

TKMG Presidents Report 2003

The end of this year marks the start of the TKMG's 7th year as an incorporated group. This past year has been a busy one for the group, we have finished projects, commenced new projects and we have new project applications in the wings.

The Case Studies II project, "Conservation of Remnant Vegetation on Private Property on the Atherton Tablelands", was finalised at the August meeting. This project used three Tablelands properties to showcase the economic and environmental benefits of retaining and enhancing remnant vegetation on rural properties. The project was finalised when project co-managers Larry Crook and Sue Mathams presented property management plans to two of the three participants: the Walthams (Olive and Reg), and Neil Coleman. The property management plans include documentation and mapping of the existing flora and fauna habitats, a survey for tree kangaroos, and habitat management plans for controlling pests and enhancing remnant vegetation.

John Winter has been spending considerable time on Cape York Peninsula undertaking surveys for possums as part of his CYNHT project examining declines in possums on Cape York. John has made four of his six planned field trips. He has visited sites at Jardine River, Embley/Mapoon, Coen, and the Kimber Plateau. Prior to this, it had been suggested that Brushtailed and Ringtailed possums had become extinct from much of Cape York Peninsula. Preliminary results from John's recent field work suggest that this isn't necessarily the case, although it does appear that Brushtail populations are very localised and are cyclical and ringtail possums are very scarce. This project is due to finish in November 2003.

The Quoll project is all but finished. One more hair tubing survey is required and the poster still needs to be produced. The project has resulted in an increased awareness of Quolls by landowners, and phone calls are still received regarding problem quolls, even though there has been no formal media work done for many months. Results of the quoll project have fed into the Qld Wild Dog Strategy. The Quoll web site continues to function and is being accessed by government departments and community groups across Australia. Most recently, the Victorian environment department have used pictures from the web site to launch their own community survey for Spotted-tailed Quolls.

A new project has been commenced which intends to map the distribution of Tree Kangaroos in towns on the Atherton Tablelands. This project will provide fine scale information on the distribution and threats to Tree Kangaroos in the town precincts and will raise community awareness of Tree Kangaroos in their area. This project has been instigated by John Winter, with support from member Kylie Freebody. Initially the project will conduct a community survey of the Malanda area. Survey forms will be available to the public at the Eacham Shire Council Office, the Tree Kangaroo Café, and the Little Bottler Bottle Shop at the Malanda Hotel. Alex and Jane at the Tree Kangaroo Café are the project managers for this project.

Several new projects have been proposed and funding applications submitted. These include a project to examine the impacts of domestic cats on wildlife submitted by Scott Burnett and two projects aimed at enhancing habitat quality and connectivity of

two areas of important tree kangaroo habitat, one in the Millaa Millaa area and another in the Yungaburra areas. More details of the latter two proposed projects are given in the latest Mammal Mail (Sept 2003 edition).

Lars has worked tirelessly promoting the TKMG at the Yungaburra markets and on the world wide web. He has manned 5 stalls at the Yungaburra and Malanda since our last AGM and has managed the TKMG web site. Lars has also been organising the preparation of a stuffed TK for future TKMG promotional work. The TK to be stuffed is a roadkill and will be housed at the TK Café, although we will take it on the road as need be. Lars has liaised with EPA and submitted a permit which we have been assured will be issued to us. He has also obtained the details of taxidermists and their quotes for the job. I'd like to take this opportunity to thanks Lars for his commitment to the group during what has been a trying year for him.

Several of the executive are standing down at this meeting, including our treasurer of many years Beth Stern. Beth has been on the executive committee since the groups inception and has done a magnificent job as treasurer, especially given the chaos accompanying the implementation of the GST in 2000. We all owe Beth a tremendous debt for her generosity with her time during her period as treasurer of the TKMG and hope that she'll continue to be involved with the group in a non-executive function.

Finally I'd like to thank everyone who has contributed to the running of the group: members of the executive, ordinary members and guest speakers and wish the group well over the next year.

Scott Burnett
President
September 2003