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Victorian Landcare & CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT

Managing native pastures

Productive sawlog farming

Greenhouse action
in the north-east

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Editorial contributions

Carrie Tiffany, Tiffany and Associates
1 Lane Street, Blackburn North 3130
Phone 9894 2169
Fax 9894 2515
E-mail: ctiffany@relax.com.au

Mailing list enquiries

Brenan Wotherspoon, Victorian Farmers
Federation, Phone 9207 5527
Fax 9207 5500
E-mail: bwotherspoon@vff.org.au

Advertising

Paul Crock
Phone 0418 377 264 Fax 9428 4676

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Eucalypts at Langi Ghiran by
Rawdon Sthradher.

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From the editors



Mark Costello and Jo Safstrom at Government House last year for the 2001 Victorian Landcare Awards.

We bid a reluctant farewell to Jo Safstrom who has left her Landcare support position to take up a new role at NRE Port Phillip for 12 months. Jo joined the editorial team for Issue 9 back in 1998. She has been an untiring worker and a great supporter of the magazine. Her most recent project was putting all of the magazine back issues on the web.

We wish Jo well in her new position and hope to see her back at some stage. State Landcare Co-ordinator Mark Costello is the new member of the editorial team.

Landcare Week 19-25 August

This year's Landcare Week theme is 'Everyone, Everywhere Landcare'. It aims to provide a wake-up call for Australians everyone, everywhere, to become Landcare aware and embrace Landcare activities. The campaign will also aim to significantly lift the profile of the

environmental crisis Australia is facing and provide clear warnings to the community that our environment needs to be managed more sustainably.

For the first time ever a keynote speech will be made about Landcare to the National Press Club in Canberra. Well-known Australian actor Jack Thompson will be the spokesperson.

Landcare Australia is encouraging all Landcare groups across Australia to showcase their projects during Landcare Week by either holding a local event or contacting their local media to run stories on their projects and achievements.

Please keep your stories and letters coming. We are always interested in hearing from our readers.

Mark Costello, Lyall Grey and
Carrie Tiffany

Pitch in for Project Hindmarsh



The Fifth Annual Project Hindmarsh Ace Radio Tree Planting weekend will be held on 10-11 August 2002. The event will be based at the Little Desert Lodge, just south of Nhill. Volunteers are expected to plant roughly 38,000 plants over the weekend.

This weekend will provide a great opportunity for people to reflect on the achievements made in previous years. Planters will revisit the Nhill-Yanac, Tarranginnie and Nhill-Diapur roadside sites from 1998 to further enhance their biodiversity with smaller shrubs and groundcover plants.

The Hindmarsh Biolink project is creating a network of corridors between the Little Desert National Park and Wyperfeld National Park, the Wimmera River, the Victoria/South Australia border and a

multitude of smaller reserves and vegetation remnants on private property.

In 2001 the 'last tree' was planted to close the 100 kilometres of identified roadside gaps to form the Hindmarsh Biolink. Now that the gaps have been closed the project is focusing on enhancing the biolink through previous roadside sites and private property revegetation.

Previous Project Hindmarsh planting weekends would not have been a success without the multitude of volunteers that have come together to assist. Up to 300 volunteers come from all around Victoria to participate each year.

Volunteers on the Kiata South Road planting the last tree in the 100 kilometre gap between the Big and Little Desert National Parks.

Around 150 volunteers usually come from Melbourne, the majority being from the Victorian National Parks Association. A bus will be available from Melbourne again this year to transport enthusiastic volunteers to the Wimmera.

For further information about the weekend, or to register, contact Pauline Story on 5391 1811.

IN BRIEF

New equipment for Leongatha Seedbank

New seed processing equipment – a Kimseed Clarke seed cleaner and a Daniell scarifier – was launched at the South Gippsland Indigenous Seedbank recently.

In recent years, hundreds of kilograms of seed from native plants have been collected and cleaned to service large-scale Natural Heritage Trust-funded revegetation projects in South Gippsland. The new equipment at the seedbank will radically improve the efficiency with which these large quantities of seed are cleaned and processed, and the purity of the final product.

The new equipment was purchased with the joint assistance of the West Gippsland CMA and Alcoa World Alumina Australia. For further information contact Mark Brammar on 5662 9912.

Schools develop good reflexes

A joint effort between Reflex paper and Conservation Volunteers Australia, the Reflex Habitat program is a national competition open to primary and secondary schools throughout Australia.

During the past two years over 500 schools have registered for the program and more than 5000 students have participated. Since 1999 students, teachers and Conservation Volunteers have planted almost 20,000 trees nationally.

Schools put together a proposal to be in the running for three major prizes. First prize winners will receive \$2000 cash and up to five days of practical project assistance from Conservation Volunteers Australia.

Proposals are judged on how well they are suited to the natural environment in the area. Preference is given to those that help restore the natural environment,

focus on revegetation and have the capacity to involve students.

For further information Freecall 1800 422 001.

Landcare Workshop series

The NRE Landcare Centre at Creswick is continuing with its low-cost Landcare Workshop series. Upcoming courses include: a Water and Land Use Forum on 14 June at Lismore; Fungi Features on 21 July at Creswick; a Private Forestry Certification Forum on 29 July at Creswick; two Remnant Vegetation Management Seminars – 'Looking After What We've Got' on 9 August and 'Mapping – What Goes Where', on 23 August, both at Creswick.

For further information on all courses contact the NRE Victorian Landcare Centre on 5345 2200.

Landcare school for North Central

By Clare Claydon

In any one day, a Landcare co-ordinator might have to: advise a landholder on what to plant where; put the finishing touches to a funding submission and rush it in to the post; place a bulk order for fencing materials; and participate in a meeting to plan a field day on pasture renovation.

Landcare co-ordinators have to be multi-skilled, particularly in the areas of natural resource management and in dealing with people. The North Central CMA has developed a new course, Working with Landcare, which aims to develop both of these skill areas.

The 60-hour accredited course is delivered by the University of Melbourne, Glenormiston College and the NRE Victorian Landcare Centre and has been devised by a steering committee consisting of representatives of these two training organisations and the North Central CMA. Terry Simpson, on whose property, Winjallock, Landcare was launched 16 years ago, chairs the course steering committee.

The course covers a broad range of topics from soils and soil types through to revegetation methods, Landcare action planning and submission writing.



David Clarke takes participants through a session on action planning.

The course is being presented one day a month through 2002. Each session starts off with presentations from CMA and NRE staff and other experts. Then it is onto a bus to go and visit examples of best practice in the region and to hear from landholders.

The 25 course participants say the mix of theory and practice and the opportunity to network with presenters and the other participants on the course creates a very

positive learning environment. On successful completion participants will be awarded two modules of the Diploma in Natural Resource Management.

The course attracted just the group that we hoped it would. Many of our existing co-ordinators and project managers are doing the course; some participants are Landcare group office-bearers; and some people have joined the course because they see it as a gateway to a new career for them.

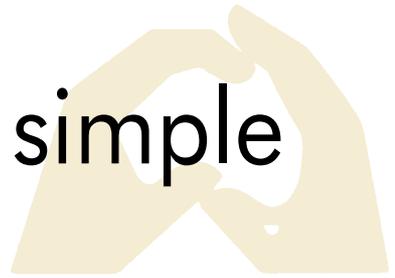
Working with Landcare is the CMA's first venture into formal Landcare training and it is delighted with the response so far. The success lies with finding collaborators with a high degree of expertise and professionalism and developing a course with the right balance of information and practical hands-on experience.

For further information contact Clare Claydon on 5440 1820.



From left: Michelle Butler, Judy Crocker and Clare Claydon, three of the key players in the Working with Landcare course.

Landcare websites made simple



By Tom Croft

An innovative Landcare website has been developed for groups in the north-east region which addresses the biggest problem with getting online – the need for design skills.

Funding from the Landcare 21st Century project (supported by Natural Heritage Trust and Victorian Second Generation Landcare programs) has enabled the North East CMA to develop a Landcare website for the region. With support from the NETCoop in Wangaratta, the developers and hosts, the website also provides a gateway to other Landcare websites in Victoria.

Many Landcare groups are interested in having their own website, but the major difficulty with most standard websites is that they require either technical design skills, or the money to pay for these skills to develop and update the pages. This means that for most Landcare groups a website is out of reach without external support. The only other alternative is to have a sponsoring organisation, such as the CMA, support and manage the web page updates.

Simple, fast access

The gateway website at www.landcare.net.au/vic has been specifically designed to be easily navigated, with search options plus a range of drop down lists to find groups by area or network. A text only option allows access to those with poor line speeds.

Group-managed pages

The unique aspect of the Landcare website design is the way pages are

created or updated. Groups can create and update their own pages simply by filling in forms online and the designers have used the most user-friendly software available for loading pictures and files.

Group pages can include text information, plus images such as maps and photos. There are options to load documents such as newsletters and reports onto the system, plus pages of links to other web pages of interest for access from a group page.

There is a newsletter-creation facility using online forms to create group newsletters. The newsletters will be for online viewing, plus printing and distribution by mail. The system also allows groups to select regional news items to be included in their own newsletters.

A regional events calendar is available to provide information on upcoming events such as meetings or field days, to increase

publicity for Landcare events and to allow others to attend events of interest.

Email list server

The Landcare gateway site also has the capacity for an email list server, which will allow each region, network or group to create email groups. These email groups provide a single email address for messages to all members of the group, to simplify communication between members.

The unique design of the gateway site allows more groups to be simply added as they form. This capacity also allows the site to be expanded to potentially cover all regions in Victoria for relatively low costs per region. This design also allows for expansion to cover other states.

For further information contact Tom Croft on (02) 6055 6258.



Fencing assistance for remnants

Greening Australia Victoria and the Corangamite CMA have received project funding to assist landholders in protecting and enhancing areas of remnant native vegetation from degradation by livestock, ensuring the future survival of the vegetation.

To enable this, the Natural Heritage Trust will provide \$1500 per kilometre for landholders to fence remnant vegetation on their land. The landholder covers the balance of the costs and must agree to develop an appropriate management agreement for the fenced area. Full-cost reimbursement is available for landholders willing to place a vegetation covenant on their native vegetation protecting it in perpetuity.

In addition, financial assistance for the purchase of seed and tubestock for enhancing and linking remnants is also available through the scheme, as is assistance with weed control and flora survey works for remnant vegetation of botanical significance.

For many farmers, it is this financial assistance that makes the scheme a reality.

St Andrews farmer Robert Marshall began fencing off bush areas on his property 20 years ago.

“I would have fenced more areas off sooner if it wasn’t for the labour, time and money required,” he said.

“It’s great that Greening Australia is able to provide funding and labour for works I have been wanting to do for years.”

The majority of the funding to support this scheme across four catchment regions of Victoria has come from the Federal Government’s Bushcare Program, a program of the National Heritage Trust.

All Greening Australia planting programs are also supported by BHP Waratah fencing products.

For further information contact Richard Francis, Port Phillip/Western Port region, on 9457 3024, Ron Dodds, Wimmera region, on 5381 1010, Kate Walsh, South East region, on 5662 5201 and Claire Dennis, Corangamite region, on 5232 9100.

*Robert Marshall with remnant
vegetation on his St Andrews property.*





THE FUTURE LO

– Planning Woody

Information technology and computers can be a bit daunting for some, but in the Woody Yaloak members of the local catchment group are not only using information technology, they have also helped to develop a new computer-based tool to plan the management of their natural resources and keep track of projects in their catchment.

Landscapes for the Future is a new software package, available on CD, that enables a landholder or a catchment group to layer maps of local information, such as soil type, over their own farms on their own computer. Features such as erosion works, plantations and weed infestations can be drawn onto the maps and project information such as site notes and fact sheets attached.

Launched by the Governor of Victoria, John Landy, at Linton in March, the software was developed for the Woody Yaloak Catchment Group in partnership with NRE, the Corangamite CMA and Osprey Computing in Ballarat.

The software uses a GIS (Geographic Information System) to store the information, so that, with the click of the mouse, users can access the information or data they are looking for and place it in layers on their property or catchment maps.

Aerial photos and contour information are viewed at a paddock scale (1:10,000) so that farmers can see trees and rocks within a paddock, helping them visualise their planned farm works.

As Project Officer Cam Nicholson explains, there are three main uses for the system.

“The first use is as a catchment planning tool for individuals and small groups.

You can zoom in to a specific location in the catchment using scanned aerial photographs or satellite images. Then you zoom in on an individual property area and start to click on a few information layers, say road centres, soils, or salinity.

“Then the farmer can mark on the farm boundary and areas of interest, such as land classes, rocks and salty areas. The program can calculate areas and lengths, so you can take a length of streamline, draw a fence both sides, work out the length, area and then tag it with plans for tree planting, when, what and how many.

“Then we can scale it up to a ‘neighbourhood’ of adjoining farms.

“In the Woody Yaloak we have neighbourhood groups of landholders working together. So if we bring up other neighbouring properties where individual plans have been done, a map builds on the screen. It might show where one neighbour has fenced a creek line and the other neighbour hasn’t. We can then plan ahead for funding to encourage cross-boundary works.

“We can also use the tool to incorporate regional, State and national priorities into the planning process. If we click on a regional priority such as vegetation, the data layer will show things like rare vegetation in red on our plan. That tells us that maybe we should fence it off, so we draw a fence around it and add that to our planning.”

A practical planning tool

According to Cam Nicholson the information is not new, but it is often in written documents not easily accessible at the local planning level. The new GIS tool makes it practical to use for planning.



Bradvale farmer Suzie Ellis shows the system in action. Suzie is helping landholders upload their information onto the group’s GIS system.

“When we put our plans together as a group we can see the projects planned for 2003 and can make catchment-wide funding applications.

“We can also filter applications. The software has a query tool, so you can ask it to identify all the 2003 proposed revegetation projects. The list shows the projects, the area they cover, the number of trees and so on. We can even break it down to show which ones are on waterways. It’s a great strategic planning tool,” says Cam.

Monitoring progress and reporting

There is real pressure these days to be accountable for activities and funds. The GIS tool is used by the Woody Yaloak Catchment Group to record information on all their projects with information on quantities, locations, costs and other statistics.

OKS LIKE THIS!

Yaloak style

By Jo Curkpatrick

“We can keep track of where different resources have been allocated and maintain an up-to-date record of progress and outcomes,” says Cam Nicholson.

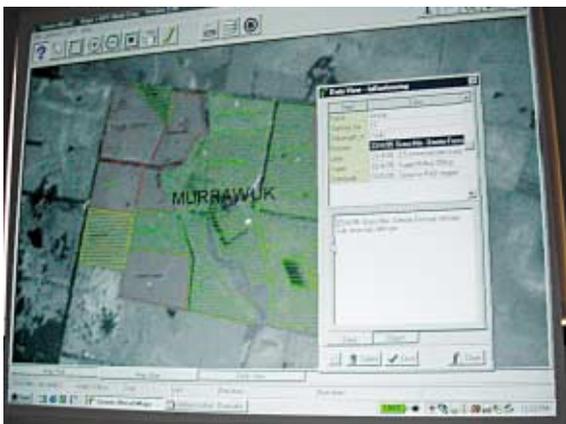
“We are also photographing our projects at regular intervals and putting the photos into the program to show progress. At Woody we have gone back as far as 1993 to record works completed, the cost and where the funding has been sourced.

“It’s a great way of reporting to our partners in a visual and analytical way but it also means the data is recorded in a way that others can access if desired.”

Sharing information inside and outside the catchment

The other use for the GIS tool is for sharing information. In the Woody Yaloak each project is seen as an experiment and the farmer who has done the work has learnt a lot and the group encourages the sharing of this information.

Farmers can search the system using key words, such as winter pastures or drainage and the relevant locations appear on the map. By clicking on the location they can get information about the site – who did the work, when it was planted, success rate and any other comments.



Alice Knight, Chair of the Woody Yaloak Catchment Group, receives a certificate from Victorian Governor John Landy at the launch of the Landscapes for the Future GIS package.

There are photographs and you can print a fact sheet relating to winter feed or drainage.

“This allows farmers to share their information with others and neighbours can follow up with the farmer involved or search other examples. By using some of the other data layers you can filter the examples further, for soil type or rainfall,” says Cam Nicholson.

The project has also been supported by Alcoa World Alumina Australia, the Natural Heritage Trust, the Golden Plains Shire and local businesses. The Woody Yaloak Catchment Group is now keen to make the package available to other landholders at a low cost.

For further information contact Cam Nicholson on 0417 311 098, or Alice Knight on 5344 7332.

Managing native

For decades, the contribution of native grasslands to the grazing enterprises of Victoria has been discounted, if not ignored. However, a shift in attitude toward these undervalued and often threatened ecosystems is stirring in the bush.

A workshop held near Stawell recently highlighted some key management issues for native pastures.

- Landholders should be able to identify what species of native grass they have.

- It is important to know both the vegetative characteristics as well as flowers. Learn each species growth patterns and flowering times.
- Grass species that are summer active will need a different grazing regime to species that are dormant at this time.
- Many native grasses are very tolerant of acid soils, drought and low fertility conditions.

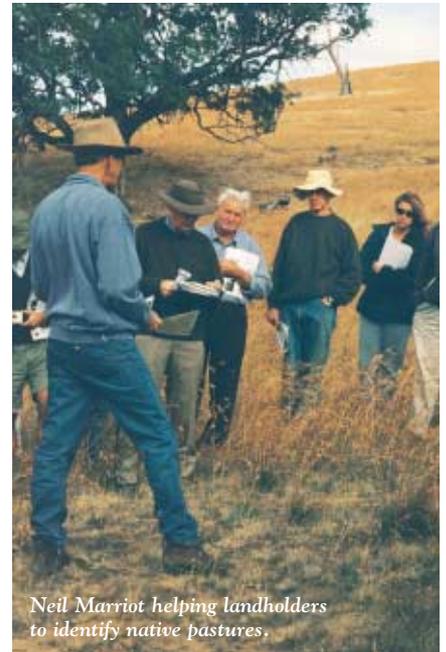
Many farmers can identify 'problem' species but not productive native grasses. Following on from this, a Wimmera pasture survey found that over a third of paddocks had unrecognised native grasses. Although the production of these paddocks was lower than other pasture types this was not necessarily due to the native species. Other factors like low legume content, the other species present and management-limited productivity are important.

Widespread native grass species that landholders need to be able to recognise are kangaroo, wallaby, weeping, love, tussock and spear grass. The palatability and nutritional value of the wallaby and weeping grasses is very high and compares well with introduced species like phalaris.

Col Langford from NSW Agriculture was the key speaker at the Stawell workshop. His message was 'use it or lose it'.

Wallaby grass

Drawings by Alan Barnett from Moerkerk and Barnett's – More Crop Weeds.



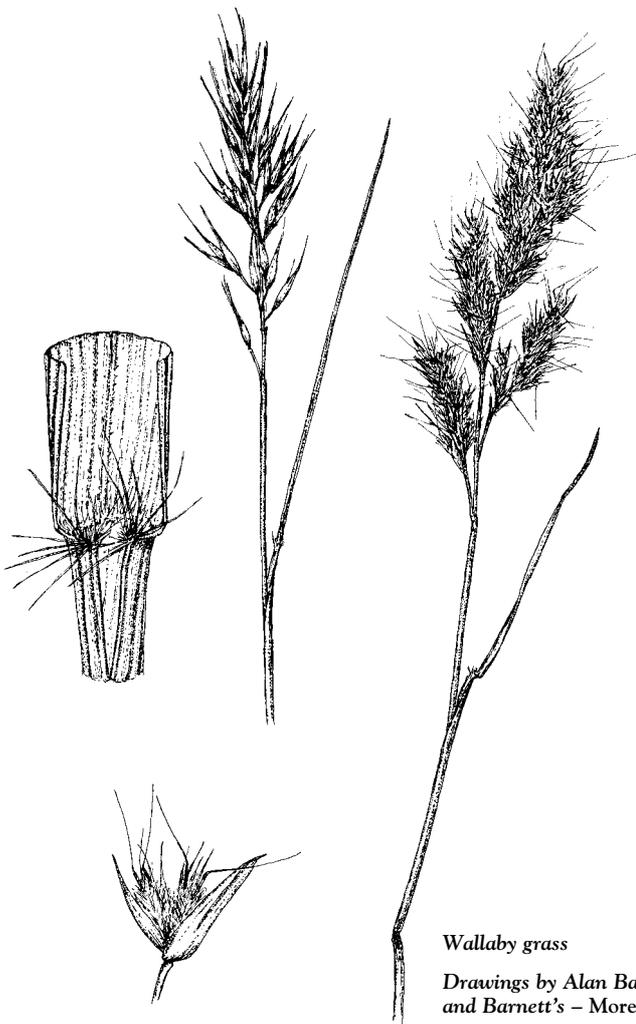
Neil Marriot helping landholders to identify native pastures.

"It is essential for farmers to know the native grass species in their paddocks and their growth characteristics. Kangaroo grass is a prime example. It responds quickly to summer rains and can provide useful green pick for stock. However, if grazing is not timed to when the grass is actively growing, which may only be for two to three weeks following rain, the opportunity is lost."

Native grasslands can be managed for a number of objectives such as increased animal productivity, summer feed, biodiversity and/or maintaining ground cover for erosion control. Col Langford said it is important to be clear about your management goal.

"You will need to monitor changes in your pasture and animal production... to know if you have reached your goal."

Peter Simpson, a pasture agronomist who works closely with Col, emphasised the dynamic nature of pasture composition and the need for long-term monitoring. He said using grazing as a management



pastures

By Julie Andrew

tool to control silver grass or increase weeping grass, may take a few years before success is clear.

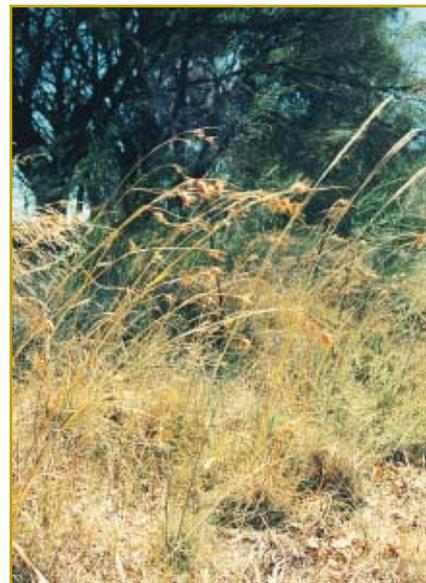
Depending on the goal, management tools for native pastures include whole-farm planning, land class fencing, grazing, burning and fertiliser regimes.

The grazing management of native pastures is the key to ensuring their persistence and contribution to stock productivity. Grazing that allows for periodic spelling at critical times will depend on the species you wish to encourage.

The workshop concluded that there are no recipes for managing native pastures. Flexibility of management based on a sound understanding of the species present, their growth patterns and the characteristics of the plant, is needed.

The Prograze program offered by NRE in conjunction with RIST (Rural Industry Skills Training), provides essential management skills for the efficient use of both native and introduced pastures and effective livestock production.

For further information contact Julie Andrew on 5358 1588.



Kangaroo grass flowering at Pomonal.

Native pasture field identification at Crowlands.



The Gunai/Kurnai people restore

By Janelle Everitt



Windarra is a 387-acre property just below the snow line in the Great Dividing Range in east Gippsland. The property is on the junction of the Timbarra River and Wilkinson Creek at Buchan South, some 25 kilometres west of Buchan township.

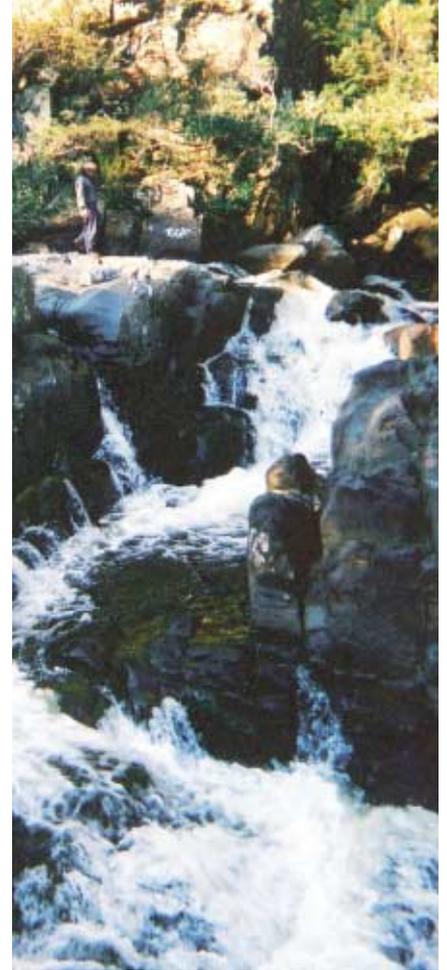
Prior to colonisation Windarra was a spiritual and ceremonial place for the Gunai/Kurnai people and had been for thousands of years. Windarra was also part of the old walking and trading trails of the Gunai/Kurnai people when they traded with northern tribes of Victoria and NSW.

In 1993 the Gunai/Kurnai people wanted to re-establish their spiritual connection to Windarra as it provided isolation for cultural healing and education for their community. They wanted a place that

embraced the cultural, social and environmental benefits for the Gunai/Kurnai people and their future generations.

The property has river flats, waterfalls, rising hills, over 100 hectares of forest with grey gum, stringy bark and box and 10 hectares of regrowth. There are also Currajong trees that are 500-1,000 years old located close by in State Forest. But the property had been used as an old goat farm and was very degraded.

In 1997, with the assistance of an NHT grant over three years of weed eradication, revegetation, fencing and track and dam building was carried out by young people from Merindoo Youth Services. In 1998 the property was purchased by the Indigenous Land Corporation and handed



The Windarra waterfall.

A Windarra community meeting held earlier this year.



back to the Gunai/Kurnai people (through the Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Co-operative).

NHT continues to provide the funds for the revegetation and rehabilitation of Windarra. Although blackberries still remain a problem (up to 70% eradicated) there is a comprehensive program to eradicate thistles and other noxious weeds from the farm by spraying and hand grubbing, which has ensured all native flora is protected.

Boundary fencing to exclude deer and the banning of cloven-hoofed grazing animals has helped to promote natural regrowth.

Windarra



An extra five hectares of fencing of the replanted area has reduced the pressure from kangaroos and wallabies.

Progress has also been made on the riverside revegetation program with gullies and streams being replanted using indigenous native species.

A Waterwatch program conducted at the junction of the Wilkinson Creek and Timbarra River records and monitors water quality.

There are many people who are working on Windarra. Mark McCord and Patrick Ryan co-ordinate most of the on-ground works on the property and provide support to the many other workers from various organisations and programs such as Merindoo Youth Services, CDEP and Justice programs.

The community and NRE are also working together on a fire protection plan to make Windarra Farmhouse, its occupants and the environment, safe from fire. The community elders and NRE are working towards using traditional burning methods with contemporary methods.

As part of the plan an old fire truck has been purchased from NSW CFA. The truck is currently being rebuilt by Koori youths through the mechanical program run through the Gippsland and East Gippsland Co-operative and Nagle College.

Windarra has been the catalyst for building many successful working relationships. The Gunai/Kurnai community and organisations from Morwell to Lake Tyers and Orbost are working together on the management of the Windarra. They have many ideas for Windarra in the future ranging from men's and women's camps, bushtucker trails, cultural camps, dance and ceremonies.

For further information contact John Hoffman on 5153 1221.

*One of the ancient
Currajong trees believed
to be between 500-1000
years old.*

A case of mistaken the Alligator weed

In 1944 a ship dumped its ballast near Newcastle NSW and inadvertently introduced Alligator weed into Australia. The weed quickly became established throughout NSW rivers and flood plains. It was declared a noxious weed in all Australian states and territories and a prohibited weed in Victoria and Tasmania.

Weed or edible vegetable?

Some 50 years later, in 1995, Alligator weed was discovered in the vegetable garden of a Queensland weed scientist's neighbour. Follow up work over the next five years by the State weed authorities led to the discovery of cultivated plots of Alligator weed growing in all Australian states and territories. The weed was being grown as a leafy vegetable by the Sri Lankan community who mistakenly believed it to be the popular Sri Lankan leafy vegetable Mukunuwenna, or Sessile Joy Weed.

The similarities between the highly invasive Alligator weed and the traditional Asian vegetable Mukunuwenna, resulted in a serious case of mistaken identity with the weed being actively grown and spread from garden to garden.

An innovative Alligator weed task force was established in 1996 to initiate, plan, manage, co-ordinate and monitor a program to eradicate the weed from Victoria. The Sri Lankan community worked along with NRE to identify the problem, raise public awareness and develop a management plan to eradicate the weed. The project also looked at identifying and introducing an alternative vegetable plant to take the place of Alligator weed in the gardens and kitchens of the Sri Lankan community.

The first step was the publication of an Alligator weed identification leaflet which was distributed amongst Sri Lankans visiting Buddhist temples, Sri Lankan groceries and local libraries. Public awareness was an important part of the project. Five different leaflets were produced along with a bookmark, fridge magnet, 100 articles in newspapers, newsletters, magazines and journals, six TV segments, ten radio programs and seven information workshops.

Discussion with community groups in establishing community-council partnerships in weed management also helped to collect further information on the distribution of Alligator weed in Victoria.

All properties with Alligator weed were visited to develop control options.

Treating the infestations

A control program started in late 1997. All identified infestations were prioritised according to the risk of naturalisation, using proximity to waterways, size of the infestation and land situation as risk factors.

Sales of Australian Mukunuwenna are brisk. The sign in the background says Mukunuwenna in Sri Lankan.



identity – story

By Lalith Gunasekera

Over 800 sites were treated with herbicide between 1997-2002. The majority (98%) of backyard infestations were associated with Sri Lankan families. Naturalised sites in waterways were also treated. Regrowth occurred in some places but repeated treatments have helped to suppress the weed successfully.

Finding a replacement vegetable

Providing a replacement vegetable was the key to public participation in the eradication program. An Australian native species, common joy weed (*Alternanthera denticulate*) was selected, tested for nutritional value and distributed to Sri Lankan families for trial. The replacement has had a good response and to encourage its adoption more than 5000 seedlings

Anura Jayamanna with replacement Mukunuwenna growing in his backyard at Hallam.



Herbicide being applied to a backyard infestation of Alligator weed.

were distributed through Buddhist temples, personal contacts, information centres and Sri Lankan grocery shops.

An Asian vegetable grower was also supplied with 3000 seedlings to develop the vegetable commercially. Sales were initially strong but have dropped as most Sri Lankans have now established the vegetable in their home gardens and started to distribute it among friends and relatives.

A successful partnership

The Alligator weed story is good example of a community-government partnership to control a serious noxious weed.

It demonstrates that preventive management can be successful where it has active community involvement and support. Infestations of Alligator weed continue to be reported in Victoria, although at a much-reduced rate than at the beginning of the program. The supply of the new seedling is being continued this summer, as is the public awareness campaign, monitoring and control program.

Importantly, the majority of Sri Lankans in Victoria can now recognise the difference between Alligator weed and their real vegetable plants. This means the risk of future reinfestation is much reduced.

Community reactions

"Initially I was very angry at this program because there were so many articles appearing in newspapers in Melbourne in 1997 and 1998. So, I thought that the Sri Lankan community was going to be blamed for the problem. But later I realised that it is not going to happen. So I am pleased and satisfied about the outcomes and progress made by this campaign." – Dr K.B. Dassanayake, Noble Park.

"Free weed control! Free vegetables and free advice! – what more?" – Jaya Upesena, Bundoora.

"I was growing and eating Alligator weed since the 1980s. Once I heard about the danger of this plant, I completely stopped eating it.

But I couldn't control it. So, NRE scientists came to my home and controlled the weed successfully. I haven't got one single plant of Alligator weed now. But I am not growing the new vegetable because I am scared." – Lalani Rajapakse, Hoppers Crossing.

"It was a real pleasure working with the Sri Lankan community under Lalith Gunasekera's very capable leadership to map and eliminate Alligator weed in the City of Casey. The working group produced an excellent model of how a community group can tackle a major weed issue. This model can be used by others to target priority-prohibited weeds." – David Westlake, Conservation Officer, City of Casey.



Mutual GANE in the



Students from St Mary's Primary School in Rutherglen at a GANE planting day.

Would you like to be involved in a program that has a proven track record in delivering on-ground works? That has a methodical yet flexible approach? That regards time spent with landholders as integral to achieving successful outcomes?

The GANE program in north-east Victoria meets all of these criteria and more. The program started in 1999 when the North East Catchment Management Authority (NECMA) received funding from the Victorian State Government through Replanting Victoria 2020 to develop carbon sinks via revegetation activities.

GANE – Greenhouse Action North East was born. GANE aims to achieve multiple benefits from the funding. Its goals include biodiversity conservation and enhancement, salinity control, stream bank stabilisation, water quality improvement and timber and firewood production as anticipated outcomes.

GANE has integrated several Bushcare programs in the north-east which has helped increase the financial assistance available to landholders undertaking revegetation works that link priority

remnants with significant areas of new plantings. It is working towards the reversal of the long-term decline in native vegetation in the north-east by assisting landholders with large-scale revegetation and remnant protection and enhancement projects.

Royce Sample, GANE Project Manager, co-ordinates the program. He uses a hands-on approach with a lot of landholder contact and targeted extension.

High priority environment

According to Royce, GANE has been operating in the lower Ovens Basin between Wangaratta, Bundalong and Wodonga in the north-east. He says that historically the basin has had a low uptake of revegetation programs, yet it is a high priority environment.

“It is an important drainage area for the Lower Ovens River – a heritage river. Also there are many rare and threatened species and vegetation types present. Fortunately there is some Landcare group coverage which makes the co-ordination easier.”

In the first two years of the program over 300 hectares of previously cleared farmland have been revegetated and almost 40 hectares of priority remnant vegetation protected. This year will see a further 250 hectares of revegetation works and more than 115 hectares of remnant vegetation protection and enhancement.

From left: John Collins, Sam Bayley, Luke Bayley and Ed Baynes take a rest after planting on Ed's property last year.



north-east

By Luke Bayley

Whole farm planning approach

Royce Sample and Native Vegetation Projects Officer, Luke Bayley, work with landholders on aerial photographs to plan the new works as part of an integrated whole farm plan. Using a Geographic Information System (GIS) to overlay biodiversity, salinity and water quality information, future works can be targeted in areas where there is likely to be the greatest environmental benefit as well as the efficient allocation of funds.

Luke Bayley says GIS is useful information to guide decision-making.

“It is important though that these decision-making tools do not override common sense and the development of a partnership approach with landholders.”

Landholders who participate in the program record their feelings in an independent survey at the end of each season – and the program is modified taking their comments into account. A thorough assessment of the success (or lack of it) of the past planting season is also used to modify the program.

GANE has also been working closely with NRE on models for best practice at their Agriculture Victoria property in Rutherglen. Trials are being established to monitor the differences in growth rates of plants in ripped sites, as compared with ripped and mounded sites throughout the region. GANE supports and promotes the constant assessment of land management practices to make sure the most efficient and effective methods are being used.

Without a doubt GANE has been successful in increasing landholder participation in revegetation in the north-east as well as creating positive relationships between Government agencies and landholders that open the way for the learning of new ideas and practices.

Winery redevelopment

GANE acknowledges that revegetation means many things to different people and it is important to understand different landholder needs alongside the overall aim of restoring landscapes and integrating biodiversity into today's agricultural systems.

GANE has been a catalyst for major property redevelopment at Stephen

Morris's Pennyweight Winery in Beechworth. Stephen has seen all remnant vegetation fenced, briar roses removed and rabbits eradicated. Four hectares of planting will commence this winter and the site preparation for the vineyard has been completed.

Stephen says it is terrific to see it all coming together. He is also pleased to

see a winery adjacent to his Rutherglen property getting involved with GANE this year. The co-ordination of works across neighbouring properties can have benefits for all involved.



From left: Luke Bayley, Stephen Morris senior and Stephen Morris junior enjoy the fruits of their labours at Pennyweight Winery in Beechworth.

More trees and more options for the Dowlings

Brian and Sally Dowling recently purchased a 640-acre property south of Rutherglen. They have spent a number of sessions with Royce Sample and Luke Bayley discussing visions for their farm. After a great deal of talking and walking a basic plan has been developed that will see laneways created, cattle troughs installed, paddock sizes reduced and eight hectares of revegetation works along a central drainage line.

With assistance from GANE the works will fulfil the Dowling's desire for more trees on their property and will also help to move their farming enterprise forward.

It is important that revegetation works are strategically placed to maximise environmental benefits and to ensure farmers can take advantage of the works, both now and into the future.

A GreenCorp team planting on a GANE property.



Landcare-aid for outer metro farmers

A new catchment initiative of the Goulburn Broken CMA is helping absentee and small landholders on the outskirts of Melbourne to actively look after their land and the local environment.

Ann Jelinek is working closely with Landcare groups and individual landholders to address increasing salinity and loss of biodiversity in the catchment. She is also assisting landholders, mainly those in rural subdivisions, to appreciate the responsibilities of land ownership and to understand how their activities in higher parts of the catchment affect land and water quality downstream.

As part of this new catchment initiative, Ann's focus is on absentee and small landholders in the upper Goulburn catchment within a 125 kilometre radius of the metropolitan area, mainly in the Broadford, Kilmore and Seymour areas. She is also involving Landcare groups and traditional farmers in exchanging information, demonstrating useful tools and techniques and providing examples

of successful land management activities through field days, workshops and local tours.

Workshops planned over the next few months cover a wide range of interesting topics, with an emphasis on practical aspects of land management. They range from getting to know some of the more unusual local wildlife like tuans, glider possums, owls and native fish to understanding salinity, weed and erosion control, farm sustainability and native pasture management.

"Salinity is a serious issue affecting the region's natural resources and agricultural productivity," says Ann.

"It is spreading, mainly due to landuse changes such as subdivisions. These actions often result in the removal of native vegetation, erosion and changes to stream flows that contribute to increased salinity levels elsewhere in the catchment."

According to Ann, because there are no obvious signs of any problems, people

living higher up in the catchment often don't realise that this is where the salt problems start.

"Once deep-rooted native trees, shrubs and perennial groundcover plants have been removed from hilltops and ridges, more run-off water leaks into the groundwater system. Salt-laden water then rises to the surface, usually in lower parts of the landscape."

Information about how landholders can look after their properties to avoid environmental problems and what advice and financial support is available to help them is detailed in a new brochure, *Action in our Catchment*.

Ann says this National Landcare Program project, which is funded by the Natural Heritage Trust, is making a valuable contribution to improving land management practices in the south-west region of the upper Goulburn catchment. For further information contact Ann Jelinek on 0439 972 012.

Ann Jelinek planting native trees and shrubs on her property at Taggerty.



Seventeen years of the Wimmera Landcare adventure

By Melissa Pouliot

Brigitte Muir shares the experiences of her mountain-climbing career, which has taken her to the top of the world's seven highest summits, including Mount Everest.



More than 150 people from the far-flung corners of the Wimmera converged on Horsham to celebrate Landcare earlier this year.

World-famous adventurer and the first Australian woman to climb Mount Everest, Brigitte Muir, was guest speaker at the inaugural Celebrating Wimmera Landcare event.

Brigitte Muir told the attentive crowd that life was all about setting goals and working hard to achieve them, whether it is climbing a mountain or revegetating a bare paddock suffering severe salinity.

“No matter what you do in life, you need to have goals and dreams and you need to work hard to achieve them. Landcare is a

very important part of our community and it is important to celebrate the amazing volunteer effort in our region,” she said.

The Wimmera CMA hosted the celebration as part of the NHT-funded Landcare in the 21st Century project. The CMA wants to make the celebration an annual event.

Local parliamentarian Hugh Delahunty, radio network owners and staunch Wimmera Landcare supporters Geoff and Helen Handbury, Rowly and Judy Paterson and State Landcare Co-ordinator Mark Costello were among the guests.

The 17-year-old Wimmera Landcare movement is made up of more than 1600 people from 64 individual groups and

networks. Landcare and environmental projects in the region have attracted more than \$6 million in Federal and State Government funding in the past three years.

Wimmera Landcare Co-ordinator Max Skeen, who was part of the organising committee, said volunteers gave their time and effort to projects and activities that helped improve the environment and the way we managed our natural resources.

“Celebrating Wimmera Landcare was one way to say thank you to everyone for the fantastic work on projects such as revegetating biolinks in Yarriambiack, Hindmarsh and Kowree districts, Project Platypus and rabbit control.

“When you join a Landcare group or participate in a Landcare event, whether it is planting a tree, managing pest plants and animals, a TopCrop event... you are doing more than caring for your environment, you are caring for your community,” Max Skeen said

The Wimmera CMA also launched its Landcare website, www.wca.vic.gov.au/landcare at the function.



Event organisers Greg Barber and Melissa Pouliot give Helen Handbury a tree. Wail Nursery donated native trees to every guest at the dinner as a gesture of thanks to Wimmera Landcare.



Strong interest

By Mal Brown

Sawlog farming is also good for the well-being of regional communities and regional economies. Jobs created by the project include growing seedlings, planting, pruning, harvesting, transporting, milling and value-adding.

The West RFA Sawlog Farming Project area extends from the Otways in the south to the River Murray in the north and from the fringe of Melbourne in the east to the Grampians in the west. Importantly, training and support is available through strong private forestry networks to improve the skills of participating landholders.

The project will deliver support to local community-driven projects such as the Otway Agroforestry Network, Central Victorian Farm Plantations Committee, the Northern United Forestry Group and Landcare networks.

The tree species being promoted by the project include *Eucalyptus cladocalyx* (Sugar Gum), *Eucalyptus globulus* (Tasmanian Blue Gum), *Corymbia maculata* (Spotted Gum), *Eucalyptus nitens* (Shining Gum), *Eucalyptus obliqua* (Messmate), *Eucalyptus obliqua x E. regans* (Otway Messmate) and *Eucalyptus tricarpa* (Red Ironbark). However, the expressions of interest reveal a preference for three eucalypt species – Sugar Gums (73%), Spotted Gums (14%) and Red Ironbark (6%).

In addition to getting trees in the ground the project will be facilitating community discussion on the social, economic and environmental impacts of private forestry and the type of landscape communities want in the future.

For further information contact Ben Boxshall on 5430 4585.

High-pruned eucalypts for sawlog production.

Productive tree growing for sawlogs can increase property value, provide a flexible, long-term source of income and deliver tax benefits. Farmers can be more profitable and sustainable if they incorporate trees for sawlogs into their farming enterprises.

Trees for sawlogs also offer multiple benefits in environmental services, such as salinity mitigation, improved water quality and increased biodiversity.

The West Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) Sawlog Farming Project has received 174 expressions of interest from landholders keen to plant trees in the spring of 2002 and 2003 for sawlog production.

The total establishment area for all expressions of interest covers 2000 hectares over the two years, with 480 hectares to be established in 2002.

Angus Pollock, Chairman of the project steering committee, says landholders have grasped the opportunity to be involved in this pilot project.

“The project aims to accelerate the development of productive tree growing on private land. By growing a sawlog resource we can complement that available from publicly owned state forest and support existing forest product industries of Western Victoria.

“The project will help meet a world hardwood deficit of 200 million cubic metres by 2020. It will also deliver social and environmental benefits to regional Victoria. In addition, it provides the opportunity for landholders to generate a tangible economic return for tackling land degradation.”

According to Angus Pollock the project offers a significant opportunity for investing landholders.

“Markets for sawlogs of good quality, well-managed stands are expected to be strong by 2020. Value-adding to the product on-site offers significant financial benefits and additional earnings may come from carbon credits.”

in sawlog farming



Farm forestry a catalyst for Landcare



Andrew Stewart and his wife Jill farm at Deans Marsh in the Otway Ranges. Andrew is a fourth-generation farmer, the VFF Farm Forestry Development Officer and Co-ordinator of the Otway Agroforestry Network. In Andrew's opinion farm forestry can turn a land management problem into environmental stability and commercial opportunity.

Andrew and Jill believe that farm forestry can be the catalyst for a wide range of Landcare, water-quality, landscape, habitat and animal productivity outcomes. At the same time, it is growing into an important source of farm income to supplement that produced from prime lambs and beef cattle.

The Stewart's property comprises 230 hectares in a reliable 700mm (average annual) rainfall district. Prime lambs and vealers are stocked at an average carrying capacity of 18 dry sheep equivalents per hectare per year.

Despite the property's high productivity, the Stewarts recognised the farm system and catchment were not sustainable. They identified problems including salinity, erosion, waterlogging, lack of shade and shelter, lack of ecological balance and lack of land class subdivision.

"We decided that these problems could be solved using a whole-farm planning approach with the integration of commercial and habitat trees which would also enhance property aesthetics and value," says Andrew.

A long-term view was adopted to achieve sustainable production and to develop income security with commercial trees playing an integral role as superannuation.

"We plan to devote 15% of the property to revegetation projects, including wetlands, salinity areas, commercial Blue Gums, direct-seeding sites, creek revegetation and land for wildlife. About 11% has now been planted."

The Stewart's multi-purpose farm forestry plantations comprise.

- An eight-hectare Blue Gum plantation – a joint venture with Midway Wood Products. The marketing agreement is for one harvest at about 12 years of age, but Blue Gums coppice and may produce a second, or even a third harvest at 22 and 32 years of age. The Blue Gums are planted as 12 row shelterbelts along land class boundaries.



Andrew Stewart prunes trees on his property in the Otway Ranges. Andrew and his wife Jill were the 1999 Australian Forest Growers Victorian Tree Farmers of the Year.

- Wide-spaced *Eucalyptus nitens* (shining gum) along the Yan Yan Gurt Creek. These trees will be pruned to six metres for quality sawlog production. The sawlog trees complement a biodiverse planting along the creek with 40 species.
- One-hectare blocks of *Pinus radiata* pruned to six metres for high quality sawlogs.
- A break-of-slope, four-row pine plantation for salinity control and sawlog production.
- Three kilometres of direct seeding amongst remnant Messmate (*E. obliqua*). Sown in 1992, these trees are an outstanding success for shelter, wildlife and biodiversity. The patch can now be used in emergencies as shelter for off-shears or lambing ewes.

Maffra seedbank powers along By Col Sutherland

As Landcare groups spread out across the country for their autumn plantings, in Maffra the Wellington Greenprint seedbank, established under the Edison Mission Energy Landcare Program, is full to overflowing with native seed.

The seedbank co-ordinates the collection of local provenance seed from throughout the Wellington catchment. An important priority in allocating the seed for revegetation projects is to match environmental conditions at the planting site with those at collection locations.

The seedbank did not exist when Edison took up sponsorship of Wellington Greenprint, now in its third year as a major environmental care initiative by the owner and operator of the Latrobe Valley Loy Yang B power station.

By the end of this autumn, Wellington Greenprint will have planted around 75,000 trees, direct-seeded 15 hectares, erected more than 60,000 metres of fencing and assisted 75 individual landholders with revegetation works.

Wellington Greenprint Project Officer, Nadine Slade, says the project is run by the community, for the community.

“Landholders have direct input to project management and participate keenly in Sow ‘n’ Grow training sessions and field days covering subjects such as revegetation techniques and wildlife corridors.

“The facility has grown to be the centre of various Landcare networks in close association with the West Gippsland CMA, Greening Australia and NRE. Together, these organisations are now developing revegetation guides for Landcare groups in the region, with the intention that they will be used eventually as templates for revegetation work throughout Gippsland,” said Nadine Slade.

Greening Australia, a pioneer in the development of native seedbanks, is moving to create a standard for seed collection and seedbank management using the Maffra example.

Edison Mission Energy sees the Maffra seedbank as one of the major successes of the company’s Landcare commitment, which also includes partnership projects in the Wellington catchment, the Powlett River catchment and on Phillip Island.



Wellington Greenprint Project Officer, Nadine Slade, at the Maffra seedbank.

healthy landscapes sustainable communities

The Landcare Action Plan: Healthy Landscapes - Sustainable Communities offers a framework of actions that will maintain Victoria's leadership in community based natural resource management.

The Victorian Government proudly supports Landcare and is pleased to announce an additional investment of \$1.5 million to implement the Landcare Action Plan. This is additional to the current \$4.8 million Second Generation Landcare Grants.

The Action Plan was developed by the Second Generation Landcare Taskforce after consulting widely with Landcare stakeholders.

\$1 million of this new funding has been allocated to establish a statewide Landcare team consisting of ten regional Landcare co-ordinators and a statewide Landcare position. The team will oversee the implementation of the ten-year Landcare Action Plan.

\$500,000 will contribute to building the capacity of local communities to implement Landcare activities, including a subsidy for public liability insurance for Landcare groups undertaking projects.

Three areas for Victorian Government support are identified in the Action Plan: strengthening investment by private and public sources, supporting Landcare volunteers and helping people manage land.

Copies of the Second Generation Landcare Action Plan can be obtained from your regional Catchment Management Authority, the NRE website on www.nre.vic.gov.au/landcare or from the NRE Customer Service Centre on 136 186.

