forced out, which ultimately reduces competition!

Both Phillip and Sheelagh are extremely supportive of the growth of the Farmers Markets, and in particular, their

(continued from page 1) involvement with the renowned Albany Farmers' Market.

Everyone who knows Phillip and Sheelagh Marshall can appreciate Western Australia won out over their "mother country" England.

Phillip is very passionate about the Denmark Agricultural College, which has developed into a modern institution with around 130 students and recently, an automatic dairy was developed. His involvement with the Farm Advisory Council of the College ensures his interest will never waiver.

He is extremely interested in "Fusion Farming", which is all about the nitrogen cycle on the farm. By following this technology, it will enable the Marshall's to recycle and produce their own nitrogen, which can only be good for the end product!

Phillip's philosophy on mixed farming, is "that you must have suitable land with good soil".

He said "very few farmers are actually farming properly" and believes the weed issues in the catchment area, are a major concern, especially the proliferation of the blackberries.

Fencing off the existing vegetation and ensuring our creeks and waterways are clean and not polluted, by over fertilising of the surrounding land, are issues that he is pleased are being taken up by the Torbay Catchment Group, of which Phillip Marshall is proudly a Life Member.

## National Landcare Projects (NLP)



## Biodiversity project—protecting endangered species

### Workshops 2016—Possum Detectives Night Stalk, Possum Box, and Bee Hive care



It was a wet and woolly evening in May last year when 22 people, ranging in age from very young children to grand parents, assembled at Cosy Corner for the 'Possum Detectives Night Stalk'. Luckily the rain stopped and the walk was a great success with a number of Western Ring-tailed Possums sighted.

The following day 16 people attended 'Possum Box' a workshop on how to make a long lasting box suitable for

possums. The boxes made were distributed to attendees.

In October and November Matt & Taysha Barrett kindly donated their expertise to run two 'Bee Hive Care and Maintenance' workshops. Swarms are a real problem for our endangered possums and cockatoos. They often end up in tree hollows used by our native animals. The workshops demonstrated how to reduce swarming.

Possum Box, presented by Joe Tonga from NatSync

## The value of revegetation

There is nothing more satisfying than finding 10 minutes to relax on the verandah with a cuppa. A visit from some of our enchanting local birds, like the splendid wren, the scarlet breasted robin, or the cheeky grey fantail just add to that experience.

On the property we bought, there were significant stands of trees, but no understorey. The ground level, where we humans dwell, was pretty devoid of bird activity. I could see and hear birds flitting around the canopy but they were too far away to really appreciate.

Over the years we have undertaken revegetation to restore the understorey

and to create wildlife corridors which also act as windbreaks. The result has been simply amazing. It is now uncommon not to see a small bird or three when spending a few minutes outside. It is very satisfying to see such a dramatic change within a few short years.

TCG still has funding for revegetation on offer and by the end of the planting season this year 7.63Ha of local native plants will be in the ground as part of this NLP project.

Whatever your motive for revegetation, (shelter for stock, aesthetics, wildlife corridor etc) TCG can assist you, with **up to \$1450/ha funding on offer.**



This photo recently sent in by one of our members, shows that even large birds like our iconic black cockatoos can be seen at ground level once shrubs are provided.





## Cockatoo nestboxes

Sixteen black cockatoo nestboxes have been installed as part of this project. The latest four were put up in November on two properties in Torbay.

Cockatoo numbers have been in decline for years. This has led to of these beautiful bird being classed as endangered.

We hope that artificial nest hollows can boost breeding. There is some hope, black cockatoos have been observed checking out the nest boxes. We'll keep you updated on progress.

## Fencing grants

For many years TCG has been helping landholders to protect their bush from stock by providing funding for fencing.

Farmers who do fence bushland often talk to us about the uses and value of having trees and bush on their properties. Some that are mentioned are: wind protection for stock and buildings; shade during hot weather; aesthetics; erosion prevention; and providing a breeding ground and food source for native animals, which in turn venture into farmed areas and eat insect pests.

If you have an area of bush you'd like to protect we may be able to assist you. **The current funding rate is up to \$2400/km.**



A recently completed fence protecting bushland

## Help, possum surveys



If you live in Albany you would be excused for thinking that there are plenty of Western Ring-tailed Possums. After all they may visit your garden almost nightly. However these possums are endangered, with Albany having one of the few remaining stronghold populations.

While we know these possums occur in good numbers on the mounts in Albany, once you head west into the Torbay catchment not too much is known about where they live.

TCG will be enlisting the help of local UWA PhD student Bronte Van Helden to undertake possum surveys. **To help us identify areas to survey we would appreciate any information you have about possum sightings.** Contact TCG.

## NLP Projects —Soil Health Projects

### The 7 soil health workshops of 2016

The workshop year started in May with an event presented by DAFWA staff members on 'Understanding your soil test'. It included a segment on the benefits of Whole Farm Nutrient Mapping. Farmers came from as far away as Mount Barker to attend and to gain assistance from DAFWA.

In July 'Spend a day with Hugh Lovel' was presented. Hugh continues to be a popular speaker with his encyclopaedic

knowledge of all things soil. Over 50 people came from far and wide to hear him.

'A 3 Day Bio-fertiliser Workshop' presented by Kim Cruse from RegenAg was held in Tenterden in September. TCG supported a number of members to attend that event.

'A Soil Biology Field Day' focussing on showing people how to collect bacterial

and fungal microbes from their own properties was held in December. The thinking is that local microbes are best adapted to the local conditions and are therefore more likely to survive and thrive.

In late December a number of hands-on field collection events were run. Participants made Local Area Microbe Preparation (LAMP) which will be used in the upcoming field trials.





# NLP Projects—Trials targeting soil health

## TM Agricultural Field Trial      Trialling local microbes—making LAMP & LLM

TM Agricultural has been used by a range of farmers here on the south coast for some years now. In fact there is a growing interest in this product as a way to conditioning the soil which in turn improves production.

TM Agricultural is marketed as a soil activator and for rejuvenating the soil.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that TM Agricultural works well on our sandy soils. For this reason a trial plot was selected in a paddock with sandy soil that is fairly typical of many properties in the area.

This trial aims to understand whether the product does benefit production. Dry Weight Matter will be used as a measurement of production. This will be measured in both treatment and control plots at the site.

Another aspect that will also be tested is the product's mode of action. In this trial we will be testing whether TM Agricultural affects soil life by reducing the amount of soil pathogens that inhibit plant growth.

TCG is working in conjunction with Murdoch University to conduct this trial and a field day will be held to as the trial progresses so farmers can learn first hand the results of the trial.

Stay tuned for more information about this trial.



Following on from the well received Soil Biology Field Day in December, TCG will set about establishing 5 trial sites over the coming months. The aim is to test how microbes collected on-farm (or as close as possible) affect soil organic carbon, water holding capacity, and microbial activity,

The process began in December with the collection of LAMP (Local Area Microbe Preparation).

LAMP is made from a collection of fungi and bacteria collected as locally as possible. This is then fed and set aside for a period to allow the microbes to multiply. Once all the food provided has been consumed the microbes go into dormancy in a similar manner to dried yeast. In this state LAMP is extremely stable and can be kept for lengthy periods.

LLM (Liquid Local Microbes) is made using LAMP as the base material. LLM is brewed for up to a week and then applied.

The University of Western Australia's (UWA) Centre for Excellence in Natural

Resource Management (CENRM) in Albany is providing assistance with the design of this trial and will be undertaking sampling.

Watch for updates on progress and for events



On farm collection of microbes to make LAMP



Raw material for processing to make LAMP

## 2017—Upcoming soil workshops

We already have plans to hold quite a number of soil health related events throughout this year. TCG will be running a series of short events at our LLM trial sites where participants will be able to learn, or consolidate their knowledge of, the process of **Converting LAMP to LLM**.

Once the LLM has brewed a series of field days giving people hands-on opportunity to understand **what brewed LLM should look and smell like** will be run. At these events there will be discussion and demonstration of how to best to apply LLM.

**How to brew a mineral boosted biofertiliser** will be the subject of

another workshop. This workshop will be held in Tambellup at one of our biofertiliser trial sites.

**Chromatography** is used to visually assess the mineral and humus condition of the soil. At this event techniques required to undertake this fascinating and useful tool will be demonstrated.

In the latter part of the year we will be looking to host **Paul Taylor** and learn more about his **Trust Natures Bio-Vital System**. Paul demonstrates how to make compost teas and a range of our biology-friendly soil additives, ameliorants and fertilisers.

For more information check out our Calendar of Events (page 6), contact the TCG officer and watch out for emails .

# State NRM Projects



natural resource  
management program



## Catchment Plan review

The Torbay Catchment Group was successful in obtaining State NRM office funding to have the Torbay catchment plan of 2006 updated. The Torbay Catchment Group wants to make the Plan current, more community based and achievable, covering land, biodiversity, waterways and community. The catchment plan will be expanded to cover communities around Princess Royal Harbour including West Cape Howe and Torndirrup National Parks.

The catchment plan is important for identifying what is important to all residents in the catchment and how to protect these values: the special places, animals and landscapes, the kinds of community and farming including the mosaics of landuse, variety of landscapes, beaches, waterways, remnant vegetation, recreation opportunities, mixed farming, and lifestyle and much more. The Catchment Group is keen to represent your interests and will continue to seek funding for positive catchment activity based on priorities in the



Manarup Lagoon (foreground), North Creek, Torbay Inlet and the Southern Ocean

updated catchment restoration plan.

A team from Green Skills led by Dr Louise Duxbury will run:

- A survey in April
- A series of small group 'kitchen table/cafe' style discussions in June/July, and
- Two larger workshops - once there

is a draft plan based on survey and discussion input in Sept/Oct.

Input from landholders, residents, community groups, agencies and businesses will be welcomed.

**For specific dates for activities please see the calendar (page 4)** The updated plan will be completed by the end of 2017.

## Building organisational capacity

In the 16 years since TCG became an incorporated organisation the group has slowly evolved. During this time a lot of documents, books and equipment have been accumulated by committee members and employees.

Basically TCG had belongings spread all over the catchment, in peoples studies, garages and sheds etc. So, about 2 years ago we set about collecting it all into one location. That was definitely a step forward.

To assist us with the next step, TCG applied to the State NRM office for funding. Our idea was to get some funding to help us work out what we had in all those boxes! In the end the grant covers a range of items.

All the documentation that had been collected required sorting, collating, rationalising and cataloguing. This has been done. We will also capture as much of our past project information on to one map as we can. The idea is so we will be able to see what has been achieved over the years.

Purchase of a new laptop and bookkeeping software will also be happening along with updating our policy and procedures and undertaking a review of our strategic plan.

Lastly we will also have a new website constructed which we hope will be up and running soon. We definitely will be letting everyone know as soon as that happens.

## Biofertiliser

To make the most of our proposed biofertiliser trial we successfully applied to the State NRM office for funding. As a result we have been able to substantially expand it. We have also been able to employ the services and expertise of UWA's Centre for Excellence in Natural Resource Management to undertake sampling and assist with trial design.

All sites have been selected and biofertiliser preparations are ready. Soil testing will be carried out in the coming month.

Once the break of season has occurred spraying of the biofertilisers will commence. Keep an eye out or register for updates.



# Our volunteers

## Thank you event



TCG will be hosting an event to show our appreciation for the efforts and expertise that has been donated

to the group by a many volunteers over the years.

This event was originally intended to be held during Volunteer Week, however we have now scheduled it in June.

**The event will be held on Saturday 24 June.** If you are interested in attending please contact the TCG project officer for details.

## Calendar of Events

### MAY

**4 TCG Executive Meeting**

### JUNE

**7 Catchment plan meeting  
South Coast Progress Hall  
Little Grove**

**8 TCG Executive Meeting**

**14 Catchment plan meeting  
Bornholm Hall  
Bornholm**

### JULY

**13 TCG Executive Meeting**

If you want to be informed of our events as they arise simply contact our project officer to be added to our email list.

[info@torbaycatchment.org.au](mailto:info@torbaycatchment.org.au)

It is worth registering for this list as some events fill quickly while others can occur at short notice.

## Volunteering - helping others and yourself

The importance of volunteering cannot be stressed enough in today's busy non-stop world. But why become a volunteer and offer your services to your local community?

Well, volunteering gives you the opportunity to become connected and an active part of your community, whilst helping others and yourself!

People volunteer for many different reasons. Some do it to meet people, others to learn new skills, add to their resume, help people, make good use of their spare time, take on new challenges, or just to use their skills and experience in a positive way.

Volunteering builds stronger communities and provides a range of resources, services and support that otherwise may not be available.

The Torbay Catchment Group would like you to consider being a member of

their Committee. You will meet interesting people. Become part of a team who are aiming for an environmentally clean, balanced ecology supporting a prosperous community in which people respect each other's use of the local catchment area and the important, but sensitive waterways.

Interested? Please contact us.



A volunteer first reported the 2013 fish kill

## Water sampling—more help needed

For about the past 18 months, TCG volunteers have, on a monthly basis, been collecting water samples. The samples are delivered by the volunteers to the Department of Water (DoW) in Albany for water quality testing.

They are additional to sample sites currently being tested by DoW. Sampling allows water quality trends to be identified which is important in understanding how best to manage our natural assets.

We are currently looking for additional volunteers to help out. Sampling takes just over an hour all up including

delivery to town. As the sites are in Torbay and Cuthbert it is best suited to people who live out that way and use the Lower Denmark Rd to travel to town. For more information please contact the TCG project officer (details below).



## TCG Committee & Contacts

<u>Chair :</u>	Sam Pasfield	<u>Vice Chair :</u>	Graeme Heighton
<u>Secretary:</u>	vacant	<u>Treasurer :</u>	Ian King
<u>Non office bearers:</u>	Mandy Arnold; Libby Johnson; Anne Taylor		
<u>Project officer:</u>	Pip Tilbrook	0439 461 591	PO Box 1900, Albany WA 6331
<a href="mailto:info@torbaycatchment.org.au">info@torbaycatchment.org.au</a>			



## MEMBERSHIP FORM 1/7/2017—30/6/2018

### We invite you to consider becoming a Member of the Torbay Catchment Group Inc, because:

- You will be updated re important Ecological Issues e.g. Water Corp, Department of Water & City of Albany activities that impact the catchment e.g. beaches, camping grounds, amenities, desalination waste management and drains, etc.;
- We can disperse urgent calls for on-ground Community Action when needed via our extensive email network;
- Your financial contribution ensures that essential Ecological Work continues;
- Memberships provide compelling evidence for Grant applications;
- You will be connected to your Catchment Community;

**Fees:** \$5 one person = one voting right    \$10 per household = 2 voting rights

**\$250 Corporate membership (logo on TCG material)**

Why not pay in advance? 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 years please circle

I / We \_\_\_\_\_

wish to apply for membership.    I / we agree to uphold the visions and objectives of TCG.

Signature 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Signature 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Email 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Email 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Property address \_\_\_\_\_

Postal address \_\_\_\_\_

Landline \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile 2 \_\_\_\_\_

**Cheque      Cash      Direct bank deposit      (Please circle your method of payment)**

**DONATION:** I / We would like to make an additional donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (optional)

**Direct deposit: please include your Surname and Initials for payment identification!**

Torbay Catchment Group Inc. Bendigo Bank BSB 633-000    Acc. No. 150285229

**IMPORTANT:** Please either Post this Form to: The Treasurer P.O. Box 1900 Albany WA 6331 **OR**

Scan & Email to: [treasurer@torbaycatchment.org.au](mailto:treasurer@torbaycatchment.org.au)    (Total amount paid = \$ \_\_\_\_\_)

Or use our new website [torbaycatchment.org.au](http://torbaycatchment.org.au) to join or renew

### TCG Member Survey — *Thank you for taking the time to complete this form*

Do you live in the catchment	Yes / No
<u>Interest/s: (please circle)</u>	
Torbay Catchment Group Committee	Yes
Sustainable Farming Practices	Yes
Waterway Restoration / Protection	Yes
Feral Animal Control e.g. _____	Yes
Supporting Endangered Animal Species e.g. _____	Yes
Weed Control / Management e.g. _____	Yes
Supporting Plant Species Projects e.g. _____	Yes
Organic Farming Projects e.g. _____	Yes
Soil Health projects e.g. _____	Yes
OTHER _____	

Do you have a windy paddock that needs a shelter belt?

Do you have trees and want to plant understorey shrubs?

Do you want to create a wildlife corridor?

Do you have a swampy area that you want to plant to native species?

If so we have may be able to help you

- easy process, almost no paperwork
- funding rate of up to **\$1450/ha**

Call Pip on 0439 461 591 or email [info@torbaycatchment.org.au](mailto:info@torbaycatchment.org.au)




# VOLUNTEER THANK YOU EVENT

If you have ever been involved with TCG in any volunteer capacity we thank you....

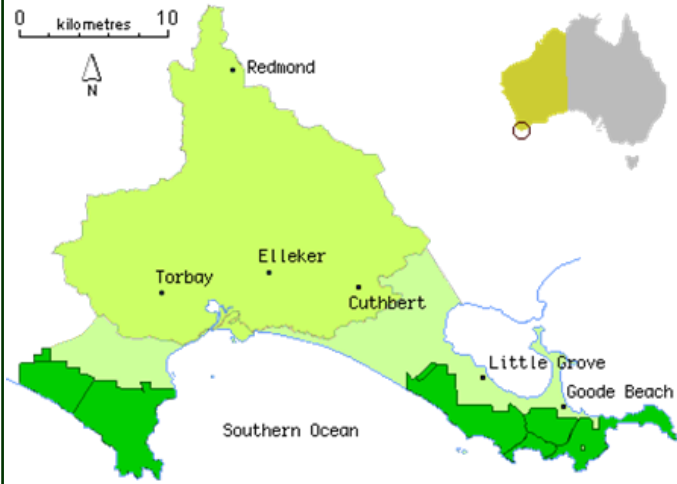
And we invite you to attend our upcoming **free event** which will be held on

**Saturday 24 June**

For more details and RSVPs contact [info@torbaycatchment.org.au](mailto:info@torbaycatchment.org.au)  
0439 461 591



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## WANTED! YOUR INPUT TO THE NEW TORBAY CATCHMENT PLAN

### COME TO A COMMUNITY FORUM

*What do you value about where you live?*  
*How can we protect those values?*

<b>Wednesday 7 June,</b> 6pm – 8pm South Coast Progress Hall, Little Grove Yummy supper provided!	<b>Wednesday 14 June,</b> 6pm – 8pm Bornholm Hall, Bornholm Yummy supper provided!
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RSVP Pip 0439 461 591  
[info@torbaycatchment.org.au](mailto:info@torbaycatchment.org.au)  
Or Louise 9848 3310 [lduxbury@greenskills.org.au](mailto:lduxbury@greenskills.org.au)

## Have seen a Western-ringtail possum?

If so we would like to know about it.

Over the coming months TCG will be undertaking surveys to understand more about these endangered possums.

Help us work out where they are by reporting your sightings.

[info@torbaycatchment.org.au](mailto:info@torbaycatchment.org.au) OR 0439 461 591



## Check out our

\*\*\*\*\*NEW WEBSITE\*\*\*\*\*

[torbaycatchment.org.au](http://torbaycatchment.org.au)

You can register for events, contact us, join our email list, renew your membership, and find the latest catchment news all in one place