



# MOGGILL CREEK CATCHMENT GROUP

P.O. Box 657, Kenmore. 4069

[www.moggillcreek.org.au](http://www.moggillcreek.org.au)

## MCCG NEWSLETTER: SUMMER 2017-18

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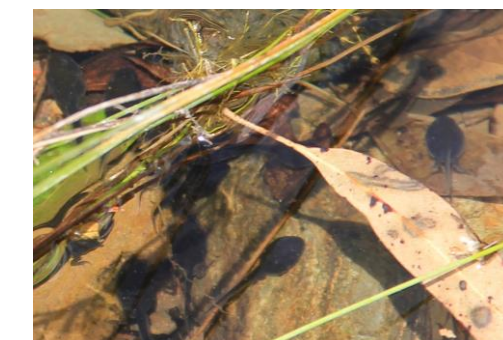
**ABOVE:** Nadia, caring for a Feathertail glider (picture: Chris Read). To read more about the challenges of a soft release, turn to page 4.



**ABOVE:** Nursery volunteers, taking a well-earned break to celebrate a special birthday (picture: Damien Egan). More on page 6.



**ABOVE:** The result of hard work on a Bryan and Jenny Hacker revegetation 'project' at home (picture dated 2013). For more information (and the 'before' picture), turn to page 3.



**LEFT:** Native Holly (*Alchornia ilicifolia*). For more seeds (and weeds), turn to page 6.

**LEFT:** Some of the tadpoles schooling in the creek (picture: Phil Bird). For more froggin' issues, turn to page 8.

## Chairman's report

As the incoming chairman of the MCCG Management Committee, I would like to take this opportunity of thanking the outgoing chairman, Warren Hoey, for all the excellent work he has done over the last 5 years in ensuring that the Group continues to function effectively in protecting and enhancing our wonderful environment, disseminating information about local flora and fauna, providing practical support for conservation activities, and reaching out to the local community. I would also like to thank the outgoing secretary, Cathie Mortimer, for her tireless efforts on behalf of the Group, and to welcome the new secretary, Sanja Oldridge. All the other members of the Management Committee also deserve congratulations for their unstinting efforts over the last 12 months. A special thank you goes to Warren, Malcolm Frost and all the others who contributed to the development of our revised Strategic Plan. This enables us to take stock of the progress made by MCCG over the past 20 years, and it also ensures that we remain focussed on our strategic objectives, and are ready to adapt to new challenges in the future.

My background is as an academic physicist, so I am very conscious of the fact that I have much to learn about protection of our landscape and native flora and fauna. Fortunately, we have within MCCG a wealth of relevant knowledge and experience to draw on. Over the coming months I shall be relying heavily on advice from those better qualified than myself. I would like to emphasise that this advice is available to all MCCG members, as well as practical support in addressing such issues as weed infestation, revegetation and pest control. There is much useful information on our [website](#). For more specialist advice, please feel free to contact me or a member of the Committee.

Some specific issues that we need to prioritise in future include targeting efforts to control invasive weeds (e.g. cats claw and Chinese elm) to minimise environmental damage, how best to address new threats to the environment (e.g. Anzac daisy), and how to get the right balance between aggressive removal of such weeds and the protection of native wildlife that have come to rely on them for refuge and protection. Membership expansion and renewal is also a matter of ongoing concern. As 57% of the Moggill Creek catchment is on private land we need to encourage more landholders to become involved in MCCG and Brisbane City Council (BCC)'s 'Land for



Wildlife' scheme. Our bushcare groups are populated by long-term supporters who are not getting any younger, so we need to encourage further involvement by the local community, make them aware of the wonderful things we are doing to maintain and enhance the natural environment, and stimulate more of them to become actively involved. I hope all of you will join me in promoting this cause.

*Jim Pope*

## Editorial

*It has been great to have a problem for this issue—a lack of space! To fit everything in there will be a bigger feature on the Photography Competition in the next issue. Do keep YOUR news coming, as I would love to continue to feature more 'new voices' alongside our more experienced contributors. All news, reflections, or new ideas gratefully received (particularly from younger members of the Association). I am sure EVERYONE has at least 100 words they could write... so email me soon with those New Year resolutions and ideas [mccgeditor@outlook.com.au](mailto:mccgeditor@outlook.com.au) Cathi*

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Moggill Creek Catchment Group (MCCG) is a volunteer action group, aiming to conserve & improve the natural environment of our catchment on both private & public land.

**Chairman: Jim Pope**

**Secretary: Sanja Oldridge**

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**Articles of interest to Members are *always* welcome.**

The Editor reserves the right not to publish any item submitted. Material will be edited for clarity, style and space. The decision of the Editor is final. *Please email your ideas direct to [mccgeditor@outlook.com.au](mailto:mccgeditor@outlook.com.au).*

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## Gap Creek: Now and Then

Bryan Hacker rose to the challenge posed in the last issue, with an update on a revegetation project on his own property. More stories from Members are ALWAYS welcome (just email the [editor](#) to star in the next issue of the newsletter)!

We own a 1 ha property just off Gap Creek Road. It straddles a ridge, and soils are generally very infertile (or non-existent!). But it does include an axe-handle, running downhill to and across a minor drainage line, where soils are deeper and retain moisture for a longer period following rain. The ground has never been fully cleared. Eight species of *Eucalyptus/Corymbia* occur naturally on the property, several trees being well over 100-years old.

We have been involved in restoring native vegetation for about 20 years, undertaking many different projects. Each project has differed, due to the characteristics of the site. As a policy, we tackle one project at a time *and* (as far as is practical) we avoid using herbicides. Here I focus on one of our many projects, which is close to our southern boundary.



Pictured above: 'Before' the project, 1999.

Our neighbours, also on a 1 ha block, have a lawn area sloping down to our block, which also includes their seepage channels. The channels provide additional moisture, and potentially some nutrients which could have contributed to the death of a couple of our eucalypts. Our side of the border includes a magnificent rock fig (*Ficus rubiginosa*) and, prior to the photo taken in 1999 (above), several Captain Cook and oleander shrubs (*Cassipouera thevetia* and *Nerium oleander*), which we cut back and poisoned.

Next, we planted several native rainforest trees and shrubs, all locally native. These included hairy-leaved rosewood (*Dysoxylum rufum*), foam bark (*Jagera pseudorhus*), green kamala (*Mallotus laevis*), brown pine (*Podocarpus elatus*), black apple

(*Planchonella australis*), red cedar (*Toona ciliata*), white beech (*Gmelina leichhardtii*), wild lime (*Citrus australis*), celery wood (*Polyscias elegans*), native holly (*Alchornea ilicifolia*) and black thorn (*Bursaria spinosa*), all of which flourished. Also planted, but which failed to survive, were bleeding heart (*Homalanthus populifolius*), native tamarind (*Diploglottis australis*) and brown kurrajong (*Commersonia bartramia*), which apparently require softer conditions. Growth over the 2011-13 period was impressive, resulting in a closed rainforest where now the only weed is the pervasive coral berry (*Rivina humilis*). With heavy shade, there is little natural regeneration within the forested area. But immediately adjoining the area, native holly seedlings are abundant, as well as white cedar (*Melia azedarach*) and an occasional red kamala (*Mallotus philippensis*). Grasses are largely absent, though there is some graceful grass (*Ottocloa gracillima*) and many-flowered matrush (*Lomandra multiflora*) is flourishing. The loss of groundcover is of some concern, with the possibility of erosion during extreme rain events. Is the restored vegetation, pictured on the front cover of this newsletter, what would have been there 200 years ago? The answer is 'No'. However, with the changed conditions associated with the development of our neighbour's property, it seemed a good way to go. If asked if I would do the same now, the answer would be 'Yes!'

Bryan Hacker

## MCCG Website: Butterfly News!

The [MCCG website](#) already holds valuable information about butterflies (we have a comprehensive list of butterflies recorded in the Catchment (2002-08) by D.P.A Sands). But here are two pieces of breaking butterfly news. Firstly, I am delighted that we will soon have information on the [MCCG website](#) about pollinators, suitable plants, location, and light requirements.



Pictured above: Clearing Swallowtail. Picture: Ed Frazer.

Secondly, we are also developing an online *Field Guide to Butterflies Within our Catchment* (complete with photos). Very soon, if you happen to have your mobile handy while out and about, you will be able to identify a butterfly right at that moment. And learn about its favourite host plants and preferred vicinities. Dale Borgelt and Ed Frazer share a passion for butterflies and for wildlife photography. The online Butterfly Field Guide initiative is their brainchild, and it promises to be both informative and *very* popular.

Michelle Johnston

## Green Army Contribution

**The Green Army may have left the catchment, but their work with the MCCG may have lasting effects, particularly in some parts of Upper Brookfield.**

During 2016-17 a Green Army team provided sustained weed management and replanting of the flood-prone areas over the Habitat Brisbane site on Rafting Ground Road. This included removing weeds on the creek banks and in the creek bed. The main species were Chinese celtis, glycine, Embu panic and other exotics such as Ruellia tweediana, and cats claw creeper on the Rafting Ground Road side of Moggill Creek. The main creek targets were Senegal tea, ruellia, purple taro, and castor oil plant.



**Pictured above: The Green Army at work**

The team achieved excellent results on restoring the riparian zone vegetation of Moggill Creek in Upper Brookfield. Over 1,000 plants were planted (or replanted) following the one episodic flood. The work on Smith's Scrub also helped reduce the threats from Madeira vine in the forest, and gave the team some experience in several areas, reducing grass and vine weed threats to young trees, and in-fill planting to reduce erosion (using jute matting). In another Upper Brookfield site, the 'Army' did a great job in managing the cats claw on the forest floor, saving hundreds of regenerating small native plants from certain death. Team members gained experience in creek health monitoring, bird and plant identification, seed

collection and nursery propagation, and in carrying out a condition appraisal survey. As part of their training they all received theoretical and field experience in weed management. The Green Army program was a very useful opportunity for the MCCG to get assistance in managing some priority sites, and to share knowledge and skills with eager young adults, many of whom were graduates with environmental management degrees. Several of our members worked with the teams, and generally were very impressed with the enthusiasm of the Green Army team.

Adrian Webb

## Bush Bite: Feathertail Gliders

Following Michelle Johnston's update, in our last issue, on one of the many new website initiatives, here is a further Bush Bite. If you have a story to share, do email the newsletter editor, or contact Michelle on ([webedit2@moggillcreek.org.au](mailto:webedit2@moggillcreek.org.au)). And in the meantime, enjoy Chris Read's story.

Feathertail gliders are the most attractive animals—warm, energetic, and bouncy, with enormous eyes, a feather for a tail, and able to curl up in the palm of a hand (*see our cover picture*). They glide 20+m between trees, and are hard to find. But they are common in the MCCG catchment.

Our neighbours, about a kilometre away, had been given a family of Feathertail gliders (which had been rehabilitated by local wildlife carers) for 'soft release' back into the bush. Soft releasing begins with allowing gliders to settle into the local environment, in an aviary, for several weeks. During this time, they typically feed on local flowering plants and mealworms, as they increase in strength, in readiness to be released back into the wild. Over successive nights the aviary is then opened, allowing them to explore the area but to return, if desired, for food and shelter during the day. This allows the gliders to transition quickly, to being 'fully wild' animals, at their own pace. But this time we struck a problem. After a week or two, the local Boobook Owls (also very common) started visiting nightly. They would sit in front of our neighbour's aviary and call loudly, surely attracted by the potential food. It made for great photos of the owls, but it was impossible to release the gliders. I was therefore asked if we could move the gliders to my aviary, and release them away from the Boobooks. Wonderful... I love gliders, and although I had heard Boobooks calling in the distance, I had never heard them close to my house.

After settling the gliders into my aviary, I kept them for two days and then planned to release them. Soon

after dusk on the planned release night, my daughter, Nadia, said that she could hear a scary blood-curdling screaming in our back yard. When we went to investigate we discovered an incredible family of five Boobook Owls, surrounding the aviary. Not the night to release we decided.

I continue to ask myself two questions. First, how did the Boobooks track the Feathertail gliders from over a kilometre away? Can the owls hear something that we can't? Is it a smell? And, second, if the owls have senses this sensitive, how does any wild glider, mouse or insect have a chance to survive each night?

We released the gliders a few nights later, and regularly hear the Boobooks in the distance—but the Boobooks are never as close or loud as the night of the planned release.

Chris Read

## Photography Competition Update

Congratulations to all Photography Competition winners. Our People's Choice competition was hotly contested. Laura Sinclair was third, with *The Swimmer*. Second was Alexander Davies, with *Hissing at the Camera*, and Ed Frazer was 1<sup>st</sup> with *Fast Food For Fledglings*. In the next issue, Ed (who won five MCCG prizes in 2017, as well as highly commended recognition) will provide some top tips on photographing birds. One to look out for!

## Lacewings

UQ's Emeritus Professor of Zoology, Gordon Grigg, shares some nuggets of information about lacewings.

Many readers will be familiar with the U-shaped clusters of 40 or so tiny white eggs, each hanging from a very fine 4-5 mm thread. They are seen under the



eaves of houses and in similar places. The eggs hatch into tiny, fierce looking larvae with large curved mandibles (see picture, above).

Lacewings live predatory lives in the leaf litter, before they pupate and, ultimately, emerge as substantial

adults nearly 40 mm long with two pairs of wings (see picture, below). The adults too are predatory, on other insects, and also have conspicuous mandibles.



Pictured above: Adult Lacewing

According to CSIRO's "Insects of Australia" this is the most common species of Nymphidae (Order Neuroptera), a family that occurs mostly in eastern Australia, with one in the west and six species in PNG.

Gordon Grigg

## Sound Financial Position

**The AGM report by Joanna Yesberg, our hard-working Treasurer, presented a positive picture.**

Following a deficit of \$16,077 in 2016, we have recorded a surplus for the 2017 financial year of \$11,276. This is reflected in cash at bank totalling \$46,625, which includes \$8,971 held in our Donations Trust Fund, and \$2,575 in unspent grant monies.

During the year we had a total income of \$44,792, of which grants received made up \$22,094. This included Brisbane City Council Admin/PR support of \$8,800. Membership income was down, at \$8,825 (in 2016 membership income was \$9,475).

After 3 years of deficits, a call to members resulted in many very generous donations (a total of \$8,500). Together with a reduction in Administration and PR expenses, this has resulted in a surplus this year.

Our expenses totalled \$33,516. The three largest areas of expenditure are Grant Spending (\$13,550), PR (\$6,749), and Administration (\$6,225).

It is therefore pleasing to report that the MCCG is in a sound financial position.

Joanna Yesberg

## MCCG Facebook: 450 followers!

In just two years, our Facebook page has gathered 450 followers—people who want to find out about MCCG events, and discover information on birds, weeds and current practices in revegetation around Brisbane. As the MCCG Facebook Manager, it is always wonderful to hear your comments, and to see you like the posts.

In 2018, I hope to manage the Facebook page a little differently, so that it becomes easier for each of you to contribute to the page. Passing on information, photos

you would like to share, and hearing suggestions from you will improve the experience of our followers.

So, I encourage you to think up ways of participating. I would also like to see more contributions from people under twenty. All suggestions welcome as to how to encourage this—and don't forget to email me with news to share ([mccgfacebook@gmail.com](mailto:mccgfacebook@gmail.com)).

Janine Nicklin

## Happy Birthday Joyce!

**Margaret Palmer shares some information on a special birthday celebration at the nursery. If you are interested in volunteering, I am sure they would love to welcome you to join with their working bees (and entertainments, including 'special' birthdays).**

On Monday 16 October, the MCCG nursery working bee celebrated the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday of a much-loved member, Joyce Westenberg (picture below, by Damien Egan, of Joyce with her daughter, Joyce Watt). Joyce has lived in Australia since migrating from Rotterdam in 1957. In addition to raising a family of 5 children, 14 grandchildren and 21 great-grandchildren, Joyce was also active in the family stationery and printing



business in Salisbury for 29 years (before buying her own Spring Hill business in 2001). From the outset, Joyce loved the open spaces in Australia which enabled her to have a large garden. She now has a beautiful native garden (interspersed with daisies and pansies "for colour") on her 10-acre Brookfield property. A keen *Land for Wildlife* member, Joyce has potted up innumerable seedlings during her years of service at the nursery.

A scrumptious home-made morning tea was provided by Joyce Watt, and by Jenny Hacker. The group enjoyed this luscious spread, and assailed the ears of the birthday girl with a tuneful rendition of Happy Birthday. Our best wishes to Joyce for her continued celebrations.

Margaret Palmer

## Weeds: Coral Berry (*Rivina humilis*)

The common name coral berry may refer to *Rivina humilis* or to a very different plant, but also with small red fruit, *Ardisia crenata*. To add to the confusion, both species are recognised as environmental weeds by the BCC. In our catchment it is *Rivina humilis* which is a significant weed, *Ardisia crenata* evidently being a problem in more coastal districts.

*Rivina humilis* is an herbaceous (that is, non-woody) undershrub growing to a height of c. 1m. Leaves are alternate and hairless and are born on 1-4cm petioles, the blades dark green, 2-13cm long and 1-5cm wide. The flowers are about 2mm wide, each with 4 pink-tipped petals and c10-30 or more are born on axillary racemes. These are followed by c. 3mm diameter shiny fruit, which are red when ripe (pictured below).



*Rivina humilis* is a native of tropical America. In our area it is a significant weed of heavily shaded areas, growing rapidly and fruiting prolifically from an early age. Plants may readily be pulled out by hand, but be sure to take a bucket when working on this species, to collect the numerous fruit.

Bryan Hacker

## Seeds: Native Holly (*Alchornia ilicifolia*)

Native holly is a sparsely-branched shrub of drier rainforests (growing up to a height of 6m). Leaves are alternate, up to 10cm long and 7cm wide, and have petioles (stalks) up to 7mm long. The leaf surface is hairless, the upper surface quite shiny, and each margin commonly carries 3-5 spine-tipped points (see front page photograph).

Plants of native holly may be male or female, the flowers being white in the male plants, 2mm diameter, green in female, slightly larger. Several flowers are born on short stalks (racemes) in leaf axils. The fruit is about 6mm in diameter, usually 3-lobed, each lobe with a single seed.

Flowering is in spring, the fruit ripening over several weeks. Despite being reputed to be difficult to

regenerate from seed, it may regenerate naturally readily. Native holly is in the Euphorbiaceae family, a very large family of flowering plants which also includes the well-known castor oil plant as well as the cheese tree. Endemic to Australia, it occurs from NE Queensland to central coastal NSW. The genus name *Alchornia* is after the English botanist Stanesby Alchorne. The species name *ilicifolia* means 'leaves like *Ilex*', the European holly. Bryan Hacker

## Upper Brookfield Working Group

**The various sections of our catchment benefit from the hard work of many of our members. It has been great to hear about the progress made by different groups. This month, an update from Phil Bird on the successes of the Upper Brookfield Working Group.**

Sometimes it is too hard to know where to start, when you see the mass of weeds growing on our properties and along the creek lines. It can be overwhelming to see a beautiful flush of weeds, especially after rains and warm weather. Areas previously cleared—even when brush-cut, sprayed, and manually removed—can still be invaded by more weeds (as the result of the massive seed bank, or of roots left in the ground). On casting a quick eye over the area, it can appear that we are only growing lantana, elephant grass and embu panic. Castor oil plants come up in the thousands, while Maderia, morning glory, glycine, cats claw, and asparagus vine, now have less competition. Clear a site and put plants in the ground is the easy part. The hard part of any bush rehabilitation is maintaining the energy and enthusiasm to keep going.

In May 2016, a group of neighbours decided to work together to restore the riparian bushland along the upper reaches of Moggill Creek. The area includes many private properties, culverts and road margins. Our priority was to determine what we have, so we can protect the existing native species. Then we identified a list of tasks: control the smothering canopy vines; remove the grasses from the creek banks (such as elephant and embu panic) and replace with riparian native species (including lomandra, cheese tree, red-flowering bottle brush, and river she-oaks, which grow naturally in these areas).

During the selective clearing of the upper banks, many dry rainforest species were found underneath the weeds—especially the red olive plum, mutton wood and several ferns. We are also mindful of local wildlife that use the area—indicator species, such as banded rails and platypus, have been sighted locally.

We have been fortunate that we also had help from the Green Army (both in preparing the site for planting, and with some 900+ plants infill planted, *see page 4*). We have also re-constructed creek banks, following nature with rocks, sediment and plants. During recent flooding events the banks were subjected to erosion, after removal of weedy exotic grasses, so time is another element in supporting creek bank stability with the establishment of native species (this is now occurring, and the banks seem relatively stable).

It has been particularly difficult to maintain the viability of plants during the recent dry. Plants have endured, with young trees now growing above the height of nibbling animals, augmenting the mature species found at the site. As a group, we have met the test of time, with a core team of neighbours who meet on the last Sunday in each month. We work together, and then enjoy a morning tea. Plates are shared, together with a neighbourly chin wag over a cuppa. For further information on our group please contact me on [frogphil@gmail.com](mailto:frogphil@gmail.com). Phil Bird

## Community Achievement

**Congratulations to all MCCG members and volunteers. The MCCG was a Finalist in the Pullenvale Ward Outstanding Achievement Awards (part of a State-wide program of over 240 entries).**



**Pictured: Dale Borgelt (L), with Cr Kate Richards (R), at the November 2017 ceremony.**

## Fungi Are Not Plants

**Keen observers visited our October photography competition desk with some vital information.**

Once the 2017 photographs went on display at Kenmore Village, fungi fans and mycologists were quick to let us know that fungi are *not* native plants. It was lovely that a number of people pointed out that we should not have fungi in our 'Native Plants'

category, because fungi are now in a scientifically recognised kingdom (i.e. *not* animals, nor plants). Competition category descriptions have changed over the years. Previously, *Native Wildlife* included flora and fauna, before *Plants* were later moved to a new category to encourage more plant entries. The committee will now have to rise to the naming challenge. Native Plants & Fungi? Or Native Flora & Fungi?!

Why not come along to the **Cottage Talk on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2018 (10am)** to hear from mycology expert Dr Diana Leeman, for a fungi presentation. She is a good speaker, so book your place now (email [daleborgelt@gmail.com](mailto:daleborgelt@gmail.com)). **Dale Borgelt**

## Froggin' Around

**Phil Bird updates us on the Cane Toad Challenge, and shares some information on the Peron's Treefrog. A froggers' 'seeds and weeds' perhaps?**

There could be up to 25 frog species in our catchment. Recently, when peering into our part of Moggill Creek, I could see black short-tailed tadpoles. Schooling, at the edge of the water, were cane toad tadpoles (*Rhinella marina*), alongside brown mottled tadpoles with longer tails (see picture, front cover).



Pictured above: Peron's Treefrog—the emerald spotted treefrog, *Litoria peronii*. (Credit, Stefan Durtschi, QFSI)

In froggin' it can be hard to find the adults. The best indicator can be to listen for a distinctive call. One frog, often calling from the dam, is the male Peron's Treefrog (emerald spotted treefrog, *Litoria peronii*). *Litoria peronii* has a distinctive, very loud call, which sounds a little like a toy machine gun with a descending rattle. The frog can grow to 65mm. As shown above, dark brown in colour, it has numerous small iridescent green spots, and is yellow with a black mottling on the hind-side of the thighs and groin (with a distinctive "plus-shaped" ("+" ) pupil). Eggs are almost transparent, and are laid singly or in small

groups. The iridescent green tadpoles are very active. With a very high-crested tail, acutely pointed, and large jaws, they grow up to 70mm.

**Pests:** The Cane Toad Challenge, which has a partnership with UQ's IMB Professor Rob Capon, uses baited traps to catch cane toad tadpoles. Of course, there is no point in removing tadpoles alone, as just one pair of cane toads can produce up to 25,000 eggs. We are talking with BCC about the collection of adult cane toads. Venom can be extracted from parotid glands which, once purified, can be used as bait in the traps. Removal of cane toads from the environment is controversial, as some froggers think that some of our native species will learn how to be cane toad predators. However, the removal of cane toad adults does have a positive impact on native predatory species, such as quolls and lace monitors, so we are hoping to use citizen science to determine the presence /absence of these species.

**Phil Bird**



## Welcome To Our New Secretary

**Sanja Oldridge is the newest member of the MCCG Management Committee, joining as Secretary at the November 2017 AGM.**

Sanja is a practising water engineer, with over 18 years' experience in water infrastructure planning, water management and catchment protection. Sanja holds a Doctor of Technology degree (instigated by Deakin University and Engineers Australia), undertaking applied research sponsored by water and energy corporations in Tasmania. This project investigated the impact of catchment land use on surface water quality.

Sanja's experience has heightened her passion for natural environment and conservation. Sanja is married to Nigel, and they have a wonderful daughter Tiana. They live near Rafting Ground Park, Kenmore, where they often walk Baxter (the dog).