Heavy morning rain and chilly temperatures did not stop over 80 volunteers from all walks of life getting into the spirit of planting trees as part of Kingborough Council’s National Tree Day activity, held on 29 July.

About 750 native plants were planted beside Coffee Creek in Huntingfield, south of Hobart. Kingborough Council Mayor Dr Graham Bury said Coffee Creek was chosen as the site this year because it is home to one of our most critically endangered bird species, the Forty-Spotted Pardalote. “This year’s planting will extend the habitat for these unique and beautiful little birds,” he said.

Forty Spotted Pardalotes are tiny birds measuring about nine to ten centimetres in length, with a light olive green colouring. They have yellow markings around their eyes and rumps, and black wings with distinctive white dots. Binoculars are needed to view these unique, tiny birds.

Council staff and volunteers planted White Gums which the birds depend on and also understorey plants to create a river corridor of vegetation. Hungry and dirty volunteers were fed hot sausages provided by Mitre 10 and cooked by members of the Kingborough Lions Club. About 25 children from Boronia District Guides and Blackmans Bay Scouts and Venturers helped make up the numbers on the day. The youngsters helped with planting demonstrations and showing people around the site.

Council’s Bushcare Officer, Bridget Jupe, and Natural Resource Management Officer, Liz Quinn, took about 20 people on a guided walk along Coffee Creek, pointing out various tree species and their characteristics, and talked about the Forty Spotted Pardalotes. Ms Jupe said the group were fortunate enough to spot different birds sitting high in the branches of one of the trees and the younger children were thrilled to have spotted wildlife so close to an urban area. “Forty Spotted Pardalotes are one of the smallest and rarest birds in Australia so we need to take care of their natural habitat, Ms Jupe said. “Destruction of their habitat is the greatest threat to these birds so to watch all the trees being planted was enormously satisfying.”

Volunteers and Council staff were all pleased with the day’s plantings and look forward to seeing significant growth of trees over the next few years.

(L to R) Kingborough Council’s Natural Resource Management Officer, Liz Quinn, and Bushcare Officer, Bridget Jupe, lead a group on the guided walk on National Tree Day

(L to R) Kingborough Council Bushcare Officer, Bridget Jupe, pictured with volunteers from the Forester Girl Guides – Caeley Fenney, Amber Richards, Caitlin Jacobson and Jessie Keygan
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Major Projects Near Completion

MIKE PAINE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Southern Water

Later this year Southern Water will officially open the $33 million Huon Valley Regional Water Scheme. Partly funded by a $12 million contribution from the Federal Government, the Huon Valley Scheme has been one of our largest projects in the three years since we began operation, and its completion will greatly benefit the health of the community, economy and environment.

Much credit should go to the Huon Valley Council for their work on the initial planning and investigations for the scheme, as well as securing Federal Government funding for the project. The scheme’s operation means that potable water is now available to all the main population centres in the Huon Valley including Franklin, Castle Forbes Bay, Geeveston and Cygnet. It also improves reliability of supply for a number of other areas which previously had a drinking water supply susceptible to fluctuating water quality and flows. As an additional benefit, small rivers and streams from which water was previously sourced will now have increased flows, contributing to better environmental outcomes.

While public attention has recently been focused on pricing and water meters, significant progress continues to be made improving water and sewerage systems across Southern Tasmania. Another major project approaching completion is the $7 million Reservoir Roofing Project. As part of this project, 20 open water reservoirs have been, or will be fitted with aluminium roofs to reduce the likelihood of microbiological contamination from bird and animal excrement, wind-blown dust, debris and algae, ensuring a more reliable water supply for customers serviced by these reservoirs. The project will be completed by late October. Other major projects currently in progress include the Salamanca Place Sewerage Upgrade, the Taroona Sewerage Upgrade, Lenah Valley Reservoir, Wayatinah Water Supply, fluoridation and chlorination improvements, relining of sewers through the older suburbs of Hobart, and planning for Stage 2 of the Lauderdale Sewerage Scheme. Planning for projects to remove permanent boil water alerts in small towns is progressing well, the residential water meter roll out is almost complete, and major upgrades are in the pipeline for a number of our urban and regional sewage treatment plants.

A common thread between many of the projects is that the need for these projects had been identified by the local council prior to the water and sewerage reforms of 2009. Our role over the last three years has been to take on and progress these vital infrastructure projects, a task which in many cases has been made easier by planning already undertaken by Local Government.

In our first three years of operation, infrastructure upgrades have been undertaken across all municipalities in Southern Tasmania, including a number of projects which benefit customers across multiple Local Government areas. We have seen major projects improving critical water infrastructure, including the $8.2 million Berriedale to Elwick and $1.7 million Bowen Bridge Pipeline duplications, which have greatly increased water security for our major urban centres.

$180 million will be spent over the next three years upgrading infrastructure, with a major focus on a number of significant sewerage projects in the Kingborough and Hobart areas, which will bring about improved environmental outcomes and service reliability. We hope that with continued support from our owners, we can continue to improve water and sewerage services for the benefit of everyone in our region.
Each year, over 120,000 Tasmanians go fishing at least once. Imagine that…120,000 potential ‘citizen scientists’ collecting valuable data about the marine environment! Well someone did! As a result, the Redmap program, hosted by the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) at the University of Tasmania, was created!

Redmap invites the Tasmanian community to spot, log and map marine species that are uncommon in Tasmania, or along particular parts of our coast. The information collected is mapped and displayed on the site, demonstrating over time how species distributions may be changing. All the information collected is mapped and will be used in following years to map the ‘story’ of what changes are occurring in our marine environment.

Redmap’s ‘citizen scientists’ are helping Redmap track which warmer-water species are extending their ranges south in search of their preferred marine climate. Some species are shifting house in search of cooler waters as Tasmanian seas warm at over three times the global average.

So far Tasmanians have logged hundreds of sightings of 70+ marine species including eastern rock lobster, yellowtail kingfish, Maori wrasse and zebra fish – all spotted further south than usual.

Redmap’s newsletter has over 700 subscribers and community sightings have been included in three scientific papers. Redmap has also picked up a few awards along the way including a Whitely Award and the Vice Chancellor Award at UTAS for Outstanding Community Engagement.

Recently Redmap released a Species ID Guide that should make undertaking ‘scientific research’ a little easier. The compact, water resistant guide, funded by the Tasmanian Community Fund, profiles the fish and marine critters like turtles, sharks, and crays that are considered uncommon along parts of the Tasmanian coast. Colour images of the Redmap species will help Redmap’s volunteers identify marine species that are not usually found at their local diving, fishing, swimming or boating spot.

Gretta Pecl, Redmap’s founding scientist, puts the success of the Redmap website down to the enthusiastic response from the Tasmanian public and hopes the new booklet will spark even more Tasmanian divers, fishers, boaters and snorkelers to report and update the Redmap website with sightings and photos of unique or unusual species along their coastline.

Redmap is now going national and will be launched by the end of 2012. The new Redmap Australia project will still be asking: are marine species shifting their range as the marine environment changes? A copy of the Species ID Guide will be sent to all coastal Tasmanian councils and it is hoped that the document will enable both council staff and their communities to be involved in raising awareness and participating in the Redmap project.

For a copy of the field guide, or for further information about the Redmap project, please email enquiries@redmap.org.au, or visit www.redmap.org.au.
48 EcoFilm Challenge

The 48 EcoFilm challenge is an Australian international ecofilm festival, designed to promote the role that film can play in raising awareness and encouraging action relating to environmental, ecological and sustainability issues. In February 2013, filmmakers from over 125 cities across the world will be challenged to script, direct, shoot, edit and produce a short ecofilm in just 48 hours. Over one weekend, filmmakers from all over the world will be united in focusing on how people feel, think and act towards environmental, sustainability and ecological issues.

In 2012, the theme was Green Your Ride. We asked filmmakers to consider a scenario where in 48 hours the world’s oil rigs will stop pumping and the tankers filled with fuel for our cars will stop arriving on our shores. How do we keep Australia moving? Next year the themes will be other important topics to engage and involve community at many levels.

The aim of the 48 EcoFilm challenge is to provide opportunities and exposure for filmmaking, emphasise creativity and teamwork, engage with community and their diverse cultures. This develops awareness of and discussion on environmental, sustainability and ecological issues.

These ecofilms from across the world will be showcased in a festival setting, attracting audiences locally and globally. An awards ceremony will announce the cash and other prizes to winning entrants, ultimately revealing the seven films that will be screened at the prestigious Cannes Film Festival – Short Film Corner, in May 2013. Following the awards event, a selection of ecofilms, including the seven Cannes winners, will be available for viewing across Australia.

48 EcoFilm challenge is now inviting councils to explore how they can best partner in the most exciting and dynamic international ecofilm festival, providing filmmakers with a high visibility platform for their work and audiences with unique opportunities to watch, discuss and get involved. Your Council can connect and facilitate ‘partnerships’ that involve schools, industry and communities to support the development of sustainable filmmaking and to ‘go green’.

For more information, please visit http://48ecofilm.com, or call Tom Papas, Producer, on 0407 295 520, or email tom@project48.com.au.
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Devonport City Council has completed a world first with the relocation of a threatened species of Central North Burrowing Crayfish.

The crayfish, which grow to about 10cm long, were found a year ago during an environmental study into planned road widening and a safety upgrade a couple of kilometers up Sheffield Main Road. Because the crustaceans are on the endangered species list, they needed to be treated as VIP's and the Devonport City Council abided by all local and national environmental permit conditions, regulations and guidelines in completing the project.

The site did not look anything out of the ordinary. A drain running down the side of Sheffield Main Road overgrown with grass. However, ecological studies were undertaken on the site and it became necessary for Council to develop a Construction and Environmental Management Plan and an Offset Management Plan.

Devonport City Council City Infrastructure Manager Andrew Rundle said the Central North Burrowing Crayfish is a robust species that frequently occurs in modified landscapes such as the site in Sheffield Road. “The expert advice contained in the Offset Management Plan stated that if the contouring and water soakage is correctly performed at the Offset Site, the crayfish will move into and colonise the created habitat,” Mr Rundle said. “A specific site in a council reserve in nearby Clayton Drive was earmarked and we created a specially built home for the crayfish.”

The crayfish are very specialised and live in tunnel system in muddy banks, seepages and peaty areas. Once the new home was created, the painstaking work began to relocate the small crustaceans. Contractors and council staff delicately removed the top soil and sifted through mud by hand to locate the crayfish, transferring them to special temperature controlled transport containers and moving them to the new site.

“After nearly 12 months of studies, reports and building the new home, in just three days the crayfish were successfully relocated. All up, 206 animals were transferred and we will now monitor the colony at their new home for the next eight years to ensure the long-term success of the project,” Mr Rundle said.

Sheffield Main Road residents are now receiving their much anticipated road upgrade which will substantially improve the safety of road users, pedestrians and local residents and will also mitigate flood risk associated with poor road drainage in this low lying region of Spreyton.

There are three of the five species of burrowing crayfish found in Tasmania, listed as endangered on the threatened species list. It’s believed there are only 80 colonies in existence. The five threatened species of burrowing crayfish are the: Scottsdale Burrowing Crayfish; Furneaux Burrowing Crayfish; Central North Burrowing Crayfish; Mt Arthur Borrowing Crayfish; and the Burnie Burrowing Crayfish.
The Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government with the Council of Capital City Lord Mayors (CCCLM) has completed a new discussion paper called Local Action for a Low Carbon Future. This research is part of a broader project to identify ways for the Federal Government to work more closely with Local Government in bringing about Australia’s move to a low carbon future. The paper sets out a policy position on the role Local Government can play and the findings reflect a consensus view developed across a range of Local Government organisations. The paper’s findings reiterate that Local Government has had two decades of experience in responding to the challenges of moving to a low carbon future. The paper suggests that the Federal Government’s Clean Energy Plan can further reach residential and business communities by working with this experience, and the key strengths of Local Government as a sector: collaboration; proximity; unlocking investment capital; and knowledge using local data.