

# The LAMP Post



## Rescue Mission

Sadly, we are regularly informed of Squirrel gliders that have been found caught on barbed-wire fences. This occurs not only around Burrumbuttock but in all Squirrel glider habitat areas. Entanglement usually occurs because the glider cannot see the fence and has been forced to glide a long distance between gaps in trees. Unfortunately, in most situations, gliders tangled on barbed-wire fences perish.

Recently, a Squirrel glider was found in just this situation by Toni Terlich from Petaurus Education Group (PEG).



**Photo:** Squirrel glider caught on barbed-wire fence. Photo by Toni Terlich.

As per usual, Toni was waiting with her children for the school bus pick-up in the morning. However, as the school bus pulled up, the kids all started pointing to an animal stuck on the fence. On closer inspection, Toni found a female Squirrel glider tangled on a barb right under a massive old gum.

With help from two lovely passersby (one of which was a farmer), they managed to cut the fence and the glider was taken to Darryl at Jindera Vet Clinic. Darryl allowed Toni to take photos of him working to remove the barb from the Squirrel glider. A WIRES form was completed by Toni at the vets which provides details of where the glider was found so that wildlife carers could release the glider back into the same area.

This is a fantastic outcome as it was clear the female had young which would have been sleeping through their mother's "day time adventure" snuggled in their secure tree hollow – waiting her return.



**Photo:** Darryl the Jindera vet working to remove the barb from the Squirrel Glider. Photo by Toni Terlich.

## How can I help?

The Squirrel Glider LAMP Project has been focusing on addressing loss of habitat and connections which Squirrel gliders need to survive. But, we need your help to address some of the other key threats to Squirrel gliders including entanglement on barbed-wire fences and predation by foxes and cats. Examples of how to do this include:

### **Removal of barbed-wire fencing**

The most effective way to remove the threat of barbed-wire is to remove it completely. Where fences no longer serve a necessary purpose, this may be a viable option. In places where fences are required for stock control, barbed-wire strands can be replaced with multi-strand high tensile plain wire or a combination of high tensile plain wire and ring-lock.

An effective short-term solution may be to install polypipe on the top or top two strands of barbed-wire as these are where most entanglements occur. Contact Murray LLS for free access to a polypipe applicator, which will make the process of installation quicker and safer.

For smaller sections of fence another alternative is to make the fence more obvious by installing metal tags along the top wire of the fence. Tags should be installed at a minimum of 30cm intervals to ensure the fence is visible.

For more information, head to <http://www.wildlifefriendlyfencing.com/instructions.pdf>

### **Fox control activities**

Foxes are widespread and abundant across the agricultural landscape. Undertaking fox control activities will reduce their abundance and result in less pressure on Squirrel gliders. These actions will also have benefits for other species such as native birds, reptiles and frogs.

A coordinated baiting program over a large area is most likely to be successful in reducing fox numbers. Contact Murray LLS to speak to one of our Biosecurity officers to assist you in developing a fox control program for your area.

### **Responsible cat ownership**

Responsible cat ownership is extremely important to reduce their impact on native wildlife. Keeping your cat inside your house at night time is one of the best ways to protect Squirrel gliders and other nocturnal wildlife from cats.

A number of council areas now impose cat curfews to restrict movement of cats, particularly during the night when they do most of their hunting. Ensure that your cat is desexed to keep it from producing unwanted litters. Registering your cat with your local council and having it microchipped will allow it to be returned to you if it is found.

### **Whats coming to Burrumbuttock?**

The project team and steering committee would like to raise awareness about Squirrel gliders and why the Burrumbuttock population is so important.

This will take the form of a series of signs which will be installed on the Urana Road bush shelter in Burrumbuttock.

You are invited to the launch of this impressive artwork and an opportunity to talk to the project team about Squirrel glider conservation and how you can get involved:

**When:** Wednesday 5 June 2018, 11:30am

**Where:** Bus shelter on Urana Rd, Burrumbuttock (near the pub)

For further information on the launch please get in touch with Kathie Le Busque on 0408 443 261 or [Kathie@petaurus.net.au](mailto:Kathie@petaurus.net.au).

### **Investment Round 3 Update**

Investment round 3 is well underway. This investment will see approximately 30ha of revegetation. This is the equivalent of creating three and a half new home ranges which could support up to 17 social groups of gliders (they live in social groups of a couple of males, females and young).

The long dry season has been favourable for fencing which is mostly complete. Ripping was more of a challenge on some sites due to the hard ground.

Once we get some rain, the final stage of the on-ground works – planting will begin.

We are also putting together an Investment round 3 landholder achievement booklet. This booklet has been created for each of the investment rounds and highlights landholder involved in the project.



**Photo:** One of the last sites to be fenced for this investment round. This site will link to the distant paddock trees which are critical habitat for Squirrel gliders.



**Photo:** Adjoining the above site will be the revegetation of this gully. This will form a corridor and connection to one of the most significant remnants in the area north of Burrumbuttock.

## Revegetation out of control !!!

The revegetation from investment round 1 and 2 is looking amazing!!!

The percentage success rate of tubestock in investment round 2 is approximately 80% and the growth rates are impressive, have a look for yourself.



**Photo:** An investment round 1 site just after planting.



**Photo:** The same site as above, 12 months later.

## When to remove tubestock guards

Tree guards should be checked periodically and repaired or replaced when necessary. As plants grow the tree guards will need to be removed, usually within the first 12 months. Timing will vary with the type of guard, plant and season. Generally, guards should be removed when plants are 10 - 15cm above the guard, or when growth is clearly being restricted. Tall plants left too long will not support themselves when guards are eventually removed. Vertebrate pest control

will be critical when the guards are removed especially when there is little feed available for rabbits and kangaroos.

Investment round 1 landholders in the Stony Park area should consider taking off tubestock tree guards now before the plants get to much taller.

## Elms on the brink.....

The removal of Elms at the intersection in Burrumbuttock is on-going. Project officer Lou and the Marshall family met recently to work on hand removal of some of the suckering Elms.

Despite two hours of work, the impact looked minimal. However, removal of suckers closer to the base of maturing and established plants means spraying of the larger patches can be done. It will take another year or two of spraying to truly be on top of the re-emerging suckers but planting of new trees will be done this autumn.



**Photo:** L - R Angie, Kate, Archie, Bindi, Sam and Emma after working for a couple hours removing Elm suckers by hand.

## Community Stagwatching Night

Landholders and community members along with the project team and local ecologist Damian Michael met on 9 March 2018 for a night of stagwatching and spotlighting.

Each person was given a "stag tree" (old, possibly dead and decaying tree that has formed nesting hollows) to watch for 30 minutes before and after dusk. As it darkened, people sat quietly hoping to see or hear a glider or possum appear from one of the hollows on their stag.

Unfortunately, Squirrel gliders were not spotted on this particular night but it doesn't mean they are not around.

Thank-you to everyone that came along and especially to Justin and his family for sharing their special spot with everyone!



**Photo:** Landholders and community members listening to local ecologist Damian Michael talk about Squirrel glider conservation before heading off for some stag watching.

## Investment Round 2 Landholders in the spotlight

A book has been developed that celebrates the dedication and hard work from landholders in investment round 2 and stories of their involvement in the project.



Contact one of our Project Officers for a hard copy or have a read of the electronic version on the Petaurus Education Group website.

<http://www.wirraminna.org.au/petaurus/squirrel-glider-lamp/>

One of the stories featured in this book is of Diane, Matthew and son Darcy who run a mixed farming enterprise at Burrumbuttock. The l'Anson family along with many other private landholders in the Burrumbuttock district are actively working to improve Squirrel glider habitat on their farm.

The l'Anson's realised they had gliders on their property after finding an injured glider caught on a barbed-wire fence, which they untangled and released. They were motivated to get involved in the Squirrel Glider Project as it was so easy to participate. "The Squirrel Glider Project helps gliders and hopefully has a low impact on the loss of farming land" said Diane l'Anson.

Through the project, the l'Anson's are linking up remnant vegetation areas on their property by revegetating nearly seven hectares to allow gliders to glide through the vegetation and ease their movement throughout the landscape.

*"The welfare of gliders is in the front of our minds and we no longer take their presence for granted"* - Diane l'Anson.



Top left: Diane l'Anson in front of a remnant vegetation block on her property.  
Top right: Diane in front of a newly planted native vegetation corridor.  
Bottom: The red line indicates where the l'Anson's are planting a corridor of native vegetation to link the remnant vegetation in the background to the paddock tree to allow ease of movement through the property for gliders.

## Environmental Trust Project Update

### Nest Box Project – Tracy Michael

It can take more than 100 years for a Eucalypt to develop a natural tree hollow suitable for a Squirrel glider. Nest boxes may provide a short term substitute den site.

Studies have shown that Squirrel gliders have a preference for nest boxes with an entrance hole of 40 - 45 mm. This small size helps to restrict other animals from using the box. They also prefer boxes with particular dimensions as shown below.



If you are keen to have a go at constructing and installing nest boxes on your property, remember that Squirrel gliders regularly move between dens sites and will use on average seven different hollows in their home range so it will be beneficial to install a number of boxes.

Try and find sites that are 'connected' by vegetation to other areas as it is unlikely Squirrel gliders will occupy isolated patches of vegetation. Make sure you attach the boxes well to avoid movement of the box which may discourage their use. Also place on the leeward side of the tree away from prevailing weather.

Recent funding from the Environmental Trust will be used to install nest boxes at selected sites across the Burrumbuttock area. Site visits have now been completed and a project evaluation will take place later this month. The Mens Shed in Thurgoona will soon start construction of the boxes.

### 2018 Environmental Trust Restoration and Rehabilitation Grant Proposal – Lou Bull

Petaurus Education Group Inc (PEG) with support from the LAMP Steering Committee and staff at Murray LLS, submitted a proposal for funding through the 2018 Environmental Trust Restoration and Rehabilitation Grants to undertake further rehabilitation works in priority areas in Burrumbuttock to support Squirrel glider conservation. If successful, the proposal will see a further 8ha of high priority connections rehabilitated including 4km of fencing and 3,000 tubestock planted.

### “She didn’t need that much” – a story by Paula Peeters

Paula Peeters is a talented artist and nature journalist who has combined her skills to help share the stories of our local landscapes in various forms. Paula is based in southern Queensland and runs regular workshops encouraging connection to nature.

Paula Peeters has kindly given us permission to share her story about a Squirrel glider that was awarded equal first prize in the inaugural Brisbane City Council Nature Writing competition.

While the story is based in Brisbane, there are still some similarities to the Burrumbuttock population. Get the tissue box ready.....

She didn’t need much. While I was busy with my own small worries, my own daily life, this last two years, she was just quietly getting on with her own.

I didn’t know it, but she was less than a kilometre from where I live, maybe a lot closer than that. For there are Squirrel Gliders living at the end of my street in the Deagon Wetlands. And I don’t live in some sort of rural paradise, way out in the bush. I live in the northern suburbs of Brisbane, not 14 km from the CBD. In one of its oldest suburbs: Sandgate, the first seaside resort frequented by the early settlers.



**Photo:** Drawing of a Squirrel Glider by Paula Peeters

Sometime, when I was still making my daily commute to the city, in the winter of 2014, she was born. How many days did she snugly cling, eyes tight shut, a pink hairless grape, deep in her mother's pouch? While her mother bounded effortlessly up those eucalypts fringing Third Lagoon to find the sugary lerps, or glided from tree to tree, to feast on the sweet-scented paperbark flowers of the Deagon Wetlands?

By the springtime of 2014, I was caught up in the care of the elderly, then the mourning for loved ones, now gone. I flew to Adelaide to attend a funeral. She stayed living quietly in the bushland fragments of Sandgate and Brighton. At night she was learning how to glide, where to find food, and what dangers to look out for. Daytime would find her curled up in a tree hollow, or nest box, with her family. A tangled swirl of Squirrel Gliders, all grey fluff and black wispy tails. It was hard to see where one ended, and the other began.

The autumn of 2015 saw me working at home – I'd taken a year off from my 'real' job – trying to write a book. All those days and nights I spent in my little room, typing, – what was she doing? Now an adult, was she roaming to find her own place in the world? Did she manage to cross the great gashes in the landscape – the wide freeways that indiscriminately gouge lines through built-up areas, forested areas, parklands and wetlands? Or did she stake out a claim in the small urban forest patch where she was raised? Squirrel gliders can glide between scattered trees, or even just poles, to make their way

across the countryside. They don't need to come down to the ground (like koalas often do) which means that they are less susceptible to attacks

by dogs, cats or foxes. By gliding, they can cross busy roads that are a deadly peril to other wild animals.

She didn't need much. Just a line of trees (or poles), or a rope bridge, to allow her to move across the roads and houses, between the fragments of forest.

Last summer saw more temperature records broken, and I found it hard to keep working at home on the steamiest days. I sought the cool of air-conditioned libraries as a refuge. The paperbarks were in almost continuous, bountiful bloom, for months. Where was she then? Perhaps in a hollow that was cool enough? Did she spend her nights guzzling nectar, and dozed blissfully, half-tipsy, during the day? By autumn she had found a mate. By winter there was new life swelling in her own pouch.

So now we finally meet, after all this time. Today she was found dead on a pathway around the back of Third Lagoon. Fresh blood on her nose and mouth. I don't know how she died.

I can cup her lithe, slender body in one of my hands. Her fur is grey and black, and is incredibly soft. A narrow strip of creamy fur trims the edge of her gliding membrane. Her delicate paws are clenched shut in tiny fists. The little one died with her, and is still in her pouch – small, naked, and pink. His eyes are covered by translucent blue lids.

She didn't need much. A hollow or nest box to sleep in. Flowers and insects to eat. A forest with trees, and some linkages across the landscape, to cross the roads, and to avoid the open areas, the sprawling built environment, the big ugly new houses that leave no room for gardens.

Her kin are still here, quietly getting on with their lives. A recent study counted over 30 Squirrel Gliders in Third Lagoon Reserve and the Deagon Wetlands. Wedged in between the houses of Sandgate and Brighton, Deagon and Bracken Ridge.

They don't need much. They have survived in Brisbane for so long now, while in many other parts of Australia their species is sliding towards extinction. Meanwhile, our houses keep getting bigger, the freeways keep getting wider, backyards disappear and the bushland remnants

shrink. The survival of Squirrel Gliders in suburban Brisbane becomes more tenuous each day.

But surely we can do just the little that is needed, to help the gliders quietly live on here, for many years to come? So that future Brisbanites can still proudly say: 'I have gliders living *at the end of my street!*'

Head to Paula's website for more information - <https://www.paperbarkwriter.com/she-didnt-need-much-wins-nature-writing-prize/>

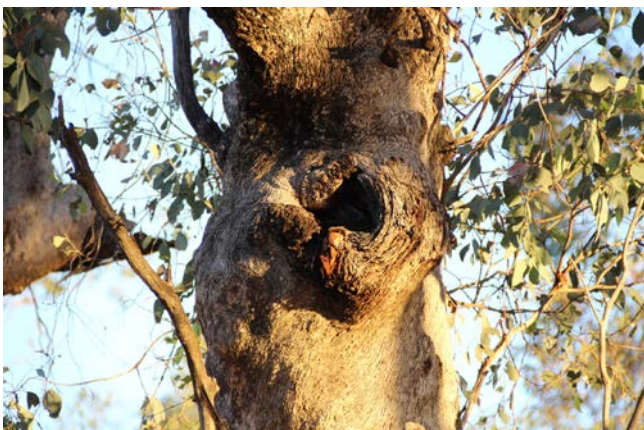
### An interesting read.....

A recent paper looking at how linear habitats in rural landscapes have complementary roles in bird conservation - Hall, M., Nimmo, D., Watson, S., & Bennett, A. F.

<https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2Fs10531-018-1557-3.pdf>

### Did you know?

Hollow formation is dependent on a tree's history, its species and location. Generally, small hollows with narrow entrances suitable for small animals such as Squirrel gliders, take about 100 years to form. Valuable hollows for wildlife are generally found in mature and dead trees, not younger trees.



June, 2018

## Upcoming Events

- Launch of the Squirrel Glider Display at the Burrumbuttock Bus Shelter

**When:** Tuesday 5 June, 11:30am

**Where:** Bus shelter on Urana Rd, Burrumbuttock (near the pub).

For more upcoming events, head to:

- Murray LLS Events Page  
<http://murray.lls.nsw.gov.au/resource-hub/events>
- West Hume Landcare Facebook Page  
<https://www.facebook.com/westhumelandcare>
- Ecoportal  
<http://ecoportal.net.au/events/>
- Greater Hume Shire Events Calendar  
<http://www.greaterhume.nsw.gov.au/Events/EventsCalendar/tabid/154/Default.aspx>
- Eventbrite  
<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/d/australia-albury/events/?crt=regular&sort=best>

## More information

**Lou Bull**, Project Officer, Petaurus Education Group, 0458 240 634, [loubullpetaurus@gmail.com](mailto:loubullpetaurus@gmail.com)

**Tracy Michael**, Land Services Officer, Murray LLS 02 6051 2211; [tracy.michael@lls.nsw.gov.au](mailto:tracy.michael@lls.nsw.gov.au)

Or visit:

- Petaurus Education Group Website  
<http://www.wirraminna.org.au/petaurus/squirrel-glider-lamp/>
- Murray Local Land Services Website  
<http://murray.lls.nsw.gov.au/our-region/programs-and-projects/squirrel-glider-lamp-project>

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Local Land Services



National Landcare Program

