

Spring 1999

ISSUE 13

# **L** *Victorian* **Landcare** & CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT



Visually impaired  
lend a hand



Neighbourhood process  
takes off in the Woody



Best of luck to the finalists in the 1999  
Victorian Landcare and Farm Management Awards

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## **Kondinin AD**

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The Victorian Landcare and Catchment Management magazine is a joint publication of the Victorian Farmers Federation, Alcoa of Australia Limited and the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, with the support of the Victorian Catchment Management Council.





# From the editors

Welcome to the new *Victorian Landcare & Catchment Management* magazine. Quietly evolutionary, the *Victorian Landcare* magazine now includes news and information about catchment management across the State.

Look for the new icon (see below) to identify articles on catchment management.



Included in the magazine will be news on what catchmentmanagement authorities are doing with their communities, together with casestudies, profiles, and information from NRE and the Victorian CatchmentManagement Council.

Including catchment based material enhances the capacity of the magazine to give you, the members of the landcare community, a more complete picture of what is happening in natural resource management in Victoria. In this broader framework, we provide the opportunity to communicate your achievements and hurdles, and present other relevant information regarding landcare in Victoria.

With this edition we are also asking you to confirm that you want to continue to receive this magazine. We do this

from time to time stop copies of the magazine going to out-of-date addresses and to prevent duplicate postings.

## Groups tell how

In this edition, we have focused on group processes with 'how to' stories from some of the State's most successful community-based catchment landcare projects.

As in every edition, we have several stories on landcare activities in Victoria. If you have anything you want to include, the lead-time for publication is significant. We need to have your contribution in September for the Christmas edition!

Best of luck to the finalists in the Landcare Awards. We will feature the winners in the next two editions in the lead up to the International Landcare 2000 Conference in Melbourne in March next year. Read about how to get involved in the conference on pages 8 and 9.

The letters section is full of comments and feedback. If you want to have your say on an issue, send us your thoughts.

Enjoy spring.

Paul Crock, Jo Safstrom, Gabrielle Sheehan

## Catchment management demonstration - Bunyip style

Susan Anderson, Secretary of the Bunyip Landcare Group sent us through a great suggestion for promoting catchments and catchment management:

Dear Editors,

Our venue was the Centenary Bunyip Agricultural Show, a landmark event for the whole community.

We wanted to make sure that landcare was represented at the show and so with a fair bit of hard work and a bit of inspiration, we set about building a catchment.

The large pile of mulch was loaded into a tandem trailer, sculptured into the upper and lower catchment, and divided into well-managed and poorly-managed sections.



Grass seed donated by a local merchant was sown at six weeks, and tube stock a few days before the show. Shelterbelts, plantations, fenced dams, weeds, etc., were all labelled and children provided the farm animals and fences from their toy farms.

It was a great success both in the design and construction and during and after the show. Perhaps other groups will be interested in using our idea for taking catchment management to the general public.

Susan Anderson  
Bunyip

# LETTERS



## Letters

### Canadian Creek

Dear editors

Just a short note to say how much I am enjoying the *Victorian Landcare* magazine. I have been involved in the L.I.N.C.S. and BEN here in Ballarat as well as working on two discussion committees for the Ballarat Council.

I'm afraid that these days I can't do much as I'm dependant on a walking frame, but because of the kindness of our VCA minister, Bruce Waldron, I was able to attend the Jens-gaunt ceremony at Canadian Creek that you mentioned in your last edition.

I think it is wonderful to see the landcare movement growing and I find it most reassuring.

God bless you all.

Shirley McRae.

Wendouree

### Berg Feedback

Dear Editors,

In reference to C. Henry's letter (*Victorian Landcare*, issue 12), it is precisely these types of ideas (dragging an iceberg to South Australia's south-east coast) that conservationists are trying to prevent.

Mr Henry, I sympathise with your hardship during drought but Australia is by nature a dry continent. Interfering with nature has caused many of the problems we are faced with today including increased levels of salinity, pollution and modifying of ecosystems.

I'm sorry, but your idea is about as sensible as redirecting fresh water from great rivers such as the Fitzroy in Western Australia and the East Alligator in Kakadu. The net result of these is a depletion of the entire ecosystem. We know that this is true because it has happened to such great rivers as the Murray and the Murrumbidgee, which have been significantly tapped for irrigation.



Now, moving an iceberg may not appear to be detrimental to an ecosystem but many marine organisms use icebergs for shelter, from whales to tiny invertebrates. If precedence were set for harvesting icebergs it would not take long at all for an adverse effect to occur.

May I suggest to you that there are much more affordable ways for individual landholders to come to terms with Australia's dry climate. Some of these are innovative and are presented in Victorian Landcare magazine in the very issue that you made your suggestion.

To make the land more productive and yet environmentally friendly it is necessary to work together for a common cause by sharing these innovative ideas. Forums such as Victorian Landcare magazine provide such an opportunity and it is exciting to see so many people from all walks of life getting involved and making a difference.

I'm proud to be Australian for many reasons, not the least because Australia is what it is – unique.

Good luck, Mr Henry, for a prosperous future.

Most kind regards,  
David Leviston  
Mt Clear

## Algae Solution

Dear editors

I would like to draw peoples' attention to a very promising experience I had following design and construction of a new dam at Red Hill on the Mornington Peninsula.

We pumped the new dam full from another that had beautiful clear water. Within a week, it was covered with a broad band of filamentous revolting algae around the entire perimeter.

The owner was very disappointed, so I suggested that we try seeding the dam with invertebrates or zooplankton which live on such algae.

As an experiment, we found an old dam near Mt Martha, which I thought would contain such dam dwellers. We pumped three tanker loads (3 x 7000 litres) out and into the new dam with the algal problem.

Someone asked me how long it would take and, having never done such a thing before, I suggested "perhaps a couple of months".

To all our surprise, the algae was all gone by 4.30pm on the day!

I later took Tim Doeg (to my knowledge one of the foremost experts in invertebrate studies in the state), to the old dam at Mt Martha where he netted the surface and middle layers of the dam.

The middle layer of the invertebrate-rich dam sported thousands of ostracods.

Tim's comment to me at the time was "that's what ate your algae!"

It was truly an amazing turn-around. I would be interested in hearing from others with similar experiences.

John McCubbing  
Red Hill



## Researching rare fauna – The Tassie Tiger: Back from the edge?

Dear Editors

Imagine this...

You are travelling home after a hard game of footy. Your eyes are nearly as tired as your legs, but they spring open when the strange animal comes into view as you round the corner.

Your first thought is 'that's not a fox.' Immediately it looks too big, the head is wrong, the tail is totally different. Then it turns and runs off the road, in an awkward shambling trot that you've never seen in a dog or any other animal.

As it disappears into the roadside scrub the image turns over and over in your mind. Could it have possibly been the Tasmanian Tiger? It was getting dark and you couldn't be sure whether it had stripes or not.

One thing's for sure – you have never seen anything like it in your life.

Does this story sound familiar? If it does for you, then you're not alone! Over 2000 people from all over mainland Australia have now reported sightings of animals they believe or suspect could be thylacines.

The Australian Rare Fauna Research Association (ARFRA) has been collecting and analysing reported sightings and other unusual animals since 1984. Although reports have been received from many areas of the state, the 'hot spots' such as the Dandenongs, Foster, Inverloch - Wonthaggi, Wilson's Promontory National Park and Loch Sport contribute significant numbers of sightings.

AFRA have teamed up with the Australian National University and are concentrating on using a BIOCLIM model to develop an environmental profile of the areas the animal sightings are coming from. These can then be compared to profiles of other animals to see whether the sightings really do represent a different species.

## Wilson's Promontory

How is it that thylacines are being consistently reported on mainland Australia? Evidence was recently brought to light at the special exhibition from the Museum of Tasmania, suggesting that six pairs were released on to Wilson's Promontory early this century. Alternatively, recent sightings could be remnants of the original mainland population, hitherto known only from fossils and cave paintings.

Either way, do you have any information that could help the researchers build their climate profile?

In the past many people were reluctant to report sightings, uncertain of peoples' response to them claiming to have seen a supposedly extinct animal. With the new database developed by ARFRA, people lucky enough to have seen a thylacine have the opportunity to make a valuable contribution to an important research project.

Please contact Peter Chapple on (03) 5968 6144 and tell him of your sighting.

Michael Cleeland  
Phillip Island

# FARM FORESTRY?

## *It's about farmers!*



September sees a series of practical field days and events across Victoria highlighting farmer views about agroforestry and farm forestry as part of the National Agroforestry Expo '99. Rowan Reid, the national convenor, highlights why the interests and needs of farmers must be the focus of farm forestry R&D.

Forestry activities in public native forests and industrial plantations suffer from a poor public image. It seems however that everyone loves farm forestry.

Industry, governments and conservation groups expose its virtues suggesting that farm forestry offers us our best chance yet of fighting soil and water degradation, turning around our \$1.6 billion trade deficit in forest products, reducing the need to log public native forests, storing carbon dioxide, and the like.

Can farm forestry really deliver?  
Are we all talking about the same thing?  
What is a farm forest anyway and what has it got to do with farmers?

Firstly, what is a farm forest?

You cannot distinguish agroforestry or farm forestry from any other type of forestry by how it looks. It is not the scale, the planting pattern, the species or the purpose of a forest that makes it a farm forest – it is about ownership. If a farmer makes the decision to participate in forestry then, for me, this is farm forestry.

Essentially farm forestry is about choice. It's about farmers choosing to commit their resources to the development and management of forests for, amongst other things, commercial return.

That commercial return might be from timber but it could be much more than that.

Rather than complaining about market access and low prices for traditional timber products, farmers must take the initiative and work towards mechanisms that allow small growers to sell all the commercial, environmental and social values of their forests.

We must acknowledge the market realities and ensure that the products of our forests are of high quality and properly presented so as to attract a fair price.

Water quality, landcare, enhanced landscapes, biodiversity and carbon are all potential products that the community are prepared to pay for. These values should be marketed and sold on an ongoing basis to ensure that the rewards form part of the farm balance sheet along with the returns from wool, beef, wheat or timber.

### ***The Australian Master TreeGrower Program and Agroforestry Expo '99***

If agroforestry and farm forestry are about farmers having the confidence to grow and manage forests then the Australian Master TreeGrower Program and Agroforestry Expo '99 are about demonstrating that they can.

More than 100 growers in Victoria have completed the Australian Master TreeGrower Program and many of them are featuring in the expo.

In Victoria, Agroforestry Expo '99 includes three full-day expos including demonstrations, displays, seminars and much more. These are complemented by Open Farm Days highlighting some of our best growers. Come along and see for yourselves where our leading farmers are taking farm forestry in the future.

For more information contact Rowan Reid on (03) 9344 5011, or on the web: [www.mtg.unimelb.edu.au](http://www.mtg.unimelb.edu.au)

## **Victorian Events**

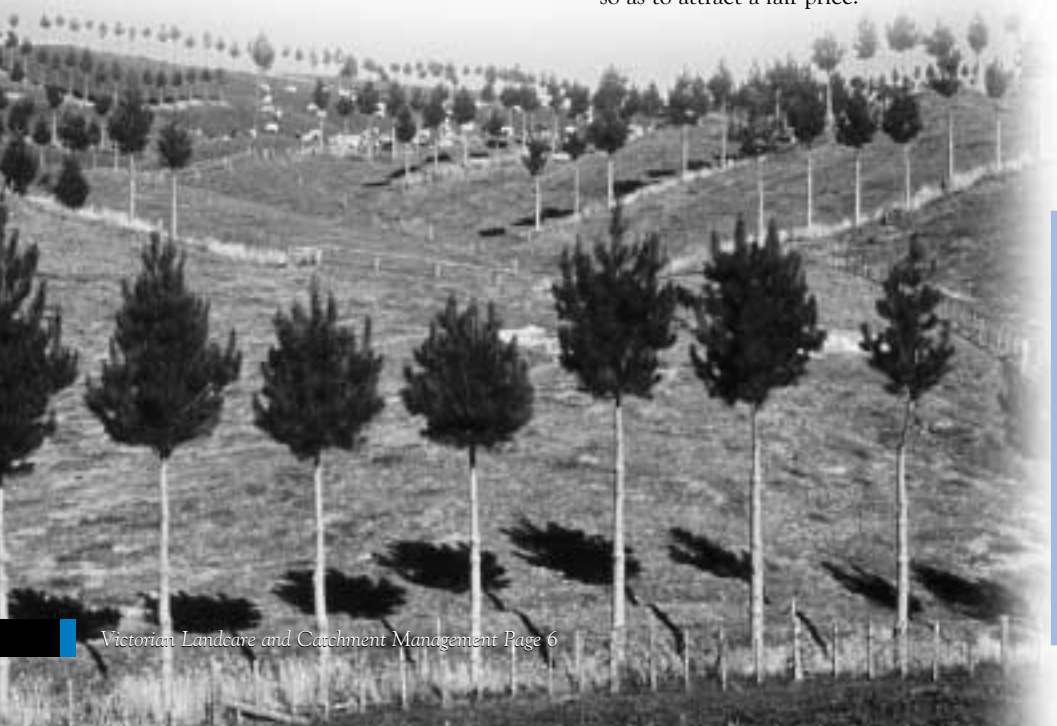
### **Expo Sites**

10 September	Oak Valley, Euroa.
17 September	Great Southern Woolshed, Ballarat.
18 September	Apollo Bay Surf Club.

### **Master TreeGrower Open Farm Days**

11 September	NE Victoria.
16 September	Central Victoria.
19 September	Otway Ranges.

**Costs: Entry less than \$5, expo kit for just \$10.**





# Farmers support water quality strategy for the Ovens Basin

By Margrit Beemster



Mudgegonga farmer Dave Reeves is all for the new Ovens Basin Water Quality Strategy... especially when it means his Mudgegonga and District Landcare Group in north-east Victoria can access more funding to tackle its biggest problem – soil erosion.

"We have very granitic soils around here," says Dave, also the landcare group's co-ordinator. "In winter you don't drive a tractor onto a paddock, but into it. It becomes a bottomless soup. The more you agitate the soil, the worse it becomes."

The group's area takes in the Barwidgee and Happy Valley Creeks; both identified as priority sub-catchments by the strategy which is now in its implementation stage. The strategy allows for increased funding for streambank stabilisation and gully erosion control and more support from departmental extension officers.

It has been designed to protect and improve the quality of water in the Ovens Basin, which contributes around 14% of the average total flows from the entire Murray-Darling Basin. It is estimated, on average, some 180 tonnes of phosphorus and 1600 tonnes of nitrogen reach the Murray River each year from the Ovens Basin.

The strategy has identified 12 specific programs with corresponding actions that target farmers, urban areas, local government and industry. Of particular relevance to landholders and farmers are the stream management, gullies stabilisation and agricultural industries (which focuses on the adoption of Best Management Practices) programs.

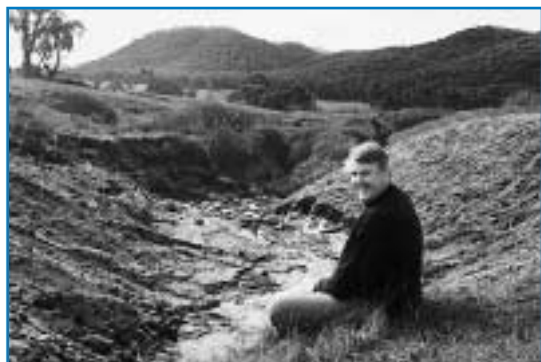
The Mudgegonga and District Landcare Group has a number of projects on the go where funding has been made available because they fit in with the aims of the water quality strategy. The projects range in size from small projects such as fencing out 100 square metres at the start of gullies and planting trees, to major works along the Barwidgee Creek in a joint project with the North East Catchment Management Authority.

"Basically it's fencing, revegetation and rockwork," says Dave. "The CMA is doing the rockwork and the landcare group and the landholder are doing the fencing off and the revegetation. We received a grant for the materials from Landcare Partnership Initiative 2000.

"By joining in with NECMA the idea is that the dollars available go further in terms of actual streambank repairs. Originally they were only going to do a small section of the creek but we approached them to see if we could work together to make the money go further and do a better job, to do a more complete section of the creek. It's a more holistic approach."

For further information on strategy implementation contact Veronica Lanigan at the North East Catchment Management Authority on (02) 6055 6133.

*Paul Bleeser and Dave Reeves inspect a site along Gibney's Gorge where rocks have been used to fill what was once a 1.5 metre drop.*



*Mudgegonga and District Landcare Group Co-ordinator, Dave Reeves, with a big rock chute along Gibney's Gorge where 240 metres of rock was used to combat a major erosion problem.*



# International Land

Just 13 years ago the term landcare was unknown. Next year Australia is hosting the first ever International Landcare Conference. 'Changing Landscapes – Shaping Futures' will be held in Melbourne from 2-5 March 2000.

The conference program is studded with local, national and international landcare luminaries coming together to share perspectives and gain new insights into the landcare movement. The conference ranges across themes of sustainable agriculture, greenhouse, community participation and rural futures.

John Claringbould, Landcare Australia Chairman and chairman of the organising committee, says the conference is a dynamic model of scale and perspective.

"It deals with issues important for the farm, the catchment, the country and the world."

Keynote speakers include scientist and author Dr Tim Flannery, Ian Johnson from the World Bank and co-founder of the Women's Economic Think Tank, Eva Cox.

The committee has matched papers and people to issues, but hasn't created any divisions between the grass roots and the managerial or academic.

John Claringbould says the conference will give landcare an international focus and keep it in the face of key decision makers.

"Landcare is a very important tool for delivering natural resource management. Australians should see the conference as a unique opportunity to showcase our achievements and share our expertise."

Twenty-five concurrent sessions will feature speakers from policy, process and practical perspectives as well as global, regional and local ones. The sessions include the following topics and speakers and many more –

**The role of networks** with Jonathon Sobels on the impact of networks on landcare in rural Australia, Gordon Brown on networks that foster government/community partnerships and Max Skeen on the Hindmarsh Landcare Network.

**Patterns and trends in rural communities** with Professor Geoff Lawrence from Central Queensland University, social research consultant Neil Barr and farmer Richard Weatherley from Mortlake, Victoria.

**The origins of community landcare** with the Hon. Joan Kirner, Theo Nabben and Njabulo Nduli from South Africa and Noel Voch from the Philippines.

**Rangelands in practice** with Caroline Boyd on landcare as the vital link in rangeland sustainability, Mark Ritchie on decision support systems for managing rangelands and Ian Laurance on the Gascoyne-Murchison Strategy.

**The theory and practice of managing land and water for biodiversity conservation** with the Hon. Sharman Stone, Dr Denis Saunders from CSIRO and Delmar Blasco, Secretary-General of the RAMSAR Convention Bureau.

**Urban landcare** with Kay Collins from the ACT, Fiona Douglas on tropical landcare in Darwin and Jacky Williams from the Noosa and District Landcare Group.

**Changing landscapes** with Dr Fionnula Frost on living landscapes, Dr Ruth Beilin on recognising landscape futures and Sarah Allen on agri-environmental projects in Scotland.

**Towards the future** with Andrew Campbell on the grass roots revolution, Cam Nicholson on the experiences of landholders in the Woady Yaloak catchment and Deb Tkachenko on the role of landcare in rebuilding the social fabric of our communities.

**Sustainable Agriculture: dream or reality?** with Geoff Gorrie from Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Australia, John Harvey from the Grains Research and Development Corporation and community landcare graingrowers from the Tammin area in WA.



Scientist and author of *The Future Eaters*, Dr Tim Flannery, will give the keynote address.



Science journalist and broadcaster Robyn Williams is an enthusiastic participant in the conference.



# care Conference

**The role of research and communicating research** with Professor Hugh Possingham from the University of Adelaide, Alex Campbell from the Land and Water Research and Development Corporation and Martin Westbrooke on the role of universities in landcare.

**The role of local government in community participation models for natural resource management** with Dr Julian Agyeman from Boston, USA, Mike Berwick from Douglass Shire Council and Linda Raynor on local government and landcare in Australia.

**International marketing trends – landcare's role** with Alan Oxley on what the market is going to demand in the 21st century, Genevieve Carruthers on landcare and environmental management systems and Graeme Gleeson on market access and landcare in New Zealand.

**Greenhouse** with Gwen Andrews from the Australian Greenhouse Office, Professor Snow Barlow from the University of Melbourne and Dr Andres Arnalds on carbon sequestration in Iceland.

**The challenge of meeting food demand and sustainability** with Tim Reeves from the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre in Mexico, Pearlie Reed from the United States Department of Agriculture and Lynn Arnold from World Vision Australia.

**Catchment planning processes** with Geoff Spencer from the World Bank, Don Blackmore from the Murray-Darling Basin Commission and Jeremy Gaylard from the Victorian Catchment Management Council.

**Catchment planning at a local level** with Linda Brownstein on linking landcare visions and agencies, Saan Ecker on ICM in the Blackwood River Basin and Dr Barbara Musso on community-based planning.

**The role of government in community participation models for natural resource management** with Dr Stephen Dovers from the Australian National University, Darrel Brewin on catchment management principles and their application in a government program and Dr Alan Curtis on what an international audience can learn from the Australian landcare experience.

**The role of the private sector in community approaches to natural resources management** with Dr Marnie Leybourne from WA and Klaus Englehard from Osram.

**How do we know we are making a difference?** with Roy Green from the Australian Land and Water Audit, Dr Geoff Barrett on birds and sustainable agriculture and Professor Mike Tyler.

**Educational approaches** with Alison Russell French on Waterwatch, Robert Wallis from South Australia and Robert Rindzevicius with a school experience.

**Educational approaches to engage the community** with Leith Bouilly from the MDBC Community Advisory Council, David Ross from the Indigenous Land Corporation and Ken Sampson on community involvement in successful catchment management.

As well as the sessions listed above the conference will include keynote addresses, panel sessions, discussions, posters presentations, displays and over 30 field trips, day trips and post-conference tours.

The National Landcare Awards will be announced during the conference at a special gala dinner on Thursday 2 March. The Prime Minister has been invited to present the awards and entertainment is provided by Australia's top performers.

For further information and registration details visit the conference website at [www.nre.vic.gov.au/conf/landcare2000/](http://www.nre.vic.gov.au/conf/landcare2000/) or call (03) 9690 6744.



International trade expert Alan Oxley, will speak on marketing in the 21st century from the landcare perspective.



Cicely Fenton and her husband John, will explain how they integrate agriculture, farm forestry and revegetation on their farm at Branholme, Victoria.

# Launch of National Dryland Salinity Program Phase II



By Jo Curkpatrick

More than 2.5 million hectares of Australia is currently affected by dryland salinity and is costing all Australians more than \$270 million a year in lost agricultural production, environmental assets and damage to infrastructure like roads and buildings.

It is a problem affecting all Australians, according to Chair of the Board of the National Dryland Salinity Program (NDSP), Mr Alex Campbell. Mr Campbell was commenting at the national launch of the second phase of NDSP in Canberra by Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon. Mark Vaile and Minister for the Environment, Senator the Hon. Robert Hill.

"For too long, urban Australia has seen this as only an agricultural problem," says Mr Campbell. "The second phase of the NDSP recognises that this is also becoming a major issue for those living in urban areas; and for the wider environment."

Conservative estimates believe there is about \$100 million a year worth of damage to urban infrastructure in Australia.

It is estimated that at least 80 country towns are suffering from damage to the foundations of buildings and infrastructure due to rising saline watertables. With costs of up to \$1 million a kilometre to repair highways affected by salinity, damage to roads is the most significant impact to infrastructure. Co-ordinator of NDSP, Nicholas Newland, says the real concern is the rate of spread of salinity in Australia.

"Research in the first phase of the National Dryland Salinity Program indicates that salinity could spread and affect six times the area of land that is currently affected within the next 20 years," he says.

"This means one-third of our productive landscape would be affected in the lifetimes of our children.

"Given that 25 per cent of Australia's agricultural production comes from the Murray-Darling Basin, salinity on this scale would have a devastating effect on both Australia's regional and export economies."

The NDSP is an initiative jointly sponsored by the Commonwealth Government and five State Governments and Australia's leading rural industries. The program was established in 1993 by the Land and Water Resources Research and Development Corporation as a means of improving the co-ordination of Australia's research, development and extension effort towards better management of dryland salinity across Australia.

"The first phase of the NDSP developed partnerships between agencies and rural communities in combating salinity," Mr Newland says.

"It also developed far more sophisticated and reliable methods for remotely sensing dryland salinity."

The second phase of the NDSP will use the techniques developed in the first, to better map and monitor salinity in Australia. It will also look in more detail at the social and economic costs of salinity, options for more effective management, and investigate the productive use of land that is already saline.

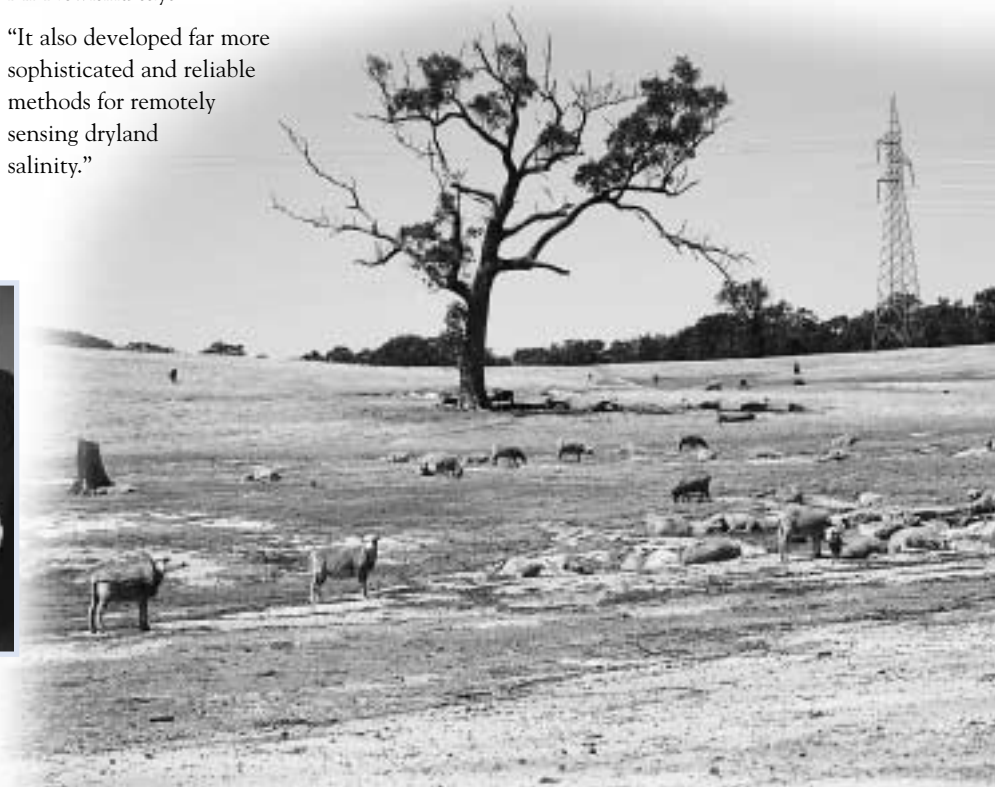
Projects with a significant Victorian content include –

- Local government capacity to manage dryland salinity (Research Planning Design Group – Bendigo).
- Evaluating the efficacy of engineering options (Sinclair Knight Mertz – Melbourne).
- Enhancing institutional support for the management of dryland salinity (Virtual Consulting Group – Albury).

For further information about the second phase of the NDSP contact Nicholas Newland, Co-ordinator of National Dryland Salinity Program, on (08) 8204 9153 or Jo Curkpatrick, Communication Co-ordinator (Victoria), on (03) 9370 1789.

*One-third of our productive landscape could be affected in the lifetimes of our children.*

Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon. Mark Vaile, at the launch of NDSP Phase 2.



# IN BRIEF

## **Victorian Landcare and Farm Management Awards**

There has been plenty of interest in this year's Victorian Landcare and Farm Management Awards. The response has been terrific with plenty of high-standard entries in all award categories to make for a good competition.

Judging panels have now finished their tasks. Finalists will become known shortly with winners announced at a special presentation ceremony in October.

## **Weedbuster Week '99**

This year's Weedbuster Week will be held from 10-17 October. The theme is 'weed prevention is the intention.' Groups around Australia will be hosting activities to raise awareness about weeds.



Weedbuster Week is a great way to draw attention to your group's weed control efforts and to try and attract new people to get involved.

Landcare and community groups in Victoria will be running clean-up days, demonstrating weed control techniques, putting up displays and working alongside schools and other groups.

For more information about Weedbuster Week contact Carolyn Munckton at the Department of Natural Resources and Environment on (03) 9637 8273.

## **Tree and timber expo**

'Clever Trees', an agroforestry expo showcasing the unusual beauty and potential uses for the wide range of timbers being grown by farm foresters in central Victoria, will be held on 17 September 1999.

The expo will feature a 'Building for the Future' house, with sections created from locally sourced timbers which are often overlooked in mainstream building. Local furniture makers will display and sell their pieces made from lesser-known native timbers.

'Clever Trees', will be held at the Great Southern Wool Shed, Western Hwy (on the Melbourne road), Ballarat, 10am to 5pm. For more information contact the Creswick Landcare Centre on (03) 5345 2200.

## **Better Farming Train**

We have had lots of interest in an article in the last issue on Victoria's Better Farming Train. The train visited country towns in the 1920s and 30s dispensing advice about the latest agricultural techniques. Many of our readers thought it was a terrific idea and something that would be still a great success today.

The photographs that we used for the article were courtesy of the NRE Corporate Library.

The library has a selection of historical photographs from the Better Farming Train and can arrange prints for people at a very reasonable cost. The photographs can be seen and ordered from the NRE website at: <http://www.nre.vic.gov.au/virtualexhibition>

## **Victorian Weeds Strategy launched**

The Victorian Weed Strategy was launched last month and sets the scene for control of noxious weeds in this State for the future. Its aims are to:

- ensure early detection of and rapid response to new weed problems;
- inform all Victorians about the economic, social and environmental impacts of weeds and how to minimise these impacts;
- achieve a significant reduction in the impact of existing weed infestations;
- establish working partnerships to ensure cost-effective weed management in Victoria; and
- promote the evaluation of weed management in Victoria.

The strategy has been finalised after input from the community and key stakeholders.

Copies are available from the NRE Customer Service Centre on 136 186.

## *A quick note on the readership*

**We currently print 30,000 copies of the Victorian Landcare and Catchment Management Magazine.**

**We constantly have people ringing, faxing, e-mailing and writing to us asking to be included on the list. In addition, there are more and more landcare groups signing up to the VFF Farm Trees and Landcare Association (with every group member getting a personal copy as part of the deal).**

**You may be receiving multiple copies, one for being a VFF member, and one through your landcare group, but with different address details. We can't separate these types of duplications.**

**All these requests and duplications add significant pressure to our printing and postage budget.**

**We need to know whether you want to continue to receive the magazine.**

**If you wish to stay on the mailing list, just send the cover sheet back to the Reply Paid address – no need for a stamp.**

**If you don't respond, we will remove you from the mailing list, making this the last edition you will get.**

**Any questions? Contact Paul Crock on (03) 9207 5562.**





# Catchment management in Victoria:



## Message from NRE

By Peter Sutherland, Executive Director, CMSA Division, NRE



### **Water management into the 21st century**

Victoria has set the scene for continued improvements in water resource management with the release of *Progress, Challenges and Future Directions – State Water Planning 2050*.



First in a series of State Water Planning 2050 policy and technical papers, the document was launched by Deputy Premier and Minister for Agriculture and Natural Resources,

Patrick McNamara, at the Victorian Farmers Federation Annual Conference in July.

The publication outlines the past achievements of the Victorian water sector, its current challenges and the actions and directions that need to be undertaken in order to achieve our goals.

*Progress, Challenges and Future Directions – State Water Planning 2050* sets out a number of principles for a sustainable water sector: investment in water resource knowledge; water quality and supply protection; market mechanisms to facilitate allocation; optimising economic, social and environmental benefits; and service delivery strategies.

Water is a fragile, limited resource and using it wisely ensures we have a prosperous future. Currently Victoria's management of its water resources and catchments is recognised as world's best practice. This is a key advantage in attracting investment, particularly in the agribusiness and food processing sectors. The challenge for Victoria now is to build on this excellent record and continue the sustainable development and protection of our water resources into the 21st century.

### **Landcare Partnership Initiative 2000**

The Minister for Conservation and Land Management, Marie Tehan, recently announced the successful 1999/2000 grants for the Landcare Partnership Initiative and \$850,000 will be provided to 25 projects across the state through CMSA. These projects range from funding landcare facilitators to supporting on-ground works. Successful groups have

been notified and are required to complete agreement forms prior to receiving their funding.

Launched in 1996, LPI2000 initially provided \$3 million in funding to landcare groups. Through CMSA, this funding was distributed to implement landcare projects aimed at strengthening the partnership between the government, industry and the community.

An overview of the first three years of funding under LPI2000 is being prepared. *Prosperity and Partnership* is a publication highlighting ten of the projects covering on-ground works, facilitation, new technology, interaction with local government, pest plants and animals and community projects. A copy of the publication will be sent to all landcare groups.

**Catchment Management and Sustainable Agriculture (CMSA) is the Division of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment responsible for maximising the environmental, economic and social benefits of integrated catchment management and sustainable development of resource based industries.**



*NRE: Caring for your Catchment*

# Farmers asked to help brolgas



by Sue Mudford, Trust for Nature, south-west Victoria



*Brolgas need a range of wetlands and shallow swampy areas to flock, breed and find food.*

A new project has been launched to preserve brolga habitat in partnership with landowners, by Victorian Trust for Nature director, Dr Brian Whelan. The Brolga Wetlands and Grasslands Protection Program seeks to address the problem of loss of wetlands and grasslands and other brolga habitat on farms throughout Victoria.

The brolga, a large majestic bird, is common in northern Australia, but now is rare in Victoria. Anecdotal evidence suggests that brolgas were once present in the thousands, but populations have now declined to under 600 birds. They need a range of wetlands and shallow swampy areas to flock, breed and find food. In Victoria, more than 90% of these swamps occur on private farmland.

The birds maintain a seasonal life-cycle determined by natural rainfall patterns. The last three very dry years have reduced the bird's ability to nest and rear young – for example, less than eight brolga pairs successfully raised chicks in south-west Victoria last season. Increasing fox numbers and the trampling of nests by stock have also taken their toll on the population over the years.

Brolgas tend to pair-up in long-lasting relationships, with the same pairs often being seen feeding in open farmland at flocking sites in summer and autumn year after year. Up to 200 birds gather annually at these sites. They are also commonly seen following the oat feeder or eating large insects, spiders, mice, water snails and plant tubers.

**How can you help the brolga?**

## ***Spare a wetland***

Farmers are encouraged to preserve their permanent and ephemeral (or seasonal) wetlands as a part of their whole farm plan. By utilising these existing ecosystems, brolgas and other birds such as Japanese snipe, spoonbills, freckled duck and ibis do provide some control over insect attack on pastures and crops.

Wetlands should be fenced to keep stock out and to encourage grasses, rushes and sedges to grow. When fencing, it is important to take into account the flight path of brolgas and other birds as they have been known to get caught up in fences and electric wires. Mesh or ringlock fencing is generally not recommended. For fencing advice, contact NRE flora and fauna officers.

## ***Create a new wetland***

Case studies in Victoria have shown that brolgas will nest in new locations if conditions are suitable. Varying depths of water and as many shallows or 'edges' as possible will encourage nesting.

## ***Become a reporter***

If brolgas are nesting on land near you, take note. Observe what type of site they have chosen and try and determine why. How many chicks did they raise? What problems did the nesting pair have? NRE flora and fauna officers at Colac and Hamilton are interested in these sorts of results.

## ***Covenant your site***

Trust for Nature regional co-ordinators are available to visit properties with remnant grasslands and wetlands. They provide advice on what species of animals and plants exist on the property and help develop management guidelines with the owner. By developing a voluntary covenant for these areas, landowners will then permanently protect the habitat of this majestic bird.

For more information on the brolga, contact Sue Mudford on (03) 5599 5223 or Trust for Nature on 1800 999 933.

*Brolgas tend to pair-up in long-lasting relationships*





# The Powlett Experience

By Martin Fuller, Powlett Project Manager

South Gippsland's Powlett Project has a reputation for achieving high volumes of work in a relatively short time.

Since 1996, over 130 sites covering 112.70ha of land have been rehabilitated by planting 225,170 indigenous trees and understorey species. This required 77,000 metres of fencing and has involved 2300 urban-based and local volunteers.

The Powlett's success can be contributed to the efforts of the steering committee, low levels of bureaucracy and a strong sense of local ownership throughout the catchment.

The majority of projects have been undertaken in areas that are actively degrading and have been done with minimal direct financial assistance to landholders. (External funding to date amounts to less than \$250,000.)

On average, landholders carry more than 55% of individual project costs, mostly in site preparation and fencing. This ensures high levels of ownership and ongoing commitment to site maintenance.

## A multifunctional project

The project's structure has evolved over the last three years to where it can be clearly divided into six key components.

### 1. Project planning

Project development is managed by the landcare groups within the catchment. A steering committee (SC) made up of all partners in the project determines project priority and viability.



*Farm planning is an integral part of the project's success*

The SC also develops the budget and manages the strategic direction of the project.

### 2. Partnerships

The success of the Powlett Project is determined by well-founded relationships, which are, more importantly, actively maintained.

Partners in the project include: landcare groups within the catchment; the wider South Gippsland Landcare Network; Bass Coast and South Gippsland Shires; South Gippsland Regional Water Authority; the West Gippsland CMA; Coast Action; the NRE; the Victorian Landcare Foundation; LAL; Edison Mission Energy; BHP; the ATCV; Water Watch; and GAV.

The Powlett Project has established very strong linkages with local nurseries – amounting to contracting expertise and production to ensure supply of project inputs.

Maintenance of these relationships, particularly financial partners, is seen as crucial to the success of the project.

### 3. New and ongoing works

The focus of the Powlett Project is achieving work on the ground quickly and efficiently. Although revegetation is the most common activity, weed control, soil erosion control, water quality monitoring and fencing are also being undertaken at a great rate.

Sufficient flexibility exists in the project to tackle emerging issues if the groups consider them a high priority.



*The Powlett catchment finishes in Bass Strait – so does the rehabilitation!*

### 4. Extension and demonstration activities

Within the community some land management practices are still seen as questionable. Holding extension events and establishing demonstration sites for broader public education are considered important components of the project.

### 5. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring of catchment characteristics such as water quality have been woven into this project.

Potential exists to form strong linkages with universities to perform environmental assessments and snap-shots which will further strengthen the project.

Evaluation of works undertaken is conducted by the steering committee and project officer on a regular basis, which helps fine-tune the project and enables direct feedback from individual landholders to the committee.

### 6. Urban-rural links

The Powlett Project has taken up the challenge of spreading the landcare ethic into the city. Involving urban-based volunteers is seen as important in reaching this goal and has been successfully carried out many times since the project's inception.

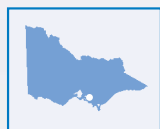
### Project site selection and management

At the heart of the Powlett Project is a determination to achieve results on the ground.

*South Gippsland's Powlett Project has a reputation for achieving high volumes of work in a relatively short time involving urban-based volunteers.*







*Innovations such as Alcoa mechanical planters assist in the high volume success.*



To achieve this the steering committee project officer, Jodie Gager, has devised an approach that attempts to capture sites, skill landholders in addressing land degradation issues and provide them with the confidence to make landcare part of their ongoing year-to-year activities.

#### **Project site selection:**

One-page project registration forms are sent out in January to groups and landholders throughout the catchment. A rural mailbox drop is also done to encourage less group-orientated landholders to participate.

Forms are returned to Jodie for assessment and follow-up one-on-one visits organised.

"These visits provide an opportunity to provide extension advice and explain procedures in greater detail. It also helps ensure that landholders who apply for assistance have sites and management skills to ensure the long-term future of the site," Jodie said.

"For example, weed infestation and property decline may lead to suspension of projects until other issues or sites are addressed."

From the farm visits Jodie prepares a one-page summary report outlining the project, budget and likely timetable of events.

"These details are entered into a database and photos are taken before project commences and are filed with project site reports," she said.

"The reports are then presented to the committee during monthly meetings for final approval."

#### **Record-keeping and monitoring**

Apart from the one-page project reports, all sites are recorded on an aerial mosaic and topographical maps of the catchment. It is envisaged that these will be ultimately incorporated into a GIS system.

#### **Powlett Project success story**

In terms of success, the Powlett Project has been fortunate in that it has had time to develop at its own rate and has been driven from the ground up. This is the key to its success.

For more information about the Powlett Project, contact Martin Fuller on (03) 5674 3516 or Jodie Gager on (03) 5671 2471.

## **Powlett Pointers**

*Some key points in developing large projects in landcare revolve around a two-stage process.*

### **Phase one – development**

- Assess the existing landcare infrastructure and culture.
- Identify and work with community leaders to develop the concept.
- Appoint a local multi-skilled steering committee.
- Develop broad interest and promote across the region.
- Strive for local ownership and support.

### **Phase two – operating**

- Start with manageable goals.
- Ensure project has a continuous improvement ethos.
- Maintain a good record-keeping system and keep committee and partners up-to-date on achievements.
- Diversify to meet community needs.
- Look for new partnerships, sub-projects and associations.
- Actively maintain close relationships with corporate supporters.





**Tony Rinaldi out laying baits.**

According to Gary Box, NRE's Catchment Management Officer at St Arnaud, the key to successful fox control is communication. Local farmers have been concerned that fox numbers were building up in the area. Certainly with less rabbits, thanks to calcivirus, the foxes were more visible. They were coming out into the open to find food and lambing percentages were suffering.

# Out-foxing

Gary Box says farmers were baiting and spotlighting, but they weren't co-ordinating their activities. Gary has been working with landholders and the Parks Victoria and Forestry land managers to get a major Foxoff baiting campaign timed to coincide with lambing.

"When people work together the chances of success are greatly increased. It's economical too – individuals can use less bait because there is greater coverage overall. The public land managers for the local parks and forests have always baited but they didn't realise the significance of timing their bait laying for lambing.

"This is the first year we have all worked together and it's really paid off."

## **Worth the effort**

James Anderson, a farmer from Sutherlands, north-west of St Arnaud, says the Foxoff campaign has increased his lambing percentages by 10-20%. James had a 'sneaking suspicion' that

foxes were taking some of his lambs but it wasn't until after the baiting campaign that he realised the scale of the damage they were doing.

"I'd visit a paddock in the first few days of lambing and there would be three or four lambs. When I came back a few days later there might only be one. Foxes tend to strike at the very start of the season."

James Anderson says he is fortunate to have the assistance of a semi-retired friend who walks the paddocks laying the baits. But he says even farmers strapped for time and cash should give Foxoff a go.

"When we all work at it together in a concentrated effort the rewards are much greater. Last year we did a big campaign on our own place but having neighbours to back you up increases the rewards."

## **Fox corridor**

At Kooreh, south of St Arnaud, farmer Tony Rinaldi has been engaged in a major battle with foxes. Tony describes his property as a fox corridor.





# the fox

By Carrie Tiffany



"Our farm is in a thoroughfare. In the south-west there's a large area of crown forest and granite rises. In the north-east there's a rocky range. The Avoca River runs alongside the place so the foxes use the farm to move from point to point."

The Rinaldi's lamb-down 1000 ewes. They also farm meat goats and pigs. Foxes have been a problem with all of the stock. Tony says it's great to see less rabbits about but it means the foxes are very hungry.

"They get into the pig huts to take piglets and at one stage we even had them living in a hay shed."

Two years ago Tony attended a meeting about Foxoff and decided to give it a try. This year he has put out 200 baits with 130 being taken.

"We've found 30 fox carcasses and they say you only find one in five, so the baits are certainly effective. Our lambing percentages are up by 15%."

"It's really worth the time to lay and check the baits. Just saving a few lambs a season will pay for a couple of boxes of bait."

Tony says knowing where to put the bait increases the chances of it being taken. From years of spotlighting he's learned how the foxes move across the property so he knows which areas to target.

"We noticed the foxes use particular routes. They like to move along a gully line or a ridge. Anywhere they think there's some cover and protection."

Tony says working with your neighbours is very important. Last year the whole area was being baited, covering 20 kilometres of farmland in each direction. More recently some of his neighbours haven't baited which he says weakens the overall effect.

"We are working hard at controlling foxes on our place so it's a bit rough when they are fattening-up nearby."

## New pest animal bait procedures

Administrative procedures for pest animal baits using 1080, including Foxoff, have been simplified to encourage landholders to get involved in pest control.

The changes have been made after a review requested by farmers and the Victorian Farmers Federation. However, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment said the requirements for laying baits would continue to be maintained at the same stringent levels.

The main changes are:

- there is now one simplified application form for each type of bait;
- nomination of another person to collect the bait has been incorporated into the application form;
- while neighbours must still be informed of the intended use of 1080 it is not necessary to use the NRE form to do so; and
- it is no longer necessary to advise NRE in writing that neighbours have been notified.

For more information contact your local office of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment or visit the website at: <http://www.nre.vic.gov.au/notes>





# New process revitalises grass-roots

A new approach to catchment management is reaping rewards for landholders in the Woody Yaloak catchment.

After six years, and with Alcoa's recommitment to their project, the catchment group decided that it was time to review their achievements and to plan for the future.

Following numerous discussions and help from Roger Standen, a consultant from Bendigo, the committee concluded a more integrated approach to catchment management was needed.

Alice Knight, the chair of the executive committee, said the evaluation was very useful.

"We realised issues that impact on our catchment activities were not just environmental," she said.

"Farm productivity, profitability, business and financial management, as well as social issues, were linked to our ability to undertake environmental work."

This erosion of social capital in the catchment was seen as a major issue arising from declining farm profitability.

"As more and more people are driven to take off-farm work, they have less time to invest in activities such as field days or information nights," Alice says.

"Lower profitability also limits our ability to make the dollar for dollar match of many landcare funding programs such as NHT."

## **The history**

The Alcoa Woody Yaloak Catchment Project covers 120,000ha between Linton and Cressy on Victoria's western plains.

Initiated in 1992, it was the state's first large-scale community catchment project. The plan was based on building the skills and confidence of individual landholders within the catchment.

Four key areas were identified in the early stages as being integral to the health of the Woody Yaloak River – trees, pastures, rabbits and erosion.

However, despite the earlier success, changing financial circumstances, the changed role of NRE and the advent of the Catchment Management Authority have altered the environment in which landcare works are being undertaken.

The Woody Yaloak Group set about finding solutions to these problems.

With the assistance of Ted Rowley, a consultant from Western Australia, and Cam Nicholson, the project manager, the group adopted a neighbourhood group approach to catchment management.

This involves small groups looking at a range of issues at a sub-catchment or sub-sub-catchment level, including environmental, social and profitability issues.

Ted says the process follows a logical planning cycle –

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to get to?
- How are we going to get there?
- Then action!

"The first step involves a facilitated discussion with the group identifying the issues that are bugging them the most.

"We then ask – 'so what do you want this area to look like in five or 10 years time?' " he said.

"Once this is described, we all work through how we will get there."

Each group then starts working on their most pressing needs and picking them off piece by piece.

*The Woody Yaloak community hosted the recent launch of the Replanting Victoria 2020 Program at Linton.*



***Empowerment has strengthened the community. The new process has helped lift the enthusiasm and effort in tackling land degradation at a grass roots level.***

Seven landcare groups in the catchment established an executive committee for the project and sub-committees to concentrate on these four issues.

## **Achievements**

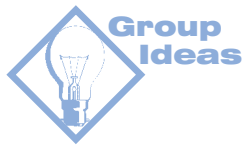
The success since the project's inception in 1993 has been dramatic: 220,000 trees established; 250,000 rabbits destroyed; 49km of erosion gullies repaired; and 3500ha of deep-rooted perennial pastures sown.

***Erosion in the Misery Moonlight Hills. The local neighbourhood group has identified their goal and are actively addressing their challenges.***



# ots work

By Paul Crock



*Learning in groups is still a key to the success of the project.*

## **Implementing these localised plans**

Planning and vision-setting activities are very useful tools, however, if they are not followed through, these activities amount to dreaming.

The local groups in the Woody are now becoming hungry for information and don't have the time to waste in the implementation of their localised plans.

Cam Nicholson has worked with the group since the inception of the catchment plan. He says that in the past, work has been done on an individual basis, focused mainly on activities that did not adequately support an integrated approach."

"NRE did provide facilitation support for some of the landcare groups in the catchment, but regular changes in staff curtailed the building of relationships necessary to achieve the best environment to learn and share information.

"To solve this problem, the committee has taken on the role of supporting the neighbourhood groups with neighbourhood facilitators," Cam said.

Cam said NRE had a vital role to play, in supporting the groups with technical information and conducting additional monitoring to help assess the impact of different solutions.

"This approach simply builds on the strengths of various people and organisations in catchment management."

"The Woody Yaloak Project has the stability, reputation and trust of the people within

the catchment and NRE can maximise their vast technical knowledge," Cam said.

## **Funding neighbourhood works**

A further change is the empowerment of the new neighbourhood groups by the executive committee in letting them determine what level of funding is needed to achieve their works.

Alice said this is a good way to ensure equitable outcomes for the funding dollars.

"A project may involve considerable earthworks, fencing and revegetation, so group members determine what is the most fair and equitable means of covering these expenses," she said.

"In some cases it may be 50:50, in others 100% of the earthworks covered with the fencing being met by the landholder."

"The group may also decide that priority actions may lead to more than 50% being paid out to other landholders on the grounds of hardship," Alice said.

Once a group has settled on a project, a very short application is made to the executive committee for the funds to undertake the works.

One person is nominated to present the request and it is up to the executive committee to find the funds.

On average, the cost sharing equates to dollar for dollar and strategically the most important catchment issues are being met.

Landcare funding processes never quite match up with the timing needs of the community according to Alice Knight.

"One of the benefits of having access to Alcoa Landcare funding is that we can use the funds to SUPPORT issues that are important to the community and not eligible or timely for funding under other programs.

"We can use it at any time of the year and it helps us maintain and build the momentum of the local neighbourhood group concept," she said.

The Woody community were also successful in receiving considerable funding through the Replanting Victoria 2020 Program. The group plans to distribute these funds using the new neighbourhood group process.

Alice is sure the new process is building trust and meaningful partnerships within the Woody Yaloak catchment area and is helping lift the enthusiasm and effort in tackling land degradation at a grass roots level.

For more information about the Woody Yaloak Neighbourhood Group approach, contact Cam Nicholson on (03) 5258 3860 or Ted Rowley on 0409 836 618.





*Marilee Lindgren from Kansas City enjoyed learning about the wool process.*

Twenty-three energetic geography teachers from the mid-west USA recently visited the Warrambeen Landcare Education Centre at Shelford for a taste of landcare on the sheep and cropping property.

The teachers were on a 'Capricorn Exchange', an 'eco-culture' tour of Australia organised as a result of a partnership between the Australian Geography Teachers Association (AGTA) and the Geographical Educators Network of Indiana (GENI).

Lindsay Francis, the AGTA representative on the Warrambeen leg of the tour, was very positive about the exchange program.

"This is the third tour of its kind and the linkages established between teachers and schools is really exciting.

"The program is based on a home hosting arrangement where US teachers are hosted by their Australian counterparts. They visit the Australian schools and give presentations to the kids on their geography and landscape issues, as well as touring to look at different issues such as landcare across the country," he said.

"When they get home, the teachers present the tour to their school students and establish linkages between the schools that host them here and their own," Lindsay said.

Dorothy Drum, the leader of the GENI tour, is responsible for bringing the group together in the US.

"We see these tours as a great opportunity to learn more about geography, landscape and agricultural issues in Australia.

# GENIS visit WARRAMBEEN



"GENI puts the package together to give teaching professionals in geography an affordable means to learn first-hand and to form some meaningful international networks in both a personal and professional sense," she said.

Many on the tour were undertaking additional professional development courses in the US. The tour was organised to give participants educational credits towards these courses.

Dorothy stressed that the tour participants were all current teachers or student teachers looking for personal development and to establish international linkages.

"Many of our teachers and their schools have made great connections since the exchanges have begun and, with the use of the Internet in schools increasing, we hope to establish many more links during this trip," Dorothy said.

For the participants in the tour, the visit to the Warrambeen Landcare Education Centre was their first time on a wool-growing property.

Ian Taylor amazed the group with some quick and nimble sheepdog work, bringing a small flock of sheep and lambs into the yards.

Marilee Lindgren, a teacher from Kansas City, thoroughly enjoyed her first time on such a property. She enjoyed learning about the wool process from the sheep's back and was keen to bring the landcare message back to her school.

"The tour has given me all sorts of new ideas and I have learned a lot that I can bring back to my school," she said.

Members of the group passed lambs around as Ian described the issues for woolgrowers in Australia and, after a short tour of the historic woolshed and the Landcare Centre, the group boarded their bus and continued the tour through to Adelaide and Central Australia.

For more information about Warrambeen, contact Trish Taylor on (03) 5281 2350 or the Capricorn Exchange Program, contact Lindsay Francis on (08) 8370 5039.



*Lindsay Francis (r) and Dorothy Drum meet the working dogs after an impressive demonstration.*

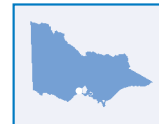




*June Minett pricking out seedlings at the Barwon Water Nursery.*

# Visually impaired lend a hand

By Paul Crock



"In the early stages we used the pottery room as the propagating area, but time restraints meant this became unworkable," Noel said.

"Instead, we learned that Barwon Water had nursery facilities available for community groups to use."

Around this time, the Greening Connewarre Group applied for and received federal funding under the One Billion Trees Program, for a wildlife corridor from Hospital Swamps, Lake Connewarre to Thompson's Creek.

Noel and the then Treasurer of the Connewarre Group, Sue McCoombe, set about developing the new program with Tim Solly from Barwon Water.

"After establishing the linkages with Barwon Water, we approached the members and management at the Illawarra Centre with the idea of developing the program from propagation into an integrated program from tree seed to the planting stages," Sue said.

"Everyone agreed and we have not looked back since."

The program participants find the program a great way to learn new skills and make a meaningful contribution to the community.

June Minett is nearly totally blind, yet she says it gives her a chance to get out into the community and do something worthwhile.

"I wanted to learn more about gardening and have the opportunity to be involved in and to do something good for the community," June said.

"I have learned how to make cuttings, pot up plants the right way and learned how to plant trees once they are the right size. The program has also given me the confidence to try it out at home," she said.

Legally blind, Alan Mackie sees the program as a way of lifting his self-confidence.

"The program is thoroughly enjoying. Learning how to pot up the plants and actually doing it is soothing and relaxing, but you can do it and chat at the same time.

"I think that others would really benefit from the program as everything about it is relaxing and enjoyable," Alan said.

The program has already helped the Greening Connewarre Group plant thousands of trees and provided visually-impaired people with the opportunity to meet new people, learn new skills, build confidence and contribute meaningfully to the community and to landcare.

For more information about the Illawarra landcare project, contact Noel Read at the Vision Australia Foundation on (03) 5221 4100.

The Vision Australia Foundation's Illawarra Centre in Geelong has teamed up with the Greening Connewarre Tree Group and Barwon Water in an innovative landcare program that is helping visually impaired people get involved in restoring vegetation around Lake Connewarre.

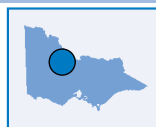
The new program grew out of attempts to establish a gardening program on the limited grounds of the centre in Geelong in 1995, and has since blossomed to provide a great opportunity for all concerned to help landcare in the area.

Noel Read, a rehabilitation worker at the centre, established the program and moved it from gardening into native tree propagation.

"Through my involvement with the Connewarre Tree Group, I collected seed that the centre members then propagated.



*Program participants and helpers with the fruits of their labour ready to plant.*



## CMA assists in revegetation project

The Upper Spring Creek Landcare Group in the Shelbourne/Lockwood area south-west of Bendigo has begun work on a three-year Natural Heritage Trust project to rehabilitate and enhance riparian vegetation along Bullock and Spring Creeks.

Funded through Bushcare, the project is being supported by the Lockwood South Primary School Junior Landcare Group, the North Central Catchment Management Authority, Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE, Lockwood South Uniting Church, the City of Greater Bendigo and a large number of local residents.

### *Upper Spring Creek Landcare Group.*



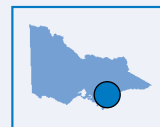
The landcare group invited Greg Peters, Waterways Manager – North Central CMA, to an information day to assist local landholders with the process of assessing the condition of the streams and methods of rehabilitation of creeks and streams.

Geoff Park, Bushcare and Biodiversity Manager – North Central CMA, is also involved, offering advice and assistance on revegetation and strategies to landholders to enhance biodiversity in the area.

In a further effort to improve the health of the catchment, many landholders in the project area along Bullock Creek have participated in an integrated pest plant and animal program. Members are fencing off streams to reduce impact by stock and revegetating with local understorey tubestock grown from seed locally collected and propagated, and nurtured by the juniors at Lockwood South Primary School.

Contact North Central CMA.  
Telephone (03) 5448 7124.

## West Gippsland CMA moves on Landcare Forum



While the future support mechanisms for the landcare movement have been considered at a state-wide level in recent times there has also been a flurry of activity in West Gippsland.

“In response to concerns from the South Gippsland Landcare Network, the West Gippsland CMA has initiated a regional review and it has been agreed that the timing is right to convene a Landcare Forum as provided for in the CMA structure,” said Ken Ashton, CEO of the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority.

Scheduled for late August, the forum will seek to improve communication between landcare and other stakeholders, ensuring the integration of projects and the understanding of strategic directions.

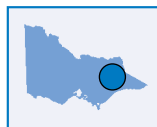
“Through the forum, we will also aim to make certain that appropriate support mechanisms are in place to deal with an ever increasing role where resources are scarce,” said Mr Ashton.

The forum will also clarify the role of landcare under the new catchment management structure.

“The Authority has a number of other forums established which have been very successful and it is hoped that the Landcare Forum can follow the same path,” said Mr Ashton.

West Gippsland CMA.  
Telephone (03) 5175 7800.

## Strategy targets algal blooms



Victoria's upper north east will have an estimated 77% reduction in blue-green algal blooms with the implementation of the Upper North East Water Quality Strategy.

The strategy, which covers the Kiewa River Basin and the Victorian portion of the Upper Murray Basin, is estimated to bring in total economic benefits of between \$4.2 and \$7.8 million per year to the region.

A draft of the strategy has been released by the North East Catchment Management Authority for public consultation.

The strategy contains 13 specific programs with corresponding actions to reduce nutrient and sediment inputs in local waterways and the Murray River. Catchment modelling has predicted that full implementation of the strategy will reduce total phosphorus loads from the Kiewa River by 38 tonnes and those from Lake Hume catchment by 37 tonnes.

The North East CMA is responsible for implementing the strategy which is an action plan under the North East Regional Catchment Strategy.

“Protecting and enhancing water quality in the Kiewa and Upper Murray Basins is critical as they contribute 24% of the total Victorian discharge to the Murray-Darling Basin system,” said John Riddiford, CEO of the North East CMA.

The waterways targeted by the strategy are used for potable water supply, environmental flows, irrigation, stock and domestic supply and a variety of recreational uses.

North East CMA.  
Telephone (02) 6055 6260.

(L to R)  
*Veronica Lanigan, NECMA Water Quality Officer; Patrick McNamara, Deputy Premier and Minister for Agriculture and Natural Resources; and Lindsay Jarvis, CMA board member, at the launch of the strategy.*



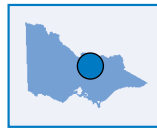
# New guidelines cut through red tape

Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority has answered a call from landcare groups who say they have become bogged down in red tape.

In a joint effort by the Goulburn Broken CMA, Goulburn Murray Landcare Network, VFF Farm Tree and Landcare Association and the Victorian Farmers Federation, a new manual of *Landcare Management Guidelines* has been developed to assist landcare groups in the daily running of their organisations. Copies have been sent to every landcare group in the catchment and are available to other Victorian groups on request.

The manual offers guidelines on setting up and running a landcare group covering topics such as roles and responsibilities of executive members, employing staff, insurance and WorkCover.

Shepparton accountant Russell Guppy helped prepare the guidelines which also include examples of a range of forms and brochures that may be useful to landcare groups.



The guidelines are a first for the state and will hopefully assist landcare members to overcome the red tape which landcare groups believe can hinder their efforts to achieve on-ground works.

The Goulburn Broken CMA is keen to work with landcare groups to ensure their time and resources are utilised where they are most needed.

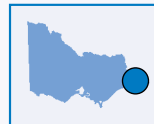
The *Landcare Management Guidelines* can be purchased from the CMA for \$20.

Goulburn Broken CMA.  
Telephone (03) 5822 2288.

**Goulburn Broken CMA Chair, John Dainton (L), and landcare member Peter Zoethalt, examine the new guidelines at their Nagambie launch.**



# Catchment management a community responsibility



Gippslanders have been challenged to take more responsibility for their own actions and help to make the region a leader in waterway management activities.

"As a community, our success as custodians of some beautiful waterways will be judged by our children in future years," said Duncan Malcolm, Chair, East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority.

"The establishment of CMAs across Victoria has helped to stabilise the health of our streams, but if we fail to muster more community involvement the degradation which has already occurred is likely to accelerate in the future."

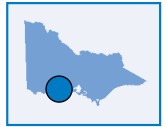
Mr Malcolm has congratulated farmers for taking a lead role through the formation of landcare groups and involvement in other activities such as Bushcare and Waterwatch.

"Many farmers are the most effective environmentalists in Gippsland because they know their future is directly linked to the continued health of the catchment. We are continually working with landholders to re-establish native vegetation along river banks, control pest animals and plants, stabilise river banks and generally encourage good management practices which minimise the impact on our waterways.

"Landcare groups have been sensational in their efforts to raise awareness of environmental issues and carry out practical work on the ground in co-operation with the CMA, but we can always do more."

East Gippsland CMA.  
Telephone (03) 5153 0462.

# Check-up for Corangamite rivers



During May and June, people in the Corangamite catchment were seen wading in rivers, even on the coldest and wettest days.

They were officers from the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority undertaking an assessment of the health of rivers and streams in the Barwon, Moorabool, Lake Corangamite and Otway Coast catchments. This was done in partnership with NRE as part of a state-wide assessment of river health, called the Index of Stream Condition. Funding is being provided by NRE, Corangamite CMA and the Natural Heritage Trust.

Corangamite CMA Water Resources Manager, Dr Tim Fletcher, said that the index provides an integrated picture of the environmental condition of waterways.

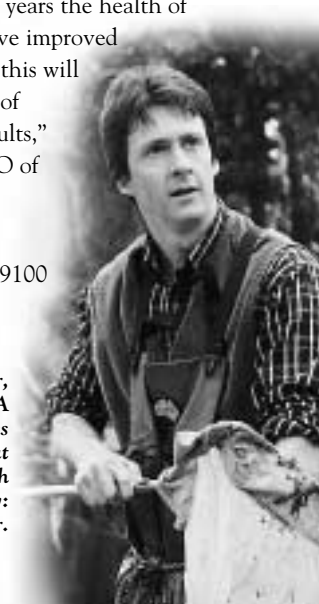
"We collect information about all the different aspects of stream health including water quality, the flow (hydrology), the condition of the bed, banks and streamside vegetation, as well as surveying the bugs living in the stream," said Dr Fletcher.

The Index of Stream Condition survey represents the most comprehensive environmental assessment of waterways in the region. In all, 214 randomly selected sites were assessed over four weeks. The survey will be repeated every five years to determine any changes over time.

"We hope that in five years the health of our waterways will have improved significantly and that this will show up in the Index of Stream Condition results," said Don Forsyth, CEO of Corangamite CMA.

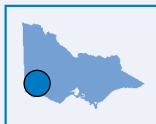
Corangamite CMA  
Telephone (03) 5232 9100

**Dr Tim Fletcher, Corangamite CMA Water Resources Manager, helping out with river health assessment. Courtesy: The Geelong Advertiser.**





## Waterways initiatives in Glenelg-Hopkins



During May, more than 50 Hamilton and district residents attended a forum on the health of local waterways organised by the Glenelg-Hopkins CMA.

The forum gave residents the opportunity to gain an understanding of the changes that have occurred to local rivers and lakes and what is being done to improve them. Examples of what communities are doing to tackle their waterway management issues were displayed during the talks.

A tour of the Grange Burn and Lake Hamilton was held in the afternoon, looking at catchment issues, and revegetation and erosion control works at a nearby farm.

In a separate initiative to promote long-term health of regional waterways, the CMA is supporting construction of a low energy, minimal operational cost, treatment process for domestic sewage generated by the City of Portland. The project is the first of its type in Australia.

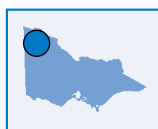
The CSIRO and CRC have been involved with Portland Coast Water Authority in a 15-month pilot trial. The process involves treatment of effluent in reed beds using *phragmites australis*, a native reed that filters water. This process will eliminate the discharge of raw sewage to the marine environment and make available for re-use the total effluent generated by Portland.

A pressure pipeline has been installed to transfer the effluent to Portland Aluminium Alcoa for agricultural re-use trials.

Glenelg-Hopkins CMA.  
Telephone (03) 5571 2526.



*Ian Inness-Wardell, Waterways Manager, Glenelg-Hopkins CMA, explaining works on an unnamed tributary of the Wannan.*



## Leadership study for Mallee landcare

A regional landcare leadership study undertaken by the Mallee Catchment Management Authority has provided baseline information about landcare in the Mallee.

As part of the study, the landcare group database held within the Mallee CMA has been updated and an inventory of equipment and other physical resources used by landcare groups in the Mallee collated. A regional map has been produced that details perceived landcare group boundaries within the region. A register of landcare group social and operational resources has also been compiled. The study also investigated how landcare groups and the landcare philosophy are related to the activities of the Mallee CMA.

"The Mallee CMA is now faced with an interesting challenge in determining how to best assist the landcare network in the most efficient, effective and strategic manner possible," said Scott Glyde, CEO of the Mallee CMA.

"The development of a close relationship between landcare groups and the CMA will ensure natural resource management in the Mallee is strategic and effective with strong community involvement and ownership."

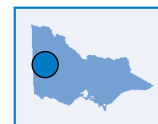
There are more than 20 landcare groups in the Mallee, mostly in the dryland farming area.

Mallee CMA.  
Telephone (03) 5022 3041.

*Waitchie Landcare Group – Tour of Murrayville looking at saltbush plantings and alley farming.*



## Wimmera community has its say on water issues



The Wimmera Catchment Management Authority held a series of five public workshops during June at Stawell, Warracknabeal, Nhill, Edenhope and Horsham to explain the principles and content of its waterway, floodplain and rural drainage strategies and to seek further input from the community.

Over 200 people from the regional community participated in the development of the new strategies that will provide direction for the management of the Wimmera's waterways, floodplain and rural drainage systems.

More than 60 written submissions were received from the community early in the investigation stage of the planning process, which began in November last year. Over 140 people including farmers, landholders, landcare group members, local government and state agencies attended the recent public workshops.

"This excellent attendance, along with extra written submissions following the workshops, has confirmed the strong community interest in the water issues," said John Young, CEO of the Wimmera CMA.

These strategies will guide all waterway, floodplain and rural drainage related activity in the region for the next 10 years. They form a major component of the Wimmera Regional Catchment Strategy.

"Community consultation and input has been crucial to developing the strategies, as it will be to their implementation," said Mr Young.

Wimmera CMA.  
Telephone (03) 5382 1544.



*Wimmera River – Big Bend, Dimboola.*

# Victorian Catchment Management Council



## ***Council looks to future of Victorian rivers***

River health is one of the Victorian Catchment Management Council's top priorities in its current program.

As the State Government's key adviser on catchment management, policy and strategic directions, the Council is developing advice on long-term vision and goals to improve the health of Victoria's rivers. Its directions are designed to meet the future needs of users and the environment, in the medium and long term.

Council's advice to government will be mainly based on the knowledge and expertise of Council members. Water engineer John Tilleard, Monash University water scientist Professor Barry Hart, farmer and former research director Christine Forster and EPA Director Chris Bell are the Council members most closely involved in developing the advice.

While the Council cannot pre-empt Government response to the advice, it hopes it will give rise to a major Government policy and River Health Strategy to measurably improve our waterways by the middle of the first century.

Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs) and key stakeholders will be widely consulted on the Council's Position Paper during the development of the advice.

If you wish to receive a copy of the Position Paper when it becomes available, contact the Council on (03) 9412 5045.

## ***Measuring catchment health***

The newly formed CMAs have a very important role in improving the management of Victoria's catchments.

However, at present there is no acceptable set of key performance indicators that are available to use in assessing whether the various management initiatives are effective or not.

Accordingly, the Council is leading a project to identify and develop a small suite of catchment indicators to assess the condition of Victoria's catchments.

The Natural Resource Assessment and Monitoring Program is a follow-on project from the production of the first catchment condition report, 'Know Your Catchments', produced in 1997. This report contained a set of 27 interim indicators.

The current program being conducted in conjunction with NRE, EPA and CMAs, has identified 20 indicators in three categories:

- condition indicators (e.g. remnant vegetation condition);
- impact indicators (e.g. nutrient concentrations); and
- activity indicators (e.g. landholder and community group works).

It is also hoped that indicators of the economic and social condition of the catchment will also be developed.

The indicators will be compatible with the indicators being used for the National Land and Water Audit.

Their development has involved extensive consultation with CMAs, government agencies, scientists and non-government organisations. It is expected that the first set of indicators will be available to CMAs later this year.

## ***Landcare Working Group established***

The Council has recently established a Landcare Working Group.

The group, under the chairmanship of Council member Dr Sarah Ewing, is monitoring and reporting to the Ministers on the implementation of the Council's report on landcare, 'Towards 2000: Caring for Landcare in Victoria.'

The report outlined recommendations for action by Government and, in particular, the new CMAs, which will advance support and development of landcare. A progress report on implementation is being prepared for Government.

The group will also identify emerging issues of central importance to landcare, among them: uncertainties surrounding the future of the National Heritage Trust; a need for a more integrated delivery of programs; the effects of poor commodity prices; access to technical and facilitation support; and, the notion of landcare groups as 'self-supporting'.

## ***Council website launch***

The Council recently launched its website, containing resources for landcarers and students including a publications list, three pages of links, a catchment map and contact details for CMAs. Designed for quick downloading, the site contains links to some 85 other related organisations from state-based to national to international.

Visit us often at [www.vcmc.vic.gov.au](http://www.vcmc.vic.gov.au) and send us your feedback.



***Council members on a tour of river health issues in north central Victoria.***



# Rabbit Buster CONTINUES

The State Government has announced a further \$10 million over the next three years for the continuation of the Rabbit Buster Initiative. Since its inception in 1996 Rabbit Buster has achieved the most significant advances in rabbit control in Victoria for many decades.

Rabbit calicivirus disease has provided a great opportunity to make a lasting impact on rabbit numbers, but only if it is backed up with integrated control programs.

Rabbit Buster encourages landholders to carry out traditional rabbit control work such as above-ground harbour removal, ripping of warrens and fumigation.

For information about how your group can access Rabbit Buster assistance contact your local office of the Department of Natural Resources



and Environment.

## 10 steps to long-term rabbit control

1. Control rabbits using more than one method.
2. Involve your neighbours.
3. Find out where the rabbits are and what they are living in.
4. Poison to knock numbers down and take advantage of when biological control (RCD and myxomatosis) is working.
5. Destroy above-ground harbour.
6. Burn/remove fallen timber and remove noxious weeds.
7. Rip and destroy all accessible rabbit harbour.
8. Check your ripping (look for reopenings).
9. Fumigate all burrows.
10. Check rabbit-prone areas once a month.

# Action programs guide resource management



The Catchment Implementation Committees of the Port Phillip Catchment and Land Protection (CaLP) Board have now completed the development of integrated Catchment Action Programs (CAPs) for the management of their respective catchments, based on the priorities established through the Regional Catchment Strategy.

"The finalisation of the CAPs is a major step forward, because they will guide the development of works programs by all those who have an interest or responsibility in sustainable catchment management," said CaLP Board Chair, Marshall Baillieu.

For each major issue the CAPs have described the extent, severity and trend of the problems, assessed the existing initiatives already in place and recommended additional actions where required.

CAPs for the Dandenong, Werribee, Maribyrnong and Westernport catchments were officially launched during May and June 1999 after receiving CaLP Board approval. With the Yarra CAP approved by government and launched in June, there is now a CAP for all five catchments of the Port Phillip region.

Copies of the CAPs are currently available by contacting Donna Dvoracek at the Port Phillip CaLP Board. The Yarra CAP is also now available on the Port Phillip CaLP Board website at:  
<http://www.nre.vic.gov.au/catchmnt/portphillip/yarra>

Port Phillip CaLP Board.  
Telephone (03) 9785 0187.

## 20 'MOST UNWANTED' WEEDS

Australia now has an official listing of the country's 20 'most unwanted' weeds.

The Commonwealth Ministers for Forestry and Conservation, Wilson Tuckey, Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Mark Vaile, and the Environment, Senator Robert Hill, jointly released a list that has been agreed with the States and Territories after extensive consultation.

Mr Tuckey said the listing of Australia's weeds of national significance is a world

first and an important element of the National Weeds Strategy.

"Weeds have been selected according to their invasiveness, economic, environmental and social impacts, current distribution, potential for spread and effect in reducing the growth of desirable plants," Mr Tuckey said.

"The list will be important to research organisations, commercial partners, industry and community groups in determining their priorities," Mr Tuckey said.

### Weeds of national significance

Common name	Scientific name	Common name	Scientific name
alligator weed	<i>alternanthera philoxeroides</i>	mimosa	<i>mimosa pigra</i>
athel pine	<i>tamarix aphylla</i>	parkinsonia	<i>parkinsonia aculeata</i>
bitou bush / boneseed	<i>chrysanthemoides monilifera</i>	parthenium weed	<i>parthenium hysterophorus</i>
blackberry	<i>rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	pond apple	<i>annona glabra</i>
bridal creeper	<i>asparagus asparagoides</i>	prickly acacia	<i>acacia nilotica</i> ssp. <i>indica</i>
cabomba	<i>cabomba caroliniana</i>	rubber vine	<i>cryptostegia grandiflora</i>
Chilean needle grass	<i>nassella neesiana</i>	salvinia	<i>salvinia molesta</i>
gorse	<i>ulex europaeus</i>	serrated tussock	<i>nassella trichotoma</i>
hymenachne	<i>hymenachne amplexicaulis</i>	Willows except weeping	<i>salix</i> spp. except <i>s. babylonica</i> ,
lantana	<i>lantana camara</i>	willows, pussy willow and	<i>s. x calodendron</i> and <i>s. x</i>
mesquite	<i>prosopis</i> spp.	sterile pussy willow	<i>reichardtiji</i>

# NATURAL HERITAGE TRUST NEWS – National Landcare Program



Natural Heritage Trust

Helping Communities Helping Australia

- State package of recommended projects is now in Canberra awaiting decision.
- 70% of recommended new projects are community group led, 30% agency (including regional implementation committees, local government).
- \$16 million requested (170 projects) – the approximate NLP pool for Victoria in 1999/2000 is \$12 million.
- Increasing number of applications from landcare networks, resulting in larger projects.
- Calls for 2000/2001 applications will open late in 1999 – groups should start planning new projects now!
- Current Natural Heritage Trust extended for an additional year to 2001/2002.
- NEXT EDITION – some tips for better applications!

Ingrid Duncan  
State Co-ordinator  
National Landcare Program  
Telephone (03) 5430 4483.

## Minimum tillage trial to stop Mallee dust

by Sarah Lance,  
Landcare Co-ordinator,  
Swan Hill NRE



Erosion, particularly wind erosion, is a critical environmental issue in Victoria's Mallee. Tonnes of precious topsoil are lost to the atmosphere every year. With it goes moisture, organic matter and valuable nutrients that are vital for successful crop growth. Apart from the damage to farmland caused by excessive tillage of the soil in fallow systems, resulting dust storms cause health and safety problems and inconvenience in everyday life.

The Waitchie Landcare Group is one of the many Victorian Mallee landcare groups originally formed around rabbit and weed control issues. The group wanted to see conservation tillage methods that address these problems trialled successfully and profitably in the region, so they began a three-year demonstration project.

Planning for the demonstration site began early this year. The group chose a 20 acre paddock close to town and the area's major road. The site contains a similar soil type across the length and breadth of the area. This paddock was divided into replicated trial plots. An important feature of this demonstration was that the area put under seed was large enough to be sown and harvested by standard agricultural machinery. The group decided to sow barque barley at the site in their first year.

A base-line soil test was conducted to determine pH, salt content and levels of phosphorus, potassium, nitrate nitrogen, ammonium nitrogen, sulphur and iron. A full trace element test was also conducted to determine any deficiencies that may affect the results. A soil sample was also tested for soil-borne diseases.

In preparation for the minimum tillage sowing, plots were sprayed with Sprayseed to knock down the self-seeded triticales that was emerging through the stubble.

*Stubble King disc opening direct drill at the Waitchie minimum tillage demonstration site.*



**Waitchie Landcare Group sowing with Stubble King disc-opening direct drill.**

Three tillage methods were used on the site: (i) minimum tillage using a tined direct drill with coulters and press wheel; (ii) no-till with a double disc opening direct drill with press wheels; and (iii) conventional tillage using an offset disc for preparation and a conventional combine seeder. Barque barley and DAP super from the same bin were used in all the seeders.

Next year the trial will be expanded. It is planned to continue the trial at the present site but to also include another site at a different stage in crop rotation. Farmers in the area are also being actively encouraged to sow their own paddocks with the same implements used at the demonstration site. This will provide insight into the operation and use of these implements on the typical Mallee paddock.

For more information, contact Sarah Lance, telephone (03) 5036 0812.







# ON THE SHELF



## Windbreaks

*Windbreaks* by Steve Burke outlines the theory and practice of establishing windbreaks. This practical guide looks at the economic and environmental benefits of windbreaks. It uses the latest technical information but presents it in an easy-to-read format.

The guide contains some interesting case studies where farmers explain how and why they have established windbreaks on their properties. The case studies cover both cropping and grazing enterprises.

It's hard to imagine a more complete publication on windbreaks. The guide will be useful to all farmers, land managers, scientists and consultants interested in improving the productivity and health of the land.

*Windbreaks* is available from the NRE Information Centre for \$39.95. Call (03) 9637 8080.

## Kiewa Catchment Landcare Group – caring for our land

This booklet and video produced by the Kiewa Catchment Landcare Group are an excellent example of how a landcare

group can market itself both to sponsors and the local community.

The booklet summarises the history, achievements and goals of the group. It includes the benefits of becoming a group member and a list of equipment the group has for hire. There is a great section profiling the 'people' of the group – they explain why they became involved and what they get out of it.

The booklet is a very interesting read – full of quotes, maps and good, clear black and white photographs. Maurie Smith's 'reflection' on the back page is a great testimony to the dedication and commitment of the members of this group. The video demonstrates the projects the group has completed over the last 10 years.

*The Kiewa Catchment Landcare Group – caring for our land* video costs \$30. The booklet is free. Contact Di Griffin on (02) 6027 1529.

## An Introduction to Herb Growing

This report, by Howard Rubin and Elle Fikke-Rubin for the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, provides a background on herbs in Australia. It gives a general overview of herb growing and discusses potential growers' prospects in the industry, export markets, set-up costs, marketing, harvesting, drying and selecting the right herbs to grow.

*An Introduction to Herb Growing* is available from the NRE Information Centre on (03) 9637 8080 for \$10.



## what do grapes, olives & biodiversity have in common?

Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE and the Environmental Management Unit of Monash University invites you to attend a workshop to discuss an emergent agricultural technique known as **Analogue Forestry**.

**Date:** 9 & 10 October 1999

**Location:** Toolangi Forest Discovery  
Kinglake - Healesville Rd

For more information or a workshop brochure phone:

Anthony Duffy: **03 9380 4688**

Kath White: **03 9269 1458**

Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE



## Lean Selflocking Tree Guards

### Conservation at Work

Ideal for exposed sites  
Heavy galvanized wire frame  
UV stabilized 120 micron plastic sleeve.  
Reusable (wire 15 years, plastic 5 years)  
Very easy to install. No tools needed.

Sleeve will not come off in any weather conditions if erected properly

### Increases plant growth and shelters against wind and frost

The wire frame can easily be pushed through five sheets of newspaper to form a weedmat and to reduce evaporation.

### Competitively priced for Landcare Groups at 85 cents complete.

Phone (03) 5428 9202 (03) 5253 1918  
Mobile: 0419 897 721

Made in Australia

# NOW, WHERE, HOW.... AND DO IT!

Greg Smith,  
Farm\$mart Co-ordinator,  
Victorian Farmers Federation

Farm\$mart is a very popular and innovative, farmer-focussed, extension program in Victoria. It's about helping farming families develop a vision - and setting goals - and planning to achieve the goals and the vision. This process leaves rural families with motivation, confidence and the capacity to manage change.

The program is based Adult Learning Principles. Over the last 2 years, about 4,000 farmers have participated in the 2-day, Farm\$mart Series A workshops and many of these are now following up with the 5-day, Series B workshops. There has been an enormous amount of very positive and complimentary feedback about the program.

## **Farm\$mart and Landcare**

Clearly Landcare has achieved an enormous amount of on-ground work and it continues to mobilise a wide cross-section of the Victorian rural community. A recent survey by Charles Sturt University reports that, where a Landcare group operates, 46% of properties have a Landcare member. It is estimated that about 27,500 members belong to the 890 Victorian Landcare groups.

There is now a keen interest in how Landcare might move beyond the very obvious and very significant, on-ground works. The network of almost 900 groups and 30,000 members can have an incredible influence on community and economic development, and consequently have a substantial impact on regional development and catchment management in Victoria.

A Great Opportunity for Landcare Groups  
Many Landcare groups have already taken the opportunity that Farm\$mart provides to transform their activities and include more 'discussion group-type' sessions by making good use of the resources available via Farm\$mart.

There is a very widespread awareness across Victoria about Farm\$mart and farming families are increasingly recognising that the program delivers very interesting and beneficial workshops in a very non-threatening learning environment in convenient locations - at convenient times and of manageable duration.

## **The Strategic Planning Process**

Farm\$mart workshops concentrate on instilling the culture of strategic thinking

*Farm\$mart facilitators are available to help groups set the direction for their farming businesses.*

and strategic planning. The process routinely involves:

**NOW** -What is the situation now? eg the farm's financial viability, or the farm's natural resources, or the communications within the farming family.

**WHERE** -Where would we like things to be? eg farm viability, natural resources, communications.

**HOW** -How are we going to get there? How are we going to achieve our vision with regard to farm viability, natural resources, communications?

**DO IT!** -Don't just think about it, do it! Get on and make it happen! And, regularly monitor and review progress.

## **Get involved**

To find out more, or to become involved with Farm\$mart, contact your nearest office of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment or the Victorian Farmers Federation.

*Landcare is about combining productivity with conservation. With Farm\$mart helping set the business focus, farmers can now look forward to a sustainable farming operation and a profitable business.*





# Junior Landcare

## Wooragee Junior Landcare Group celebrates 10 years of action

Wooragee Rural School, Australia's first Junior Landcare Group, has celebrated 10 years of involvement in landcare.

Since forming a Junior Landcare Group in 1989 the school has built their own shade house and hot house, propagated their own plants, done research work with CSIRO on Paterson's Curse, developed a weeds database and run their own waterwatch program.

The students have recently built their own bird hide and are involved in daily bird watching and recording.

The school commemorated the 10 years of action with a special celebration in June. Guests included Heather Mitchell, Joan Kirner and Caroline Hogg.

*Heather Mitchell, Joan Kirner and Caroline Hogg (l-r) with students from Wooragee Rural School celebrating 10 years of involvement in landcare.*

All were instrumental in developing landcare in Victoria and were involved in launching Wooragee Rural School's Junior Landcare Group.

Wooragee School teacher, Di Tyrell, said the students really enjoy working on projects involving landcare.

"They can relate it back to their own places. A lot of sharing of information happens between students, families and landcare members so the students feel they are really making a contribution and a difference."



## Kids talk river health in Mildura

A major river health conference involving presentations by primary school students will mark the launch of National Water Week in October this year.

The conference, to be hosted by the Mallee Catchment Management Authority and the Mildura West Primary School, will be held in Mildura, Victoria, from 17-19 October 1999.

The conference is targeted at upper primary school students and their teachers, in particular schools active in environmental education. Over 150 students and 80 teachers are expected to attend from across Australia.



The conference aims to reinforce the importance of river health, raise awareness among primary students and provide an opportunity for students to interact with their peers.

It is the first ever conference to focus on both water and young people. Students developing the conference are working with expert mentors in water science. The students will present and discuss information on water quality and quantity, salinity, flooding and biodiversity.

Mildura chef and presenter of ABC's 'A Gondola on the Murray', Stefano de Pieri, is a keen supporter of the conference.

Stefano will cater for the conference dinner using local river food.

"The health of the Murray-Darling River system is vital to rural communities such as Sunraysia. The quality of water in the River Murray sustains the irrigation industries and the prosperity of local communities.

"How we manage our rivers also impacts on the biodiversity of aquatic life and the quality and quantity of food that we can sustainably remove from the river. I am sure the young people will do a great job in communicating these messages," Stefano said.

For more information contact Arron Wood, Conference Convenor, Mallee Catchment Management Authority, telephone (03) 5022 3069.

# WEED CONTROL

Weedmaster 360...the **green** glyphosate from Nufarm



Glyphosate herbicide has been used throughout Australia since the mid 1970s for control of annual, perennial, brush and woody weeds.

With Weedmaster 360, Nufarm has delivered a change for the better by ensuring the built-in surfactant is environmentally acceptable. This makes Weedmaster 360 the best choice for riparian areas where water may pond or flow.

When you need weed control choose Weedmaster 360, it's a safer broad-spectrum weed control option for the whole farm.



For more information contact your nearest Nufarm representative:

**Horsham** - Paul White 0419 561 016, **Shepparton** - Philip Jobling 0418 338 850,

**Swan Hill** - Kent Wooding 0418 532 805, or visit the Nufarm web site at [www.nufarm.com](http://www.nufarm.com)



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