

When & Why was the group formed?

TACPLACI was formed in 1996. The reason for the long unwieldy handle is because it was the amalgamation of two other groups; Rokeby Hills Landcare based on the Tranmere side of Rokeby Hills and the Rokeby Beach Landcare Group which was based at Clarence Plains.

The two groups had somewhat different objectives in their formations. The Rokeby Hills group was initially formed as a means for the Tranmere/Howrah community to engage with the developers of 186 hectares of the Rokeby Hills stretching from the hill above Shoreline shopping centre to south Tranmere. The initial plan put forward by the developer called for suburbia to cover the whole hill with virtually no native vegetation remaining. Members of the community who initiated the Rokeby Hills Group wanted some natural areas to be retained and for there to be vegetation links from the shoreline to the skyline.

The Rokeby Beach Landcare group was initially formed to rehabilitate the crown land between Rokeby Beach and Droughty Point Road near the mouth of the Clarence Plains Rivulet. The beach and its surrounds were overgrown with weeds.

The two prominent members of that group were very enthusiastic, environmentally inclined ladies who, once they achieved the transformation of the beach, looked further afield and applied for a grant to have a catchment management plan designed for the whole of Clarence Plains Rivulet catchment area. The rivulet and its associated streams rise in Mt Rumney and run through Clarence plains to meet the sea at Rokeby Beach. The application was successful and the group received a grant of \$25,000.

However, once they realized what was involved, the two ladies, both having work and family commitments, recognised that they did not have the resources within the group to pursue the project. They considered returning the funds, but after initial talks with the then convenor for the Rokeby Hills group, Kim Peart, and then various meetings between the two groups, the decision was taken to amalgamate both groups so that the project could be undertaken.

So that is how the Tranmere – Clarence Plains Land and Coastcare Inc. got its start and its name!

The new group hired consulting firm, Sinclair Knight Merz, to design the plan for the catchment. Their representative, Jamie Wood worked closely with Kim Peart and the catchment management plan was delivered on time and within budget in the late 1990s.

The group has since worked to update the catchment management plan in association with Clarence City Council.

What do you think has kept the group together?

One name, Wendy Andrew. If it wasn't for her drive and enthusiasm, the group would never have achieved what it has in the last 25 years.

As luck would have it, soon after the Catchment Management Plan was delivered, Wendy joined the group. She and her late husband, Bruce had recently retired and moved to Tasmania. One of the reasons for choosing their house in Howrah was the bushland behind.

Wendy's initial reason for joining the group was because the developer of 186 hectares of Rokeby Hills had started development right behind their house without any consultation with the local residents. Straightaway Wendy joined the committee and immediately plunged into consulting with the developer and learning all she could about the planning process. She haunted the planners at the Clarence City Council both by phone and personal attendance.

Wendy took over as convenor of the group when Kim Peart left (about 1998). She immediately recognised that the group had a responsibility to implement the Clarence Plains Rivulet Catchment Management Plan. With her usual attention to detail, having thoroughly read the consultant's recommendations, she considered there were two priority actions the group should be taking.

1. To document the history of the area and then to create an historic trail through the township of Rokeby.
2. To actively manage the clean up and revegetation of the Clarence Plains Rivulet in the reserve running from Goodwins Road to the boundary of Bayview High School (formerly Rokeby High School)

Not only did she drive the rest of the group and everyone else involved, Wendy and her late husband Bruce, did a majority of the planning and a fair proportion of the physical work which resulted in these two projects being successfully achieved.

Wendy spent weeks and months in state archives as well as interviewing older residents of the area who had knowledge of the history of the area. She ended up writing a book about the history of the area, "Footprints".

She obtained a grant from the Commonwealth government under the Centenary of Federation scheme to design and implement the "Old Rokeby Historic Trail". Having designed the self drive trail and accompanying pamphlet, she then designed the signs and obtained the relevant permits to place the signs at various points along the Trail. To date, Wendy has conducted all the formal tours of the Trail.

What is the project the group is most proud of?

There are probably 4 projects which stand out.

1. The Old Rokeby Historic Trail
2. The work for the dole project which transformed the rivulet over a period of about 6 years.

When the government of the day introduced work for the dole schemes in early 2000s, Wendy saw an opportunity for a Work for the Dole group to carry out environmental work along the Clarence Plains Rivulet. She applied on behalf of the group and was granted funding to hire a supervisor to oversee the workers assigned to the group. Their task was to clean up and re-vegetate the rivulet surrounds from Goodwins Road for a length of over a kilometer to the boundary of Bayview High School.

When the group first looked at the area it was like a rubbish tip with car bodies and rubbish strewn everywhere. Not forgetting the 6 foot high blackberries. The first step was to fence and boulder-off the area so no more rubbish could be dumped. Then a cleanup of the car bodies and

rubbish was organised. Once that was done, work began on clearing environmental weeds such as blackberry, boxthorn and boneseed and planting natives to replace them.

The next step was to build a pedestrian path running from Goodwins Road to the boundary of Bayview High School. Wendy's husband Bruce, a retired civil engineer, designed the path and supervised the work for the dole team in its construction. The work for the dole team worked in the area for about 6 years. The result today is a beautiful park land surrounding the rivulet.

3. The planning outcomes of sub-division developments in Rokeby Hills and Clarence Plains.

Over the years, the group, primarily through Wendy worked with the developers to obtain sub-divisions that featured retained natural areas, particularly on ridge lines, Water Sensitive Urban Design features, appropriate Public Open Spaces, walking trails and natural links connecting shorelines to ridge lines.

4. Rehabilitation of foreshore, gully & hill reserves.

Since Wendy moved to Western Australia in 2017, the group has focused more on rehabilitation of the Tranmere foreshore, the Rokeby Hills reserves and the connecting gullies in accordance with the Council's Reserve Activity Plans. We have a core working group of about 8 people who together with Council and its contractors are gradually returning these areas to a more native vegetation.

Did your group form partnerships for it to succeed?

The most significant relationship this group has had is with the Clarence City Council. Through their staff and elected representatives, they have always tried to assist the group with its objectives.

We have collaborated with many other organisations and individuals over the years without which we would never have achieved our objectives.

Some of these are: Landcare Tasmania, Parks and Wildlife (in the early years), Planning Commission, State Archives, Clarence Lions and the developers of several sub-divisions in Rokeby Hills and Clarence Plains area. There are many, many others; too numerous to name and to even recall. I hope I haven't overlooked any important ones.

Is there any project the group would have approached differently in hindsight?

No.

What are the challenges the group faces for the future?

The challenge is always to find enough volunteers do the physical work and also to undertake the administrative work and the background planning and preparation for events.

How does your group share your work with the broader community?

1. Word of mouth: Many of our members have come from contacts with existing members.
2. Website
3. Facebook page
4. Occasional media appearances.

What drives you to keep returning to working bees?

The core group of committee members and workers pride themselves in conserving natural areas where possible and returning debilitated areas to native vegetation as much as possible.

Is it worth also adding that it is a pleasure to be working in the areas we do. It is rewarding to make a significant and very visible difference to the sites in which we work. And we are a great group of people who go for coffee after a working bee.