



# 2018 NATIONAL LANDCARE AWARDS

11 October  
Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre

**Nominee: Tamar Island Wetland CAREs Volunteer Group, TAS**  
**Category: Fairfax Landcare Community Group Award**

The Tamar Island Wetlands Centre (TIWC) CAREs Volunteer Group is a branch of Wildcare Inc. and operates the Tamar Island Wetlands Centre, in Riverside, with support from a part-time centre coordinator on behalf of the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service. The Group has been successfully operating the centre since it opened in November 2000 and now welcomes over 38,000 visitors annually. The 26 members of the volunteer team primarily provide visitor and educational information, focusing on a range of environmental topics, including wetlands ecology, wetlands fauna and flora and the pest fish, *Gambusia holbrooki*. The volunteer team provide in excess of 5,500 volunteer hours annually to the TIWC and the community as a first point of contact in interpreting these unique wetlands.

The centre which is open 364 days a year and staffed entirely by volunteers offering a safe, friendly, informative, affordable and inclusive place for the broader community to visit for recreational, educational, and social purposes. Each year the volunteers successfully run an open day to celebrate World Wetlands Day with free activities for the whole community, thereby promoting the benefits of preserving wetlands for future generations. This event is growing every year and in 2017 attracted a record crowd with over 500 community participants.

The TIWC are actively involved with the University of Tasmania's 'Trojan Y' project to eradicate *Gambusia holbrooki* from within the Tamar Island Wetlands. The project's aim is to modify by genetic manipulation the chromosomes in this species to breed females that will only give birth to male offspring. The volunteers assist this project by undertaking weekly population monitoring, maintaining a fish stock, and educating the community on the impacts of introducing unwanted species.

The group works closely with local natural resource management groups, particularly Natural Resource Management (NRM) North, who has been pivotal in funding equipment and chemical purchases to undertake weed working bees on Tamar Island. There have been many collaboratively organised working bees on Tamar Island with the community, NRM North, TIWC volunteers and Parks and Wildlife staff. Local primary school groups also regularly visit the centre and reserve as part of the school curriculum.

The volunteers are able to inspire and encourage new volunteers through the mentoring program so that they benefit, not only themselves but also to the community and the environment. The level of knowledge and experience is vast amongst such a diverse group and they happy to assist and share their knowledge with each other and the community. The volunteers also assist University of Tasmania (UTas) students requiring practical work experience, by supervising students at the centre.

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One of the biggest challenges facing TIWC is the recruitment of new volunteers and lowering the average volunteer age. For many years, the average volunteer age for the Group was 67. However, recently the Group has been able to encourage new graduates and first year students from UTas to undertake a weed management project on Tamar Island. The project's aim is to identify weed species, then prepare a work plan to control each weed species during spring 2017 and a follow up plan for autumn and spring 2018.

Funding for on-ground works is another issue faced by the Group. TIWC engaged Ian Edmondson, a postgraduate student, to undertake a long overdue building survey on a heritage listed building remaining on Tamar Island. The project provided the volunteers with an example of where a tangible project plan can be implemented so they can apply for grants to fund any ongoing maintenance and protection of the heritage building.

Landcare is a grassroots movement that harnesses individuals and groups to protect, restore and sustainably manage Australia's natural environment and its productivity. Groups that fall under the Landcare umbrella work on a diverse range of environmental projects and include farmers embracing sustainable farm management and any community group that partakes in volunteer environmental activities. To find out how you can become a Landcare volunteer and for full details on all 2018 National Landcare finalists, visit [www.landcareaustralia.org.au](http://www.landcareaustralia.org.au)

## Ends

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## Web Summary

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