



TreeProject

Celebrating
25 Years
2 Million trees and
still counting

June 2014

The TreeProject Story
The Next Generation
TreeProject VIP's

Celebrating 25 years — Thank You everyone!





Sowing the seeds for a sustainable future

Welcome to TreeProject's 25th Anniversary Edition

It has been 25 years since TreeProject volunteers planted their first seedlings at Yarra Bend Park, since then the organisation has grown from an ambitious young idea into a flourishing enterprise, hosting many branches of volunteers and support.

The story of TreeProject's beginnings is an inspiring one. In this anniversary newsletter we reflect on TreeProject's 25 year journey through the memories of members from our earliest days. TreeProject extends a deep and heartfelt thanks to all the people who have been doing a fantastic job making vital environmental contributions to revegetate Victoria's degraded ecosystems.

We would like to continue to share your stories about your journey with TreeProject. Please kindly send us your stories and photos.

Thank you to TreeProject supporters and donors

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Cover __ Maggie Mcleod
Craig Schultz (age 6)

Thank you Impact Digital for sponsorship in the printing of this newsletter

25 Years of TreeProject

Volunteers making it happen

TreeProject has a remarkable team of volunteers that keep the office running and get the growing kits ready. The office in Ross House on Flinders Lane in the city houses an army of volunteers who handle media, promotions, landholder and grower recruitment, submission writing, database entry, packaging seed and creating the grower and landholder reports.

A flotilla of volunteers help at the depot in the historic Stockyards in Flemington to assemble the larger items for the grower kits. The depot team wash and sterilizes used seedling tubes which are then counted and bagged. Fertiliser and sand are bagged and soil shoveled. The depot team devotes a day each weekend from September to February to prepare the grower kits.

Lyn Grocke is the volunteer manager for the depot operations. Lyn took over the depot work from Steve Watson in 2002 while we were at the Port Melbourne depot. Lyn leads the depot team with skill and dedication and has now taken up the challenging job of president of TreeProject. Lyn has been involved with Tree Project since 1991 and is a key member of our organisation.



Lyn Grocke



Our boundless thanks to all our loyal depot and office volunteers who have given so much of their time and energy to TreeProject. Your remarkable contributions ensures that TreeProject's environmental projects to restore urgently needed Indigenous vegetation are realised.

Nursery News: Goodbye Lex Richards and Hello Brad Rob

Lex Richards had been with us as manager of the TreeProject—Garry White Nursery from November 2010 to August 2013. He moved to the North Coast of New South Wales to work in permaculture landscaping. Thanks for all of your efforts Lex and good luck!

Brad Rob had been assisting Lex as a volunteer in the nursery and took over in the role of Nursery Manager. Welcome Brad!



Lex Richards



Brad Rob

Brad is continuing the projects of growing 400 long-stem seedlings for a riparian repair project in Gippsland and 1000 back up seedlings to support our volunteer growers, and taking orphaned kits from growers that need to go away or can not continue for some reason. Brad is also growing 96 species so that we can take pictures of the seedlings' progress at four different stages for our new Seedling Database on our website.

Volunteers are always welcome to come in and help with duties in the nursery, located in the Fairfield Community Gardens.

The Planting Continues

2 million seedlings and still counting



In 2012, TreeProject member, Kurt Van Wijck, who is a resident of the Yarra Valley, inspired landholders between the suburbs of Coldstream and Healesville to become part of the Shire of Yarra *Ribbons of Green* program. The program aims to support planting 60,000 seedlings each year to off set the councils carbon footprint by revegetating and providing habitat for native birds and animals. The planted areas will create bush-style habitats to serve a range of purposes including shelter, erosion control and weed reduction. Assistance for people in how to prepare sites and select the right plants for properties can also be provided.

TreeProject's dedicated volunteer growers nurtured, their seedlings over the summer and delivered them to the landholders. With enormous support from our corporate sponsored teams of planters from Print Graphics, ANZ bank, Aesop, TPG and the NAB teams 5,000 seedlings were planted in 2013 at Fiona Conway and Carl Hillford's adjoining properties in Gruyere near Coldstream. The plantings were held June through August and those involved were treated to a spectacular 360 degree views of stunning landscapes and hues of the greens and blues of the Yarra Valley mountains. The plantings were a huge success, with more seedlings planted than could have been hoped for.

Riding on the success of last year's program, this year TreeProject has increased seedling production and landholder participation, we have grown will be planting 10,500 seedlings with landholders as part of the *Ribbons of*

Green Program. For this year's program we are seeking people to help assist planting trees in this beautiful environment. Most of the plantings will be on weekdays and one weekend on Saturday August 2nd. The plantings include a BBQ lunch, as well as a fun day outdoors!

Additionally, if you are a landholder living in the Shire of Yarra Ranges municipality and are interested in participating in 2015 *Ribbons of Green* program, contact Ben Shiffield at the council and apply for the project. If you are eligible for the project the council will pay for up to 2,500 seedlings. If you choose TreeProject as your preferred seedling provider we will get the teams of volunteers organised to plant the seedlings for you. Orders for 2015 will be taken through October 2014, and plantings will take place beginning June 2015.

Remember that every plant you help to put in the ground will assist in creating change by reducing weed growth, linking habitat for wildlife and soil health, creating shelterbelts for our stock, stabilising soils and making our landscape beautiful.

Planting Dates: , Mon July 21, Mon July 28, Fri Aug 1, Sat Aug 2, Tue Aug 12.

Please register you interest with De in the office: E: info@treeproject.org.au PH: 9650 9477 Luisa Canales-Loyer

Ever Clever growing tricks

Allan Collard has come up with an Innovative idea to catch that ever moving sunny spot in his yard. The trolley's are easily made. Materials you will need are; 90 x 45mm treated pine with 6 swivel castors and several cross cleats holding the long timbers. The timbers are approx. 3 metres long, to comfortably hold the 7 box kit, with room between each box to enable easy lifting off & on. ropes are attached to the timber on each side to pull the trolley along, simple & effective. Please send you great growing tricks for us to share



The TreeProject Story

by Maggie McLeod

Maggie, pictured on our current cover, is an original founder of TreeProject. She shared the story of the project's beginnings with us.

Throughout 1988 my friend Belinda Gross and I would meet and bewail the state of the environment. So, eventually we tired of complaining and our focus shifted from "ain't it awful" to "what can we do that will make a difference?"

Ideas tumbled forth – toxic waste, air pollution, *trees*, soil degradation, salinity, *trees* – it became clear to us that it had to have something to do with trees. There were a multitude of reasons – everyone can relate to trees; there is no question that trees are valuable; trees are symbolic of life; trees make a difference in the resolution of many of our problems. Then the question became: how and what can we do with trees?

I had heard of the Tree People in LA who had declared and accomplished a target of planting one million trees and I thought that this sounded like a good number, so I stood up in a seminar on "commitment" and declared that I too would plant one million trees. I had absolutely no idea what was involved or how I could do such a thing and I probably would not have opened my mouth if I'd had any idea.

However, then the miracles started to happen. Other people stood up to join me. A group formed to talk about planting one million trees and groups who were already active in revegetation work joined the conversation. We started to plan and by early 1989 the newly named TreeProject was ensconced at the Commission for the Future and engaged in preparation for a large public planting in the Yarra Bend Park.

On the day, to our utter astonishment, 700 people appeared and we planted the 5,000 plants – all before lunch! Graeme Richardson, the then Federal Minister for the Environment, was invited to launch our program. He said that one million trees was a great target and what was really needed Australia-wide was a one billion-tree program. Four days later Prime Minister Bob Hawke announced the One Billion Trees Program – we like to think that we had a hand in that!

Following our initial success and throughout 1989 we worked hard on monthly plantings anywhere that a large community planting seemed appropriate – Darebin Creek, Kororoit Creek, Yarra Bend Park, etc. Thousands of trees went in and hundreds of people came – it was exhilarating.

Minette Russell-Young of the *Men of the Trees* suggested that we work with people in the country and we used the model of *Trees for Life* in South Australia, which gave away seedlings for free.

In our first 1990 season we grew and planted 11,000 plants. We recycled and washed tubes at home (many in my bathtub), assembled and distributed kits from our backyards, and after attracting our first volunteer planters we planted with our first landholders, amongst them the Warren-bayne-Boho Landcare group.



Our learning curve was very steep. Initially we were generously funded by the Myer Foundation for a staff member, and otherwise run by volunteers. The underlying philosophy of TreeProject is that repairing our natural resources, including the farmland that produces our food, fibres and other essential items, relies upon the entire community. We have simple policies: to raise awareness of the importance of revegetation work; only plant local, native species; work cooperatively with anyone who shared our vision; and honour whatever contribution anyone could make as a gift to the earth.

We learned and we grew. Though we still make no profit in growing the seedlings, landholders who receive the seedlings pay for the growing supplies. In this way we are still able to make revegetation affordable. Currently we have 1 part time staff in the office and 1 part time staff in the TreeProject support nursery funded by the Garry White Foundation. TreeProject remains buoyant thanks to some generous private and corporate donors, a dedicated committee and a galleon of administrative volunteers. 200 to 250 volunteer growers annually propagate 60,000 to 100,000 seedlings for country landholders. We peaked at 130,000 seedlings one year. We also organise and promote urban and country plantings for some large companies who offer their staff for a days' paid community leave.

We've long ago planted our one million trees and we are at the two million mark now, however it's minuscule compared to the number of trees that have been felled and the number needed to restore the balance. We haven't even begun to redress the effects of air pollution, salinity and soil erosion, let alone global warming! Yet the contribution has been enormous. We know that we have generated increased awareness, great good will, lasting city and country links and up to two million trees in the ground. Great work TreeProject volunteers!

Celebrating 25 years - Thank You everyone!

Growers With TreeProject for 5 years or more

Colin	Hare	5
Brenda	Greenall	5
Ian	Robertson	5
Eva	Barcikowski	5
Les	Tate	5
Sue	Lindsay	5
Patrick	O'Neill	5
Lyn	Baker	5
Linda	Macindoe	5
Daniel & Oliver	Ward	5
Rose	Read	5
Annette	Lincoln	5
Jacques	Olivier	5
Terry	Virgona	5
John	Williams	5
Debbie	Capozzi	5
Delwyn	Riordan	5
Melanie	Robinson	5
Martin	De Visser	5
Gen	Lorang	5
Catherine	Kmet	5
Emily	Donaldson	5
Elaine	Nyberg	5
Kevin	Fennessy	5
James	Harrison	5
Rosemary	McKenzie	5
Matthew	Turner	5
Karyn	Bosomworth	5
Egle	Johnston	5
Barry	Roper	
Jane	Brownrigg	6
Jill	Chancellor	6
Rosie	Miller	6
Sarah	Eggleton	6
Patricia	Graham	6
Kerry	Monaghan	6
Heather	Ferguson	6
Julie	Francis	6
Kate	Chmiel	6
Tony	Lopreiato	6
Sally	Jope	6
James	Frazer	6
Siska	Waddington	6
Anthony	Hester	6
Andrew	Miller	6
Bronwyn	Morris	6
Margaret	Muller	6
Malcolm	Boyd	6
Betty	Ives	6
Barbara	McAuley	6
Alison	Thomas	6
Ken	Sandars	6
Geoff	McGinniskin	6
Mary	Keily	6
Kevin Heinze	Garden Centre	6
Kurt	Van Wyck	6
John	Adams	7
Peter	Blacket	7
Denise	Keighery	7
Chris	Carboon	7
Hiske	Carville	7
Valerie	Cheffings	7
Alan G.	Ide	7
Selby	Dixon	7
Elaine	Cochrane	7



Greg	Pruitt	7
Lorraine	Castles	7
Bernie	Kidd	7
Allan & Jan	Searle	7
Thelma	Halse	7
Shane	McCarthy	8
Kylie	Jordan	8
Matthew	Shinners	8
Peter	Revill	8
Bill	Brown	8
George	Sanderson	8
Julie	Smith	8
Charlotte	Roseby	8
Marianne	Robertson	8
Bill	Morgan	8
Peter	Rolins	8
Fran	Spain	8
Nigel	Pugh	8
Anna	Clabburn	8
Lisa	Steny	8
Julie	White	8
Adrian and Ai	Watson	8
Debbie	McMillan (ANZ)	9
Marguerita	Stephens	9
Don	Clark	9
Bruce	Westerman	9
Bronwyn	Woodward	9
Adam	Hughes	9
Margaret	Locarnini	9
Cynthia	Matser	9
Denise	Noonan	9
Don	Reid	9
Bernadette	Kalotas	9
Helen	Webster	9
Alice	Steel	9
Michelle	Thomas	9
Vaughan	Allan	9
Barbara	Kneebone	9
Helen	Morris	9
Michael	Hoves	9
Katherine	Bradford	10
Liz	McAloon	10
David	Smith	10
Suelin	Haynes	10
Peter	Hooke	10
Peter	Dwyer	10
Neil	Mitchell	10
Jane	Monk	10
James	Sandy	10
Helen	Smith	10
Michael	Bialczak	10
Maggie	McLeod	10
Ronald	McInnes	10
Claire	Segrave	11
Tod	Mackay	11
Marion	Cincotta	11
Ross	Wilmoth	11
Ann-Heather	White	11
Harry	Dobson	11
Lindsay	Patience	11
Laraine	Proctor	11
Michael	Coates	11
David	Jackson	11
Sandra	Smale	11
Gabriel	Fuller	11
Graeme	Lunt	12



Kalai	Shaw	12
Chris	Colquhoun	12
Helen	Fallshaw	12
Jenny	Bunnage	12
Tom	Lewis	12
Alby	Robinson	12
Joanne	Richards	12
Fiona	Brown	13
Wal	Leslie	13
Graham	Duell	13
Geoffrey	Cox	13
Noel	Hudson	13
Alison	Morton	13
Liz	Cole	13
Robert	Powell	13
Mary	Wheeler	14
Peter	Walker	14
Jenny	Chivers	14
Arthur	Davey	14
Bronwyn	Beesley	14
Genevieve	Gill	14
Michelle	Smith	14
Jessica	Littlejohn	14
Patricia	Jemmett	14
Ian C.	Bennett	14
Douglas	Down	15
Sally	de Visser	15
Ross	Brown	15
Carolyn	Gilpin	15
Ron	Crane	15
Lynn	Corcoran	16
Ken	Peard	16
Geoff	Caddy	16
Gladys	Billington	16
Gwen	Sanders	16
Melinda	Wilson	16
Paul	Gleeson	17
John	Goodwin	17
Viki	Nathan	17
Denise	Nicholls	17
Lyn	Grocke	17
Ann	Starritt	17
Dorothy	Pearson	17
Lindsay	Roberts	17
Bruce	Moonie	17
Peter	Blow	19
Robyn	Calder	19
Alan	Collard	19
Jos	Van Boheeman	20
John	King	20
Gerard	Bakker	20
Greg	Price	20
Frank	Johnston	20
Sylvia	Morrissey	21
Jan	Campbell	22
Ken	Moore	22
Asger	Sturup	22
John	Halford	22
Bill	Rewell	23
James	Crawford	23
Geoff	Marett	23
Andrew	McKenzie	25
Jim	Penna	25
Richard / Lindsey	Walls /Duffield	25
Laurie	Rush	25
Brendan	Muller	25

Members giving financial or significant support

Maggie	MacLeod
Belinda	Gross
Richard	Fuller
Ildiko	Ago
Vaughan & Sylvia	Allan & Paparozzi
Jane	Archer
Val	Ashton
Brenda & Peter	Ashton
Jim	Bailes
Ruth	Barrett
Margaret	Beavis
Michael	Bialczak
Judy & Ian	Bidstrup
Megan	Blair
Peter	Blow
Chris	Booton
Keven	Bradley
Alastair, David & Katie	Brewer
Graham	Brewer & Family
Prue & Roger	Brown
Warwick	Bryant
Bronny	Burger
Luisa	Canales-Loyer
Jillian	Carpenter
Jenny	Chivers
Gary	Choi
Katharine	Claringbould
Don	Clark
Alan	Collard
Mark	Collard
Graham	Connell
Peter	Cook
Jane	Crouch
Ann	Cunningham
Jenny	Davidson
Gail	Davis
Harry	Dobson
Wendy	Dowe
Jillian	Drysdale
Darcy	Dugan
Elsie	Elsmore
Gina	Fox
Caroline	Friar
Carolyn & Gillian	Fryer & Carpenter
Bonnie	Galman
Paul & Margaret	Gleeson & Golder
Paul	Godfrey
Ken & J	Greatorex
De	Grebner
Roxanne	Gregory
Lyn	Grocke
Belinda	Gross
Rob	Haines
Richard	Harcourt
Ruth	Hargrave
Charlotte	Harrison
Russell	Harwood
Debbie	Ho
Roger	Hollaway
Lilleth	Honeychurch
Ede	Horton
Deidre & David	Houlden
Carmel	Hurst

Katherine	Hyndes
Frank	Johnston
Barry	Jones
Graham	Keil
Karoline	Klein
Eric	Kluukeri
Jude	Larkin
Shirley	Lee
Wal	Leslie
Richard	Liddicut
Peter	Lynch
Linda	Macindoe
Anne	Mathison
Collin	McDonald
Chrisanne	McDonald
Bruce	McGeehan
Helen	McGeehan
Ronald	McInnes
Carmel	McKinna
Fiona	McLeod
Grace and John	McRae
Nicky	Moffat
Bruce	Moonie
Ken	Moore
Helen	Morris
Greg	Mueller
Anna	Murphy
Lakshmi	Nallari
Viki	Nathan
Joanne	Nicolaci
Phil	Noyce
Jack	O'Donahue
Peta	O'Donohue
Steve	Oke
Rachel	Oliver
Daphne	Oliver
Doug	Oliver
Peter	Osborne
Cara	Patterson
Kay	Patterson
John	Penington
Jim	Penna
Delwyn	Poyser
Tom & Dianna	Price
Wendy	Probesti
Julia	Raath
Greg and Glenda	Ralton
Eve	Recht
Jo	Richards
Lex	Richards
Brad	Rob
Anne	Robertson
Jim	Robinson
Charlotte	Roseby
Minette	Russell
Annette	Salkeld
Marian	Sargood
Janet	Savige
Ludo & Renild	Schoenborn
Andrew	Serpell
Amanda	Sheehan
Kevin	Slattery
Kate	Sonogan
Janet	South
Vic & Mark	Spedding

Katherine & Reuben	Stanton
Paula	Stillman
Sister Maree	Stuart
Theonie	Tacticos
Kane	Thornton
Tessa	Tomborou
Clair & Helen	Toner
Wilma	Trew
Daria	Utrobina
Kurt	Van Wijck
Lotte and Pippa	Van Wijck
Philip	Van Zutphen
Jim and Beverly	Veale
Richard & Lindsey	Walls & Duffield
Fran	Watson
Michael	Watson
Steve	Watson & family
Simon	Watters
Rosalie	Whalen
Mary & Ramsey	Wheeler
Peter	Whittle
Greg	Williams
Nikki	Williams
Janet	Williams
John & Carolyn	Williams
Andy	Wood
Rob	Youl
Albert George & Nancy Caroline Youngman Trust	
ANZ Staff Foundation	
Australia Post	
Blick Creative	
Buoyancy Foundation	
CAF.Jack.Johnson	
Commission for the Future	
Dahl Trust	
Deloitte	
DMS Tree Company	
Equity Trustees	
ERM	
Ethical Buying	
Freehills	
Gary White Foundation	
Grant Thornton	
Grill'd	
Helen Macpherson Smith Trust	
Hoffman Centre	
Intrepid Travel	
Johnson Controls	
Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation	
Nicola Cereni	
Pearl Film Company	
Mt Waverly ANZ Nursery	
Print Graphics	
R.E. Ross Trust	
RUCC	
Unico	
Sidney Myer Foundation	

Thank you to everyone that has contributed to make TreeProject such a success

Rob Haines Remembers

From a founding volunteer

Rob Haines was a volunteer with TreeProject from its earliest days. He currently works at Computershare in Abbotsford and amongst many things he is a keen traveller, bushwalker, gardener and a proud grandfather.

How did you get involved with TreeProject?

I knew [founders] Maggie and Bindi. We met through a commitment seminar in South Melbourne. They were concerned about the environment and initially didn't know what they could do, but had heard of a group called

TreePeople in Los Angeles and were inspired by them. TreePeople had planted one million trees before the LA Olympics, and Maggie and Belinda said 'why not here?'

What kind of involvement did you have?

I was on the committee and there on the first planting day, and I showed people how to plant the trees.



Senator Richardson breaks ground

Can you tell us about the day?

It was at Yarra Bend Park on April 30, 1989. We advertised it on the radio and in the press but we weren't expecting many people. Then on the day more than 600 people showed up. We had a Wurundjeri welcome to



TreeProject's first planting day, Yarra Bend Park, 1989



Some of the Blue Devil Day volunteers

country, and Senator Richardson who was the Federal Environment Minister at the time came too. We always had a good relationship with Yarra Bend. We liaised with them to collect the seeds and do the planting.

How did the group evolve from the first plantings?

We organised more plantings, mainly in the city. It was about four or five years later that we started growing the seedlings - giving the kits to people so they could grow the seedlings at home.

There was also Blue Devil Day, an environmental arts festival that TreeProject received funding for. Two people, Anna Mur-



Blue Devil Day banner, Brunswick St Fitzroy

phy and Rachel Oliver worked from the TreeProject office for some six to nine months to organise the first festival in 1996 and it was a big success, with performances and talks. There were two more Blue Devil days, in 1999 (to celebrate TreeProject's 10th anniversary) and in 2001.

What are the highlights of your involvement with TreeProject?

The highlight was being part of a group able to make a difference and I really enjoyed working with the people involved. *Thanks to Rob for the archive photos. Sian Vate*

TreeProject

Sowing the seeds for a sustainable future

Landcare's Karoline Klein

Making Change Happen: the Impact of TreeProject

Karoline Klein is the President of the North Harcourt-Sedgwick Landcare Group, which sits astride the main north-south ridge dividing the Loddon and Campaspe catchments north of Castlemaine. Karoline has been involved in the revegetation with TreeProject for 10 years.

What has been the impact of TreeProject in your area?

Our Landcare Group has been receiving trees from TreeProject for over ten years now and we've distributed over 25 000 trees in this area. This is a large number of trees making a visible difference in the landscape.

The land that we've been planting on used to mainly be sheep paddocks which were then sub-divided into lifestyle blocks. In those early years the land was very barren with only a very few old trees still left in the landscape. So you can imagine the difference it has made with 25 000 trees being planted.

Can you describe the difference that has been made?

The first thing you notice is that the insects come back, you notice the insect eggs and caterpillars on the leaves and after that, the birds. I have neighbours here who say there never used to be any birds in the area and now they're back.

The other change is that we used to have a lot of rainwater runoff into the creek. Now, with the trees and the vegetation, the soil acts like a sponge and catches the rain so you keep the water in the landscape for a longer time.

In addition to the birds we've also had wallabies return into the area. We'll see them occasionally by the creek seeking shelter, which they wouldn't have been able to do before. And we find the digging holes of the echidnas that have returned, and the little bats fly over too. So it's not just one thing – it's the biodiversity that has returned.

What is the best strategy for revegetation?

Revegetation success is best with indigenous species. These species have adapted to the climate over millennia and only need minimal watering during the first hot summer months. We collect seeds ourselves from remnant vegetation of these indigenous species and send them to TreeProject.

We only collect seeds from the old original trees and a nearby State Park where we are sure that they come from the natural, original vegetation of this area.

The number of trees that have been planted is just amazing. You can see an obvious contrast between the lush, green revegetated areas alive with bird life and the empty paddocks with the occasional old tree.

What has working with TreeProject meant to you?

Being involved in the distribution of the seedlings in this area means I catch up with people whom I might otherwise not see, so it brings the community together.

Some people come along just wanting seeds for one species of tree that they like, so I try to educate people about biodiversity and the importance of planting different species. Other people will come back and let me know which species are working and which might have failed – so we share knowledge.

Most of the properties here are owned by people living the rural lifestyle, they're busy working and looking after kids, and people just wouldn't have been able to organise the plantings themselves. Repairing our natural environment would not have happened without TreeProject. Helping get the seedlings in the ground. *Sian Vate*



Karoline Klein



The Next Generation

The Remarkable Fiona McLeod S.C.

As a barrister Fiona McLeod's pro bono legal work is well known, such as when she represented the Gunns 20 group of forest protesters, but it is her involvement in TreeProject that makes Fiona a treasured part of our community. We took the opportunity of TreeProject's 25th anniversary to talk to Fiona about her life and experiences with TreeProject.

Fiona McLeod's involvement in TreeProject began in her twenties, when her mother Maggie McLeod co-founded the organization with Bindy Gross.

Maggie's interest in indigenous vegetation had been longstanding. After working for the state government on roadside re-vegetation for some years, she and a few of her friends decided to do something bigger.

"[Maggie] felt frustrated at what she saw as the impotence of the individual to make a difference with something she cared about, the environment, so she created the TreeProject with Bindi Gross and Richard Fuller, two mates at the time.

"They were having meetings in the front room and over cups of tea they'd discuss things. The whole family got scooped up in it. I used to go the plantings, just to hang out with Mum and help her out," Fiona told us.

"I saw how valuable it was. At one of the first plantings I did in Yarra Bend Park, I'd go back ten years later and it's this beautiful forest.

"To think that there was this denuded, barren, rocky plain and we all spent an afternoon and a morning putting shrubs and trees in the ground ... suddenly, you can recreate the natural beauty of a place. It's quite a remarkable thing to see," she said.

"The real inspiration for my connection with the environment is my mum ... I always had that example from her. "[Maggie would say that] making massive changes in your life to follow something you care about, like setting up TreeProject, was just what you did."

As a result of this lifelong influence Fiona went on to become a passionate and outspoken advocate for social justice and the environment, and like most barristers at Owen Dixon Chambers where she is based, she donates a proportion of

her time to pro bono work.

"In many cases, such as the Gunns 20 case, a Tasmanian native forest logging giant Gunns Ltd. sued twenty protesters for loss of income, the system utterly depends on pro bono lawyers," Fiona said. The pro bono cases are a highlight of Fiona's work.

"You commit more of yourself personally and work harder on them because I guess it's about issues you care about and also because it's that burning desire that people shouldn't be crushed [by] using the court process to stifle things - that it's a misuse of the rule of law to do that. The little guy should have representation too," says Fiona.



Fiona McLeod

"I used to go the plantings, just to hang out with Mum and help her out. I saw how valuable it was. At one of the first plantings I did in Yarra Bend Park, I'd go back ten years later and it's this beautiful forest."

share. "I really believe that we need to be connected to the planet to have a sense of ourselves. TreeProject is really valuable because it lets you have a sense that you're achieving something one tree at a time. It also allows you to be quite grounded and slow, being connected to [nature] in a way that you can then put a tree in the ground or walk around in the bush is really ... it keeps you very sane and very connected to yourself."

Fiona is married with two daughters. Her husband Olivio, a graphic designer, created TreeProject's logo.

TreeProject extends its most heartfelt gratitude to Fiona for her involvement and her impressive contribution to the defense of the environment and human rights. *Nicky Moffat*

Fiona loves her work and she is evidently good at it, having won several awards for outstanding contributions to her profession. These include the coveted *Lawyers Weekly Women in Law Barrister Award* in 2012, the *Anti-Slavery Australia Foundation Award* in 2011, and the *Ron Merkel QC Award for Outstanding Pro Bono Contribution* in 2011.

She is also a respected commentator on human rights, environmental justice and the legal system, with regular appearances in the media.

"We're so lucky to have Fiona as part of our community – both for her own involvement and for the example she sets our young people," said TreeProject President Lyn Grocke.

Fiona sees the need for connection with nature as a spiritual need that people



Celebrating 25 years — Thank You everyone!



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