

VICTORIAN

LANDCARE

Winter 07 Issue 40

& CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT

LANDCARE'S CHANGING AUDIENCE

Arrival of the trees changers

Young Landcare

Old Landcare

Multicultural Landcare



From the editor

This issue of the magazine looks at how Landcare is changing. According to Landcare researcher Allan Curtis from Charles Sturt University, over the next ten years we can expect 40 to 50% of rural properties to change hands. This invasion of tree changers poses some challenges to Landcare and to rural communities in general.

We have a number of stories in this issue that show how groups are dealing with these changes. Judy Crocker tells us about a tree changer who found Landcare to be a crucial mechanism in helping him settle in to the rural life. Judy's story shows that tree changers can bring a great deal of motivation and enthusiasm to groups and help enliven them and give them new direction.

We also have stories showing the diversity of people involved in Landcare. From a group of nursing home residents in Kyneton who are helping a local Landcare group to save a rare plant, to overseas travellers looking for a Landcare holiday, new migrants rejuvenating the Kororoit Creek and Landcare projects for the very young.

Victorian Landcare Awards

The next issue of the magazine will feature stories on the achievements of our Victorian Landcare Award winners. The awards aim to celebrate and promote the achievements



The big dry: David Fletcher's photograph (left) of the rotten remains of Antwerp Weir on the Wimmera River in 2007 shows a drastically different landscape to this historic photograph from 1903.

of the many different individuals, groups and organisations involved in Landcare.

The State Landcare Awards are held every two years. The winners of the State Landcare Awards are entered into the National Landcare Awards co-ordinated by Landcare Australia Limited.

There are also many regional Landcare award celebrations. In this issue we feature stories on awards in Goulburn Broken and Yarram Yarram.

The deadline for the next issue of the magazine will be Friday 10 August 2007.

Victorian Landcare by email?
Would you like to read the Victorian Landcare Magazine online?

To be added to the email list for future issues of the magazine send an email to landcare.magazine@dse.vic.gov.au

Carrie Tiffany

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Cover photograph

The rural landscape is looking increasingly busy.
By Andrew Chapman

Back issues of the Victorian Landcare & Catchment Management magazine can be found at www.dse.vic.gov.au/victorianlandcaremagazine

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Young people from near and far

By Polly Hall

The Corangamite CMA and Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA) have been working in partnership since 2001 to deliver the Community Involvement Program (CIP) to assist Landcare, environmental groups, local government and schools to complete onground works while providing learning opportunities to those involved.

CIP participants are involved in revegetation projects (weed removal, fencing, planting), boardwalk construction and the propagation of plants. The combination of different volunteers on each project is always remarkable. People volunteer their time from countries as far away as South Korea, the United Kingdom and the USA or as close as Geelong.

The program has been running for six years and has achieved the planting of over 440,000 trees, shrubs and grasses as well as extensive weed removal and seed collection. There are also strong social and community outcomes.

During each year the CIP delivers at least

30 weeks of onground support to the community, in addition to running several training events and workshops for the region's volunteers.

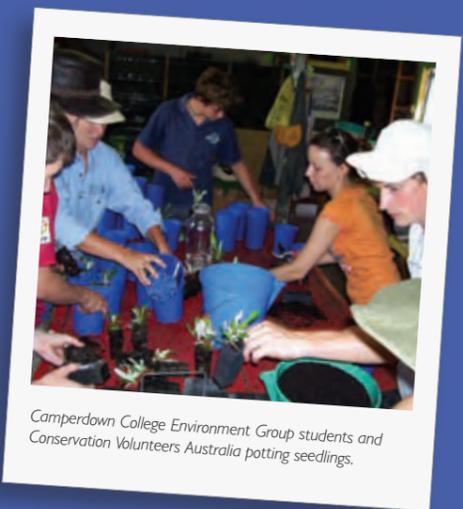
The ongoing relationship with the Camperdown College Environment Group in SW Victoria is an excellent example of how the program is assisting the community. The voluntary student group established in 2002 is made up of students from Year 7 through to Year 12 and on average has about 20 volunteer student members each year.

The Camperdown students work on environmental activities both within the school grounds and for the broader community and have developed a nursery which propagates thousands of plants each year.

The students join forces with the CIP to work together in the school nursery each year. They have also created a herbarium for the local management committee which will be an ongoing learning resource for the

school and the general community.

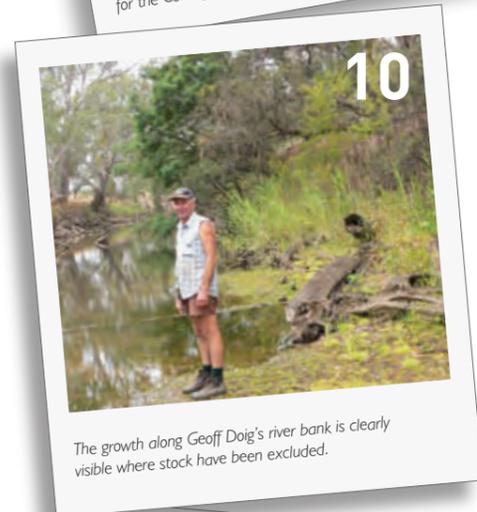
For further information contact Polly Hall on 5232 9100 or at polly.hall@ccma.vic.gov.au



Camperdown College Environment Group students and Conservation Volunteers Australia potting seedlings.



John Fyfe, President of the Bellarine Landcare Group, entertains his audience on one of the field trips conducted for the Corangamite Regional Landcare Forum.



The growth along Geoff Doig's river bank is clearly visible where stock have been excluded.



Feeding sheep morning and night on a farm near the Warby Ranges: In the drought many farmers face financial and time constraints which may hinder their commitment to Landcare.



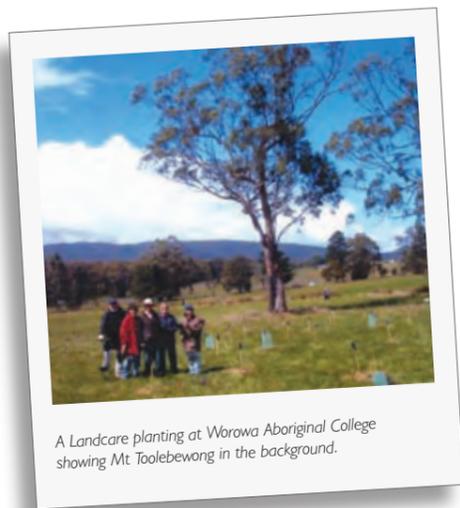
Mt Toolebewongers doing a Waterwatch survey.

“
The action plan also makes us stop and think about our successes; we are often so busy doing that we forget to step back and smell the gum leaves.
 ”



Students from Badger Creek Primary School don't hesitate to get involved with Landcare.

The view from the mountain



A Landcare planting at Worowa Aboriginal College showing Mt Toolebewong in the background.

The Mt Toolebewong Landcare Group in Healesville got started in 1996 as a ragwort group. We were urged into action by one of our neighbours, Roly Greaves, who knew that ragwort was spreading in from the Don Valley and if we didn't tackle it we would soon have a major infestation.

After a few years of working on ragwort, we realised that it was only one of the problems we had threatening our mountain, so decided to become a Landcare group. Our first official activity, in March 1999, was a weed walk. We soon had our certificate of incorporation, insurance and lots of enthusiasm. Our members at this time were landowners on Mt Toolebewong – most of us with 10 to 20 acre bush blocks, and the Moora Moora Co-Operative, which has about 300 acres.

As time went on, we realised that whatever we did at the top of the mountain would have an effect lower down, with many of the springs feeding local creeks originating on our properties. We adopted a catchment management approach to our issues, and sought membership from properties below us. Our members now include Healesville Sanctuary, Badger Creek Primary School and Worowa Aboriginal College.

One of our aims has been to educate landowners and make information and equipment available to them. We work constantly as individuals on our own land, with at least one annual onslaught as a group on a neighbour's property, and several working bees a year along a roadside and gully.

We also have a strong commitment to educate the general public and publicise Landcare. We hold an annual Landcare display in the Healesville Library and have been involved with two local festivals to promote Landcare and sustainable living. Profits from these were put into the Mt Toolebewong Fund which has given grants to local Yarra Valley groups and schools for environmental and community development projects.

One of our members produces and emails our quarterly newsletter, which is our most important communication tool for members, project partners and the community.

As well as having an impact on our land, our Landcare network has enabled us to form a Fireguard Group, become involved in a township committee, work with other community groups and schools on Clean Up Australia Days, and access grants from Melbourne Water, the CMA and the Junior Landcare scheme.

We have formed partnerships with the Shire of Yarra Ranges, Melbourne Water, Vic Roads, the local Lions Club and Healesville Environment Watch to work together on various revegetation projects, and the relationships we have formed give us a strong sense of belonging to the community.

Where to from here? We are still a small group comprising 24 members, and need to resist the temptation to attempt too much. We developed an action plan with CMA assistance, and have achieved 90% of our aims. We review the plan annually to keep us on track, relevant to new ideas and issues, and most of all, remain realistic with our expectations.

The action plan also makes us stop and think about our successes; we are often so busy doing that we forget to step back and smell the gum leaves.

One of our current projects involves Waterwatch testing and revegetation of Boggy Creek, and will bring us into contact with new landowners at the bottom of our mountain. Hopefully we can work together to improve this degraded area of the creek, which begins its life at the very top of Mt Toolebewong.

By Karen Garth

Although our energy levels wax and wane, and we lost the wonderful friendship and support of Roly Greaves to cancer a few years ago, we will continue to protect and enhance the biodiversity of our mountain and its catchment.

Karen Garth is secretary of the Mt Toolebewong Landcare Group. For more information contact Karen on 5962 5115.



The group promotes its activities at the local farmers market.



The Mayor of Kingston, Councillor Topsy Petchey, plants a tree at Heatherton Park helped by Oturika Akanoa and Daniel Lim from Westall Secondary College.

Heatherton Park rises from the sand

By Norm Bury

The end of the sand mining era brings a great opportunity to repair past damage in the Clayton area. Tiny pockets of native vegetation have survived the devastation of sand mining.

Always breezy at the best of times, the winds of change first began to blow across Heatherton Park during 2000. This saw the first planning survey take place on this site since its closure to the public in September 1984.

In 2007, nearly twenty-three years later, we see a very different outlook from that vacant landfill surrounded by ugly wire fencing. Significant changes have taken place as a result of liaison between Friends of Heatherton Park Incorporated and Kingston Council.

Low areas of the park were drained and filled. Old concrete walking trails were repaired and extended. An access ramp for people with limited mobility was installed along with a shared walking trail of granitic sand for fitness activities. Old cyclone wire fencing was removed and replaced with a post and rail fence, public toilets were installed and a play space was created.

Planting indigenous vegetation is now a high priority to restore this area's indigenous habitat and provide urgently needed shelter from strong winds presently blowing unhindered across the park.

On National Tree Day in July of last year, a further 2500 trees were planted by over 130 students from four local schools. Local residents were assisted by Friends groups and NAB volunteers. Our thanks to the Clarinda Lions Club for providing a sausage sizzle for volunteers and to LJ Hooker and our local scout group for the marquees. Special thanks to Springvalley Golf Club staff for their valuable assistance over the two days.

For further information contact the Friends of Heatherton Park Incorporated on 9546 2448.

Nursing a plant back from extinction

The residents of a Kyneton nursing home are working to save a rare local plant believed extinct in Victoria for over a century.

Newham and District Landcare Group member Philip Wilson noticed an unusual shrub growing on his property at Hanging Rock. He sent samples to prominent La Trobe University botanist Neville Scarlett who identified the species as velvety peppergrass (*Lepidium hyssopifolium*), which was believed to be extinct in Victoria for over a century.

Neville Scarlett had rediscovered the plant during a survey along the railway tracks at Beveridge in 1984. However, these six plants were later destroyed by excavations at the site when a fibre-optic cable was laid.

A small population was also found at Trentham, which survives precariously at the front of a derelict shop on the main street and is at risk of eradication by over-zealous council workers aiming for a weed-free streetscape.

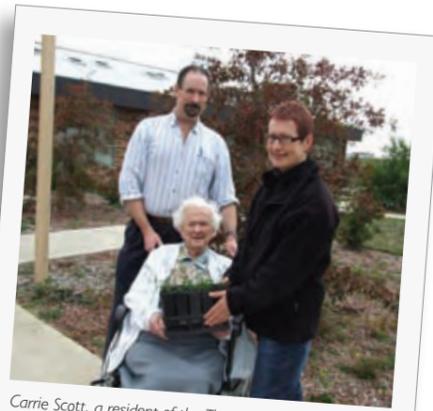
Philip Wilson's Hanging Rock specimens had persisted in a highly modified habitat, growing in deep conifer litter and among man-made paving. The plant's original ecological niche remains unclear. It tolerates no competition

from other vegetation and has suffered greatly from grazing pressure and herbicide use.

Although similar in appearance to the introduced *Lepidium africanum*, it can be distinguished by small hairs present on the pedicles which have given rise to its common name.

Philip Wilson works as a nurse in Kyneton. His interest in the plant was taken up by the residents at the Thomas Hogan Nursing Home who have raised a healthy crop of seedlings this year. The residents have also been involving the local community and Landcare groups with the aim of re-establishing the species in suitable habitat on surrounding properties.

The plant has been found to be raised easily from seed and a nursery has been created within the grounds of the nursing home, where the residents have shown a keen interest in efforts to save the velvety peppergrass from oblivion. Hopefully there is a brighter outlook for this fragile plant now some wise hands are involved.



Carrie Scott, a resident of the Thomas Hogan Nursing Home in Kyneton, hands Philip Wilson and Penny Roberts from the Newham and District Landcare Group a tray of velvety peppergrass seedlings grown by residents.



Velvety peppergrass in its last remaining natural habitat – the main street of Trentham.

For further information or to obtain plants for restocking contact Philip Wilson at pwilson@kynetonhealth.org.au

“

We are proud to have made Victorian Landcare so vibrant, creative and diverse over the past decade.

”



Landcare Australia Melbourne staff with long-term supporter, Paul Burns of International Power Mitsui. From left: Matthew Reddy, Lana Collison, Rob Youl, Paul Burns, David Hehir and Kate Fenby.

Landcare Australia Limited – ten years in Melbourne

By Rob Youl

In three far-reaching moves in 1989, the Hawke Government, spearheaded by Graeme Richardson, provided resources to Greening Australia to establish one billion trees; launched the Decade of Landcare; and established Landcare Australia Limited (LAL).

Brian Scarsbrick became the LAL Chief Executive Officer with the mission of increasing community recognition and support for Landcare. Brian, with Melbourne-based consultant, Ken Gibson, both still with Landcare, devoted the first five years to networking, logo development, television endorsements, Landcare stamps and coins, a Telstra communications kit, launching national awards and gathering initial sponsors, like BP and Uncle Tobys.

From 1994-98, the Landcare Foundation under Sir James Hardy raised \$10 million for projects from BHP, Telstra, Alcoa, Ansett, Amcor, Banrock Station and Westpac. In early 1995 LAL organised a Murray River event for Ray Martin and Angry Anderson to plant a million trees in one week. Under Angry's patronage the goal was achieved along with fantastic television coverage.

John Claringbold became LAL's chair, with Wellington Lee leading a Landcare Foundation Victorian branch. With State Government

support, which continues today, and Ken Gibson's help, we opened a full-time office in Melbourne's Farrer House in 1997.

What should we do? A small team of myself, Lindy Moffatt and Alex Arbuthnot fielded enquiries, explored Melbourne's corporate and philanthropic worlds and wrote Landcare pamphlets. We encouraged emerging operations like Powlett Project, Hindmarsh Biolinks, Yarrilinks, Bass Coast/Phillip Island and Project Platypus; and helped secure and publicise major contributions from BHP, Telstra, Rio Tinto, International Power Mitsui, Amcor and Melbourne Water to community projects. And we worked on Olympic Landcare with Greening Australia.

By 2000-2002, Grow West, Westgate Park and Sydenham Park escarpments project had developed, all oriented towards corporate funding and staff teams. Justin McFarlane arrived in 2001 with increased integration of the Melbourne and Sydney offices of LAL. Justin's watch saw Mitre 10's Junior Landcare created and LAL extended to Perth. Since 2003, Matthew Reddy has completed our national integration, with LAL now in Brisbane.

Highlights since 2003: 1 500 hectares planted across Australasia through eTree, our landscape change program with Computershare; SP

AusNet revegetation projects; Elders Landcare Farming; a 2005 Telstra Baynton-Sidonia 90-hectare direct seeding day; and VicTrack's Grassroots program. Moreover, we have Powercor supporting weed control; Bass Coast Shire offsets projects; our collaboration with virtually every Victorian energy company; the Port Campbell coalition: five gas companies and the Heytesbury Landcare network.

Our office has just launched a national initiative, CarbonSMART, paying landholders for carbon sequestered in conservation plantings, supported by DSE through vehicle emissions offsets, and Melbourne City Council. LAL has also promoted Coastcare and Coast Action, allocating over \$100,000 annually to Victorian initiatives, including award-winning Warramboul Coastcare Landcare Group.

Our relationship with Port Phillip and Westernport CMA is rewarding. Building firmly on Grow West at Bacchus Marsh, the CMA is launching new regional projects like Living Links in Melbourne's south-east.

Now a decade old, LAL is proud we've helped make Victorian Landcare so vibrant, creative and diverse.

For further information contact Rob Youl on 9662 9977.

Landcare thinkers mingle with Landcare doers in Geelong



Author Tim Low encourages Corangamite Regional Landcare Forum participants to think about the future.

About 200 environmental champions converged on Geelong in March to hear former Victorian Premier Joan Kirner celebrate 20 years of Landcare in the Corangamite region.

The event was an opportunity for Landcare volunteers to celebrate, reflect and learn from each other.

Joan Kirner was instrumental in the formation of Landcare in 1986, after she was appointed Minister of Conservation, Forests and Lands. She set about creating a new land protection and conservation program that followed community based principles and involved partnerships between landholders and government.

Tim Low, author of *Feral Future*, *Bush Tucker and Bush Medicine*, and Saxon strategic analyst Peter Ellyard also spoke at the event along with many local Landcarers.

Corangamite CMA Acting Chief Executive Officer Don Forsyth said the forum created a picture of the contribution individual Landcarers make to the local, regional, state, national and global environment.

Topics that were discussed included engaging Heytesbury farmers in sustainable Landcare, integrated catchment management along the Bellarine Peninsula and opportunities to improve the Moorabool River and its catchment area.



The changing rural scene around Bendigo – trees and cows.

“
The biggest change we are seeing in Landcare now is not in the numbers of rabbits or types of weeds we are controlling, but in the backgrounds of our members.
 ”



Landcare Joe had a lot to learn about rural life.



How city Joe became Landcare Joe

By Judy Crocker



Landcare group members installing nest boxes.

The Upper Spring Creek Landcare Group was formed in the early nineties by a small band of residents dedicated to controlling pest plants and animals and raising community awareness of the rising salinity in our streams. Rabbit and weed projects were soon organised and a few years later the members began fencing out creeks and planting native trees and shrubs.

The biggest change we are seeing in Landcare now is not in the numbers of rabbits or types of weeds we are controlling, but in the backgrounds of our members. The majority of our members are known as peri-urban or lifestyle residents. They live in the interface between the country environment and the suburbs. These fringe environments can be very pleasant places to live, but increasing population pressure can also cause a very high impact on the surrounding vegetation, streams and wildlife.

The good life

People become fringe dwellers for many different reasons. Some retire into the country, but wish to stay close to the city amenities; some want some space for their children and pets. Few realise how different life will be until they actually make the move.

Water doesn't just keep flowing from the tap endlessly, having a wonderful log fire takes a lot of effort and resources. The pets don't stay in their own backyard with just a wire fence and the chooks are in constant danger from foxes and eagles. The rose garden is often the first to be established, but is then eaten by possums

and wallabies and the young trees so lovingly planted are also trimmed by corellas, wallabies and hares.

One of our Landcare couples spent considerable money and physical effort erecting a rabbit-proof fence around their property and then watched in horror as a large hare climbed the fence to nibble their precious tree seedlings.

Here's the story of one of our recent members – we'll call him Joe.

Joe came to Australia 40 years ago. He settled in South Australia where he became interested in wildlife photography and was mildly supportive of tree planting projects.

Several years ago he purchased a block in Lockwood South. The land was ex-grazing, but still had some remnant vegetation and native grasses. He planned to plant some more trees and shrubs and pretty up the block in the hope of attracting more birds.

Joe realised he needed more information on what and where to plant. By chance he came across a Landcare newsletter produced by the local group.

Landcare has provided Joe with an enormous amount of local environmental knowledge and access to resources and equipment. But more importantly he says it has helped him to settle in. He and his partner have formed many friendships through their Landcare involvement which has given them a sense of community belonging and worth in a very short time.

Stormy weather

Joe said that when he lived in the city the weather had little impact on his daily life. When a recent violent storm passed through our area he was in awe at the fury of the environment and the damage it wrought. Within minutes the storm brought a raging torrent of water sweeping through the gully below Joe's house, threatening the structure of his dam. He ran down the hill to try to save his pump from being submerged in the rapidly rising water and found to his dismay that he was in danger of being drowned himself.

Joe will never forget that day when he experienced total involvement in all the fury of the environment and the resulting damage to properties and roads, instead of safely sitting inside his home looking out, as he had done all his life before.

In a very short time Joe has changed from city dweller to becoming an avid Landcare fan, especially after attending a local direct seeding and seed collection workshop organised by the Landcare group. He was particularly impressed with the locally developed technology that accomplishes massive revegetation with very little effort. He was pleased to see corporate sponsors attending and their pride in being involved in large-scale landscape repair.

The following spring Joe and his partner joined other Landcare members for a seed collecting workshop which was held at a local site that had been successfully direct seeded some years

prior. He told me he realised that day that not only was it possible for an individual to make a difference, but also that a motivated group working together really could change the landscape.

Prettying up the whole landscape

Joe is now a member of the Landcare group executive committee. He has gone way past prettying up his block and has now planted and direct seeded a large portion of his land. He believes the success of Landcare is that it is community based and largely volunteer driven, a bottom up approach – knowledge building and challenging. He thinks the Landcare format is successful and hopes that it won't change too much in the future. He is especially wary of too much bureaucratic involvement.

In Joe's opinion the Landcare funding model is flawed. It is too short term. He believes the environment, as with people, is not a tap you can turn on and off and that too much of the group's time is spent worrying about where the next funding assistance will come from, applying for it, and waiting for it to arrive.

In Joe's words: "Landcare members enjoy working together. We just want to get on with the desperately needed work of repairing the landscape."

The future for Landcare around Bendigo

In the last four years there has been a massive landscape change around Bendigo as many



The Landcare group serves an important social function in the community. Here a group is off on a cycling expedition.

farms have been subdivided into lifestyle blocks and more and more Joes are moving out to own their small piece of bush.

People have also come from other Victorian and interstate areas and there is now a diverse mixture of nationalities with families from English, Dutch, Chinese, Vietnamese and African backgrounds.

This influx of residents with little or no knowledge of the local landscape, such as soil type, native vegetation, wildlife, pest plants and animals, creates considerable issues for the bordering farming community.

The challenge for the local Landcare group has been how to welcome these new residents and to find the best way to communicate with them.

The Landcare group sends out a monthly newsletter to as many local residents as possible. The group has also worked with the North Central CMA to produce a *Guide for Sustainable Land Management in Central Victoria – Caring for Country* which is being sent to all new residents.

Judy Crocker is the secretary of the Upper Spring Creek Landcare Group. For more information contact Judy on 5435 3412.



Geoff Doig with river bottlebrush that has regenerated along his Ovens River frontage.

“

It seems a tender program allows farmers to submit for the costs of getting contractors to do a job when they have the intent but not the time to undertake the work they want done.

”



Owen Trumper from Grand Ridge Plantations (left) presents Bill Bodman, President of Won Wron Landcare Group (centre) with the Community Group Award assisted by Bob Wenger from Wellington Shire (right).

“

Together with Rob and the family, Jenny Davies has created a magnificent wetland area of around 10 hectares on her property. By fencing and revegetating this area with more than 2000 trees they have established a much-needed local wildlife haven.

”

Tender care for north-east rivers

By Margrit Beemster

The four-year River Tender program, which involves landholders putting in tenders to do conservation works to protect their river banks, is being trialled along the Ovens River in north-east Victoria. The Ovens is regarded as a heritage river as it is largely untouched and unregulated.

Administered by the North East CMA, 44 landholders have participated in the program with a total of 118 hectares protected and over 100 kilometres of river frontage fenced off.

According to Jane Roots from the CMA, the tender system had proved to be a cost-effective way of delivering funding for conservation works.

“All the bids were assessed and we chose the ones that gave not only good value for money but that also contributed best to the aim of the program,” she said.

Jonathon Howard, from Charles Sturt University’s Institute for Land, Water and Society which was engaged to evaluate the project, agreed that it had been successful.

“Apart from being cost effective we found it also encouraged a new group of farmers to implement conservation practices as well as increase general awareness about the CMA and its programs amongst the community,” Jonathon Howard said.

“Participants in the program tended to own farms that were about a third the size of the average farm in the region; their average age was significantly younger than the general farming population; most of them had a source of income off-farm; and they tended to be newer to the district.

“It seems a tender program allows farmers to submit for the costs of getting contractors to

do a job when they have the intent but not the time to undertake the work they want done.”

River works worthwhile – despite drought

The regeneration of river bottlebrush along the Ovens River at Geoff Doig’s Oxley Flats farm near Wangaratta is very heartening.

The country is drought affected, the river extremely low, but here is a sign of a management plan to protect the vegetation along the river that is working.

Geoff, a dairyfarmer, has done further conservation works to protect riparian vegetation on his land following his successful bids under the River Tender program.

According to Geoff, the program gave him the impetus to do more. After the drought in 2003, he had fenced off all of his river frontage and put in off-river stock watering troughs. Impressed with the results he wanted to extend the fence line out further to protect more of the vegetation.

Geoff found out about the River Tender project through his local Landcare group – the Milawa, Markwood and Oxley Landcare Group – of which he is chairman.

Geoff had four sites where he wanted to do conservation works which were inspected for their riparian value by program officers before Geoff put in a bid or tender for each of the sites.

Under the terms of the program, landholders whose bids are accepted sign agreements to manage the site for things like weed control and fence maintenance, and to exclude stock, for five years.

In putting in his bids, Geoff says he took into account lost production from cattle being locked out; no longer being able to remove firewood; his time and cost to do weed and grass control; and fencing and tree planting costs.

He was successful with two of his four bids for two smaller sites, about a hectare each. Fencing and the tree planting, mostly understorey species, were done in 2005 with Green Corp assisting with the planting.

“I think it worked out that I received about \$2500 for each of the sites for the five-year period. I’d probably put in tenders for more works if there is another round of funding. It’s been well worthwhile.”

Geoff says because of the drought he had been tempted to let stock access the fenced-off areas.

“But I decided it would be a waste and spoil all the good work that has been done.”

Yarram Yarram Landcare heroes awarded

By Paul Martin

Snake was on the menu at the recent Yarram Yarram Landcare Network annual awards dinner. Steve Darby, the local snake man, fascinated guests with his slide show and talk on local lizards, snakes and frogs, and the impact of feral cats on lizard populations.

Jenny Davies from the Albert River Landcare Group was our top individual Landcarer. Jenny has been involved with Landcare for about 22 years. She has been very active at both the group and network level; president of the Albert River LCG for the past seven years, and the group’s delegate to the network for eleven. She has been a strong supporter of Young Landcare in the Yarram region and was instrumental in running the Yarram Envirofest in 2005.

Together with Rob and the family, Jenny Davies has created a magnificent wetland area of around 10 hectares on her property. By fencing and revegetating this area with more than 2000 trees they have established a much-needed local wildlife haven.

The Won Wron Devon North Landcare Group took out the Community Group Award. Despite the poor season, the Won Wron Devon North Group has had an excellent win with their Boodyarn Road revegetation project. Taking advantage of the Shire’s Weeds for Trees program, they planted 500 tubestock plants to provide an important wildlife corridor and integral link between the Won Wron North and South forests.

The Boodyarn project was the first for many years that effectively combined the collective knowledge and experience of group members

while making the best use of public land for the best environmental outcome.

Group members continually monitor the Boodyarn project and all reports show that the project is in great shape, even with the current climate going against it. Of equal importance, this roadside planting gives the group a good reason to get together periodically to check on the project and have a barbecue in the forest.

Yarram Primary School received the Landcare Education Award. Students at the school have established a large vegetable garden to complement the school’s healthy eating program and implemented a water recycling scheme that utilises waste water to water the various gardens in the school grounds. Students have also taken part in a highly successful revegetation and beautification project at The Station in Yarram and have learnt some elements of plant identification during classroom and field activities.

At the end of the formalities some informal network awards were given out – the Macrame Award to Russell Pierce for his assistance with folding newsletters, and the Seedbank Enthusiast and Volunteer Seed Collector Awards to Robyn Langford and Ross Lampre respectively for their work in the Yarram Seedbank.

The Yarram Yarram Landcare Network would like to thank the judges of the awards: Peter Huthwaite and Anne Davie from Bass Coast Landcare and our sponsors: West Gippsland CMA, the ANZ Bank, Grand Ridge Plantations, Yarram Artificial Breeding Centre, Wellington Shire, Landmark, Tarra Wholesale Nursery, Murray Goulburn, Rodwells & Co, Retravision and TomsCap Vineyard.



Michelle Graham from the ANZ Bank (left) presents Glenda Amos from Yarram Primary School (centre) with the Landcare Education Award assisted by Linda De Win from Yarram Artificial Breeding Centre (right).



From left, The Hon Peter McGauran, Leon Trembath – Yarram Yarram Landcare Network Chairman, Individual Landcare Award winner Jenny Davies and Geoff Hocking, Chief Executive Officer of the West Gippsland CMA.



Landcare researcher Allan Curtis in Beechworth. He predicts many more absentee landholders will be involved in Landcare in the future.

“
I think one of the most important and most obvious trends of the last 25 years is the rapid process of migration to the bush
”



The view from the porch. An almost suburban bush scene in Yackandandah.

Arrival of the tree changers

Over the next 10 years, we can expect 40 to 50% of rural properties across Victoria to change hands. One way to illustrate the magnitude of this change is that in the previous ten years about 25% of properties have changed hands.

While some of this transfer of ownership will come about as a result of family succession and/or amalgamation, in many areas there is ongoing subdivision of land and most of the new owners are coming from other districts, including from our metropolitan and regional cities.

“I think one of the most important and most obvious trends of the last 25 years is the rapid process of migration to the bush, particularly in Victoria but also in NSW and Queensland,” says social researcher Prof Allan Curtis, director of Charles Sturt University’s Institute for Land, Water and Society.

These days we call this trend the ‘tree change’ but as Allan Curtis says it is not something new.

“The difference now, though, is the extent to which this trend has gained momentum,” says Allan Curtis, who recently published a report, *Corangamite region social benchmarking survey 2006*, undertaken on behalf of the Corangamite CMA in western Victoria.

Corangamite leads trend

“Looking at property sales data in the Corangamite CMA region, for example, over the last 10 years, 25% of properties have changed hands. However, our research is now suggesting that 50% of properties across Corangamite will change hands in the next 10 years. This trend is consistent across most of south-east Australia, with the exception of more remote areas such as the Wimmera or western New South Wales where it is likely to be around 30%.

“With property turnover, we are finding that while some of it is to do with demographics (i.e. existing landholders are retiring or dying), more than half of the new owners have come from somewhere else and are very different from the longer-term residents,” says Allan Curtis.

“These new settlers are less likely to see themselves as farmers and are more interested in the environment than agricultural production; they have more off-property work and less time for on-property work; and they report much

lower levels of knowledge and skills related to land management.

“They are also less likely to be involved in local organisations such as Landcare. However, that’s ironic in that these people say they are attracted to rural property by the appeal of living in a rural community.”

A high proportion of these new owners, particularly for properties close to Melbourne, are likely to be absentee owners (people who own a property but don’t live on it).

“This is a substantial issue when it comes to resource management and community engagement,” says Allan Curtis.

“The Corangamite region is close to Melbourne and Geelong and is probably at the cutting-edge of this trend. The Corangamite CMA is really struggling with how to engage these absentee owners. They are often so busy that when they visit their properties they don’t want to move off their properties. They either want to work on the property or relax.”

By Margrit Beemster

Hollowing out of community

“There are wider community issues,” says Allan Curtis. “The absentee owners are less likely to be in the rural fire brigades, to be involved in other volunteer organisations. Social workers talk about this hollowing out of community, where the ties that bind communities together break down because there isn’t the involvement in these kind of organisations.”

How these new settlers access information about land management is different than with longer-term residents. “Many of these absentee owners are not members of Landcare and have little contact with farmer organisations such as the VFF or with the CMA,” says Allan Curtis.

“You would be struggling to reach these people if you relied on Landcare groups, departmental extension officers or the VFF,” he says. “These people are more likely to use the internet so that could be one way to reach them.”

One of his recommendations to CMAs is that they track changes in property ownership and organise a property visit to meet new owners soon after they buy their property.

“It could be the Landcare co-ordinator who makes this personal visit which would need to be booked in advance, probably at the weekend,” says Allan Curtis.

“At this meeting there should be some discussion of why the new owners purchased the property and of their plans for it. The extension staff should also explore interest of the new owners in linking up with their neighbours to share equipment, access labour for fencing or weed management, or simply to learn about property management.”

The trend to more non-farmers owning properties is expected to lead to changes in the enterprise mix on properties, with people choosing cattle grazing in preference to more intensive enterprises such as dairying.

Allan Curtis also predicts a substantial loss of local knowledge.

“You are going to have a loss of local knowledge which could be about how to manage for fires, about how to manage for droughts, or how to control pest plants and animals,” Allan Curtis says.

“One of the assumptions is that everybody who is on the land now has been through the last drought and therefore they will be more accomplished managers when we hit the next drought. But if half the population moves on in the next 10 years, that’s not going to hold for the future.

“There has also been an assumption in natural resource management (NRM) circles that we have largely finished with landholder NRM

education. Clearly, if we have 50% of our future land managers who have not lived in the district, and many probably have never managed a rural property, it will be important to invest in awareness raising and improving landholder knowledge and management skills.”

“
You are going to have a loss of local knowledge which could be about how to manage for fires, about how to manage for droughts, or how to control pest plants and animals.
”



Weed control works at Chad's Creek Reserve.

“
Primary producers – both full-time and part-time – live alongside hobby farmers, lifestylers, stock producers, primary producers, conservationists and absentee landholders.
 ”



Young cricketer Trent Thompson enjoys the facilities at Slater Park.

Strathewen welcomes the new By Mandy Hayley

Strathewen is home to a uniquely diverse range of residents. The eclectic mix of Strathewen residents has been a challenge for the Strathewen Landcare Group over the past twenty years. Primary producers – both full-time and part-time – live alongside hobby farmers, lifestylers, stock producers, primary producers, conservationists and absentee landholders.

The diversity of land use in the Strathewen area generates a variety of needs and creates very different perceptions of land management. For example, some residents are focused on preserving native flora and fauna while other residents find kangaroos in large numbers a destructive nuisance.

Weed control is a Landcare issue that all residents can embrace equally as blackberries, honeysuckle and cape broom plague the Strathewen environment.

The environmental successes that the group has enjoyed have been hard won. These are in part due to dedicated core group members and the fact that the group is community based.

Bronwyn South, a local primary producer, edits the Strathewen Landcare newsletter. A compilation of articles and updates on local and regional Landcare news, the newsletter provides information on events such as working bees to target specific weeds. It also clearly lists the many Government departments and resources and includes contributions from members and non-members on issues that are of environmental interest.

The newsletter recently ran a series of interviews on a cross-section of Landcare members. The member profiles showcased each property and highlighted information on what Landcare involvement can provide.

Landcare opens doors for new residents

When Kylee and Geoff Woods bought their 80-acre property in Strathewen three years ago, they had some idea of the work that lay ahead of them, but didn't fully anticipate the complexity of their Landcare needs.

About half of their property is bushland which, through the local Nillumbik Council, has now been placed under a Trust for Nature covenant. This provides them with a yearly rebate on their land rates.

Melbourne Water and the Stream Frontage Management Program had initially spearheaded Kylee and Geoff's restoration work and they received a grant to assist them with weed spraying and rabbit control. Tea tree infestation has also been a problem but some progress is being made.

Kylee Woods became aware of the Landcare group from a sign on the local hall advertising the Annual General Meeting. She and Geoff thought it would be a great way to meet local people.

Attending that meeting has opened up a plethora of information and a sharing of local knowledge and networking for the Woods. They have recently restored ten acres of pasture with the aid of a helpful neighbour, his tractor, and the information provided by the Landcare group.



New residents Kylee and Geoff Woods benefit from Landcare experience at a discussion on their property.

The group is working on a new resident information sheet to help make contact with people like Kylee and Geoff.

According to Bronwyn South, new residents are looking for a local source of land management knowledge.

“We need to balance local knowledge with current Landcare concepts and make it useful for them. We can provide information on how to utilise relevant resources such as the DPI and the local collaborative Landcare group project – WACMAC.

“The group has to evolve with current trends.”

For further information contact Bronwyn South on 9714 8451.

A Landcare park for Swan Hill By David Ellemor

The Mid-Murray Landcare Network is made up of district Landcare and environmental groups including the Mid-Murray Field Naturalists, Friends of Nyah Vinifera Forest and Trust for Nature. The network is strongly supported by Swan Hill Rural City Council, Mallee CMA, DPI and DSE.

The network has the usual range of rural projects – on farms, roadsides and along waterways, but it is an urban park in the regional city of Swan Hill that has really been getting our members excited.

The network received approval from Swan Hill Rural City Council to establish an urban bushland reserve in the city as a habitat for wildlife and indigenous native plants and to serve as an educational facility for locals and tourists. The bushland was an alternative to the existing high maintenance watered and mown parks – with no water connection to the park and no mowing program by council staff.

Slater Park is named after a local family from the area. Kyle Ford, a student from Swan Hill College, drew up the plan for the park, with a winding path from the north end to the south end, seating areas and an ephemeral wetland.

Swan Hill Rural City Council outdoor staff and local landfill contractors Twigg Group provided support by delivering soil and mulch. Local contractors assisted with ground works according to the plan. Landcare network members, the extended Slater family, Green Corps team, and community members (including cubs and scouts) planted a range of

trees, shrubs and ground covers. All of the plants were local species provided by native nurseries in the district.

Funding for the project was obtained from the NHT Envirofund and management provided by Lead On, with Landcare network members and the Swan Hill Rural City Environment Officer forming the steering committee. Assistance with maintenance and removing summer weeds has been provided by Work for the Dole groups.

The park was officially opened in November 2005. Despite the extremely hot and dry summers, an autumn walk through the park reveals the wide range of thriving plants.

Slater Park is a great example of the knowledge and experience of the Landcare network members providing a long-lasting asset to the Swan Hill community.

For further information contact David Ellemor on 5032 2670.



David Ellemor planting trees with Green Corps volunteers to bring the bush back to the city of Swan Hill.

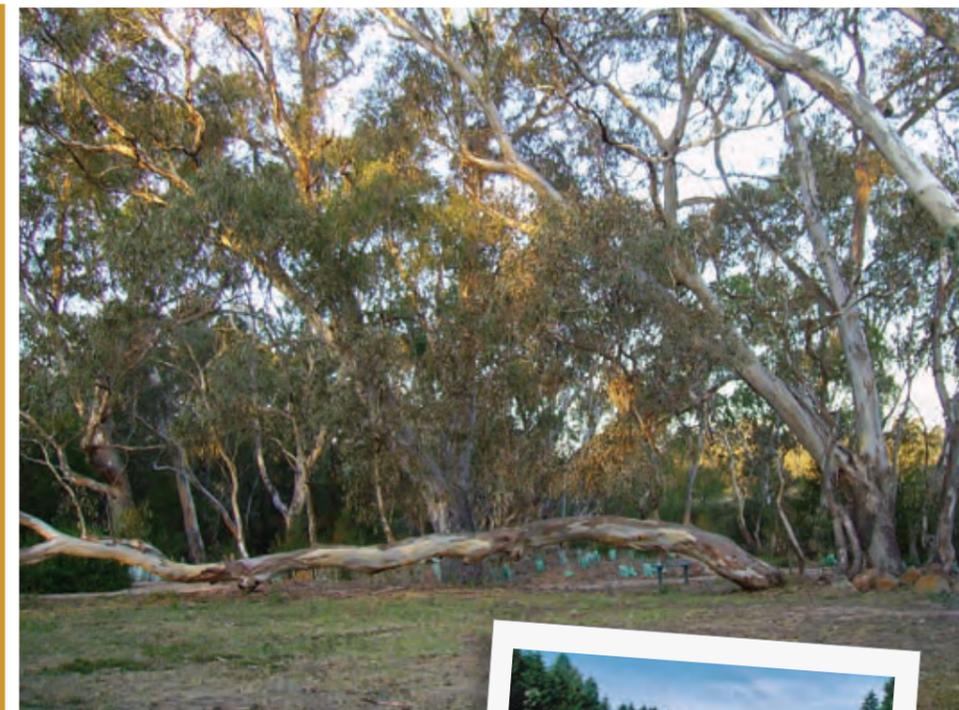


Feeding sheep morning and night on a farm near the Warby Ranges: In the drought many farmers face financial and time constraints which may hinder their commitment to Landcare.

“

The underlying concept of Landcare in Germany is the equal representation of farmers, conservationists and local politicians in each group as well as a co-operative rather than a confrontational approach to problem-solving.

”



The Tallarook Arboretum: a gem in a small town. Planned and established by the Dabyminga Catchment Cooperative since 2003 this was once inaccessible public land covered by blackberries and other weeds.

German and Australian Landcare compared

By Katrin Prager

I am a German researcher visiting the University of Tasmania for six months to compare German Landcare with Australian Landcare. After talking to and interviewing people involved in Landcare and natural resource management in Tasmania, I travelled around Victoria to gain an impression of Landcare in another State.

Although Australians think Landcare is an Australian invention, the German *Landschaftspflegeverbände* (landscape maintenance groups) are the equivalent of Australian Landcare groups. These groups began in 1986, the same time as Landcare in Victoria. While there are over 4000 Landcare groups

in Australia, there are only 140 Landcare groups in Germany, partly because of its smaller size (in area if not in terms of population).

There is much greater diversity of Landcare groups in Australia than in Germany. Australian Landcare started out on farms, encouraging farmers to adopt more sustainable ways of farming. It was supported by a single government program, the National Landcare Program (NLP). This has broadened considerably over the last decade, partly due to government programs subsequently introduced in 1997 under NHT such as Rivercare or Bushcare.

In Germany, there is no federal Landcare funding program such as the National Landcare Program. German groups generally have budgets with mixed sources ranging from European programs to state and local government funding.

The overall aim of Landcare in the two countries is similar. In Germany, the primary purpose is landscape preservation with sustainable regional development. In Australia, the aim is phrased as sustainable land use and management. These aims result in various actions on the ground. In Australia, groups focus on issues such as weed and pest control, revegetation, linking remnant bush for biodiversity outcomes, erosion control or improvement of waterways.

In Germany, groups are involved in management of special habitats such as mountain meadows, establishment of wetlands,

swamps and hedgerows, preservation of traditional fruit and nut orchards, establishing and marketing regional products, soil conservation, or management of areas protected under European Union legislation. Landcare groups in both countries contribute to education and awareness raising regarding conservation issues.

Short-term funding frustration

Despite the provision of government grants for Landcare activities, there are concerns regarding the accessibility of funds and the lack of continuity in funding arrangements. The limited duration of programs and funding rounds severely restricts mid to long-term planning. This remains an issue both in Germany and Australia although Australian groups can potentially tap into corporate sector funding attracted by Landcare Australia Limited.

While most interviewees in Victoria and Tasmania agreed that there are various funding opportunities out there, the challenge is to write applications in a way that they are likely to be successful. Groups of volunteers find it hard to keep up with the changing buzz words and the paperwork. A co-ordinator is – with few exceptions – essential for group action planning and for attracting funding for specific projects.

The same is true for groups in Germany. On average, a German Landcare group has a co-ordinator who is responsible for project management and a part-time secretary. Some groups are able to employ additional technical

support staff; for example if they deliver a project of national significance. Regarding facilitators, Germany would sit between Tasmania where few Landcare co-ordinators work with individual groups and Victoria where both State and Federal Governments support facilitation and co-ordination.

Victorian networks lead the way

The Victorian groups are well looked after with the state funding a set of Regional Landcare Co-ordinators as well as the regions making the most of the NLP funding for support staff at regional and local level. What at first sight appears as an advantage, however, does involve repeated discussions about respective roles and competencies to avoid facilitators tripping over each other.

Another observation is that the idea of networks is most advanced in Victoria. There are no strong Landcare networks in Tasmania. However, the Tasmanian Landcare Association as the peak body for all care and friends of groups partially fulfils the role of a network.

In Germany, the regional co-ordinators network between the groups and stakeholders within a state, but there are no regional Landcare networks as such. However, Landcare groups are often active within networks such as the Local Action Groups that are formed to deliver EU funding schemes for sustainable rural development. At national level, the German Landcare Association ensures that Landcare issues are represented in decisions about

federal funding programs as well as in European legislation regarding rural development and agricultural policy.

The introduction of the regional approach to natural resource management, in particular the NRM bodies or CMAs, has undoubtedly had a major impact on Landcare in Australia. Reactions range from groups ignoring these bodies or keeping them at arm's length, to forming networks to maintain community group influence or partnering with the regional body.

German states already had a three-tiered system in place when the first Landcare groups formed. The challenge for these groups was to be accepted as an influential partner. The underlying concept of Landcare in Germany is the equal representation of farmers, conservationists and local politicians in each group as well as a co-operative rather than a confrontational approach to problem-solving. While government agencies initially did not believe in the value of this approach, it is increasingly recognised as the only way to implement regional landscape plans and conservation schemes.

The German Landcare Association has always promoted the German movement as a powerful device for delivering regional and local plans. Although there is a top down element in that the agencies' plans guide the actions of the local groups, the groups choose ways of implementation which suit them best and explore alternative ways to achieve the desired outcomes.



A typical mountain meadow, in Sachsen-Anhalt in Germany. Without regular slashing it would turn into forest, resulting in decreased biodiversity as the habitat changes.



A field walk in a traditional apricot orchard near Lake Suesser See in the Harz mountains in Germany with sheep grazing to keep the grass down under the trees.



The regional Landcare group makes an effort to protect this threatened hamster that lives in the Havel area in Sachsen-Anhalt, Germany.

Although the specific context is different for Landcare in Germany and Australia, it becomes apparent that the movement has the potential to ensure that community engagement becomes an accepted and integral part of regional policymaking in both countries.

For further information contact katrin.prager@agrar.hu-berlin.de



Edvardo encourages tree planters with some Greek accordion music.

Kororoit – the culture creek

By Geoff and Olga Mitchelmore

Kororoit Creek rises near Gisborne and empties into Hobsons Bay between Altona and Williamstown. Over the years, what was once a picnic retreat frequented by early settlers degraded into a sludgy polluted drain because of industrial activity and neglect.

Friends of Lower Kororoit Creek Inc. (FOLKC) was formed in 2001 by a group of people in Hobsons Bay who are dedicated to reversing the damage and bringing Kororoit Creek back to its former glory.

Targeting cultural groups and industry

The group identified two important factors for success; to be relevant to the area's diverse cultural communities and to involve local industry.

One of our members was connected to the multicultural committee on the Hobsons Bay Council and this allowed us to contact cultural groups in the area. We tailored our activities to appeal to and include as diverse a range of people as possible.

Our tree plantings are major community celebrations with training and free barbecues, chocolates and lollies and other donated giveaways. There is also wonderful entertainment by musician Edvardo on his accordion. People have fun, but leave knowing that they have put back something special into the environment.

On National Tree Day, sponsored by Toyota Australia, we attracted over 400 participants. Over the past three years this has seen more than 4000 indigenous trees and shrubs planted in the Kororoit Creek corridor.

By networking and using local newspapers more and more multicultural groups in the area saw what we were doing and wanted to get involved.

The Greek and Sudanese communities, local Lions groups, the Baha'i Group and scout troops and young people from Conservation Volunteers Australia have all become acquainted with the creek and helped to improve the environment over the past six years.

Local schoolchildren have also played their part. In 2006, through an Envirofund, Toyota, Hobsons Bay City Council, Burns Site Development and FOLKC partnership, 300 children from Hobsons Bay were brought to Kororoit Creek and given information about the environment by local council rangers. Each child planted a tree and was shown how the waterway works by Melbourne Water's Waterwatch team.

Sponsors and partners

The group has been able to achieve great results by attracting sponsorship and building partnerships with local industry and businesses, along with local, State and Federal Government environmental agencies.

FOLKC has actively developed partnerships with organisations that have frontage on Kororoit Creek. We are working with Toyota Australia, Toll Group, CRT Group, Mobil Altona Refinery and Altona Memorial Park. The key is to be active. One of our members is on the Mobil and Toyota Community Liaison Committees; we are involved with CRT Group and Toll on their transport issues and with AMP on their land issues.

Local businesses have also been major contributors in ensuring the plantings and developments are a success. Sponsorship from Millers Inn has allowed us to become autonomous and to buy our own 4WD vehicle for work along the creek corridor.

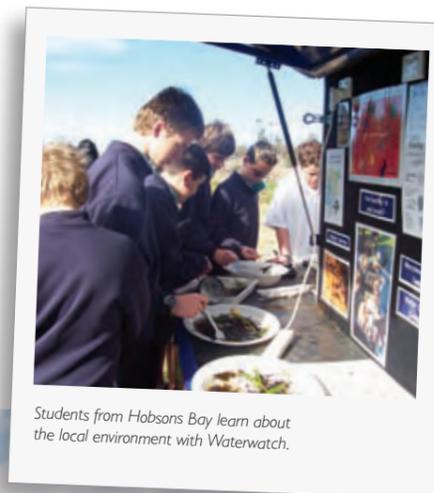
In for the long haul

The work being done along Kororoit Creek by FOLKC shows the Hobsons Bay community that this project is not short term. It is a major project with a momentum that will ultimately make Kororoit Creek one of the major waterways in the west of Melbourne.

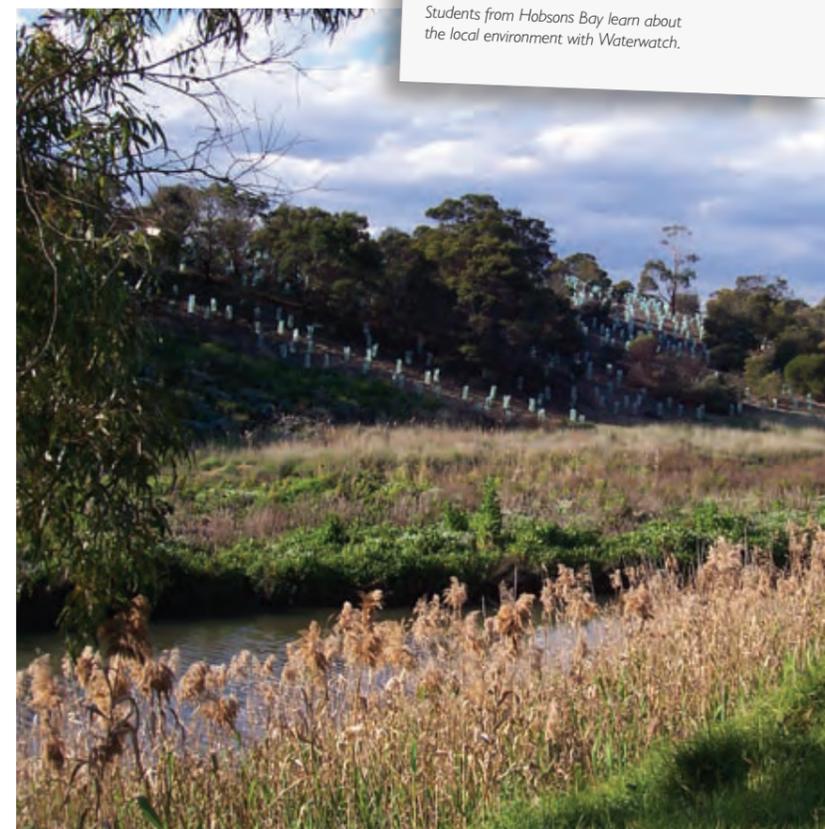
The development of the Kororoit Creek Strategy 2005–2030 and the implementation of this strategy through a Victorian Government Local Sustainability Accord Funding Grant and the adoption of the (Lower) Kororoit Creek Landscape Masterplan by Hobsons Bay City Council in 2007, all developed through initiatives by FOLKC, will also guarantee this momentum.

Through the use of strategy, innovation and commitment FOLKC hopes to achieve its vision to protect and enhance the natural character of Kororoit Creek for future generations to use and enjoy.

For further information log on to our website at www.folkc.cm.au or contact Geoff Mitchelmore on 9332 2599.



Students from Hobsons Bay learn about the local environment with Waterwatch.



The scale of works along the creek is impressive.

VFF celebrates 21 years of Landcare

By Susi Johnson

Last year was the 20th anniversary of Landcare in Victoria and of the VFF Farm-Tree and Landcare Association (FTLA). The association was created by the VFF to support and promote Landcare in Victoria.

Landcare has seen many changes with activities expanding to encompass public land, the advent of the Natural Heritage Trust and increasingly sophisticated organisational structures. At heart, it is still about coming together as a community to ensure responsible land management.

Many FTLA members are traditional farmers, but we also represent a cross-section of the rural and peri-urban community, including hobby farmers and 'Friends of' groups. The mix of backgrounds has placed new demands on our groups as they try to manage old and new members.

Whatever difficulties new people and new structures pose to what is essentially a volunteer grassroots movement it also provides new opportunities for communication and innovation. Some members hold forums and open days, or invite speakers to talk about controversial issues. Some members operate from someone's home, others have several employees with six-figure turnovers, and others have recruited local high school students to help with new technologies to produce websites and newsletters.

Regardless of size or structure, Landcare groups are being asked to comply with ever-greater legal and financial requirements.

The FTLA is currently reviewing its internal procedures to give members better access to services and greater protection, but without extraneous paperwork. Such measures also assist in our insurance negotiations as we continue our trend for lower costs for members. Despite our successes, the FTLA seeks to evolve and grow to ensure that our next 20 years are even better than the first.

Susi Johnson is the Executive Officer, VFF Farm Tree and Landcare Association. For more information contact Susi on 9207 5527 or at sjohnson@vff.org.au



Glen Dixon from the Wimmera CMA inspects new trees with Graeme Delahunty on his fire-damaged property at Lake Fyans.

Fire and water works at Lake Fyans By Melissa Pouliot

Lake Fyans farmer Graeme Delahunty has battled his fair share of farming challenges such as drought, floods, poor seasons and livestock and wool price fluctuations. But the past 12 months have been more challenging than most. The Grampians bushfire in late January caught the family by surprise.

"We thought we were going to get burnt in the earlier Stawell bushfires and were prepared. But when the Grampians caught fire, we were not prepared. They burnt us out from the south through to the back of Lake Fyans. There were two fire fronts and only two of us were here – a neighbour and myself," Graeme said.

The fire wiped out Graeme's woolshed, hayshed, wool, hay and livestock. Flames were only 30 to 40 metres from the house.

"We just went hammer and tong to save the house. There was no time for anything – it was full on. We were just trying to save what we could."

Graeme believes he could have saved the woolshed, but ran out of water at a bad time. Every tree on the property was on fire, and every hectare except about eight hectares in the back corner was burnt.

Eighteen months down the track, apart from a few trees with blackened leaves and branches, the path of the fire is hardly obvious.

What is obvious is the 30 kilometres of new fence and 12,000 new trees. Graeme is one of many Grampians landholders who have been able to recover from the bushfire with assistance from the Wimmera CMA and Project Platypus.

Incentives for fencing and revegetating near wetlands and waterways through the CMA's Property Enhancement Grants scheme and

other Government funding have been an important part of Graeme's bushfire recovery.

In 2006 Graeme focused on a 20-hectare site near a wetland that has salt problems and needs more effective shelter.

"We are trying to stop the salt from spreading any further and are also looking at ways to help the water from the channel from Lake Fyans get away," he said.

"In a normal year we have a lot of water lying around, which causes all sorts of problems. This was just a wasted area here but in five years time this is going to be the best block on the property."

Although the 2006 projects presented some challenges due to a critical water shortage on the tail end of 10 years of drought, Graeme is looking to a brighter future.

"We've got over the bushfire and drought quite well. We just need a good season – if we could get back to our 22 inches (550 millimetres) of rain for the year we'll be right. But the eight inches (200 millimetres) we had in 2006 just isn't enough, especially when the past 10 years have been so dry."

The views on the Lake Fyans property are outstanding and with Graeme's efforts they will be appreciated and improved well into the future.

Sharing approach is a winner for Tatura farmer

Tatura farmer Tom Dumaresq, member of the Goulburn Valley Tree Group and the North West Mooroopna Land Management Group, is the winner of the 2006 Shepparton Irrigation Region Landcare Award.

Tom's vast experience and innovative approach to revegetation and watertable monitoring, his dedication over many years to Landcare and his involvement in the Assisi Aid agroforestry project in Tamil Nadu, southern India were all acknowledged at the recent celebration dinner.

Tom started off growing tomatoes, beef and sheep on a mixture of Shepparton fine sandy loam, Lemnos loam and Goulburn clay soils, but was always interested in getting into trees and lucerne.

"It was in the late eighties when things came together a bit – the watertables were high, salinity was a problem and a government grant program for tree plantings became available, so I decided to go for it. I figured if I put trees on every checkbank, I'd never have to grow tomatoes again," said Tom.

There have been good and bad results on the property. Tom believes groups and individuals need to learn from past experiences for better onground results in the future.

"I'm the first to admit not everything I've tried has worked, I've had some spectacular failures and there are certainly things I'd do differently. Most farmers can probably relate to this. I believe we should always look to the past

and share our experiences before rushing off and trying the next big thing. We are getting better at it, but we could still make some improvements."

Based in Tatura, the Goulburn Valley Tree Group established a nursery in 1985 because farmers saw a need for trees in the Goulburn Valley. The nursery is completely staffed by volunteers who grow native seedlings that are sold around the district. To date they have grown over one million trees.

Five other remarkable Landcarers were nominated for the awards.

Don Anderson has been involved in Landcare activities over 50 years. He became an active member of the urban landcare group in Kyabram in 1999 where he has been instrumental in preserving flora and fauna through planting and protecting native flora species, including the endangered Murray Pine.

Dot Brown has been a member of the Invergordon and District Environmental and Landcare Group since it was established in 1992. She has worked tirelessly to plant trees, collect seed and monitor watertables and has produced the group's newsletter for 14 years.

Godfrey Medland was Bunbartha Kaarimba's first president back in 1990 and has since been a remarkable ambassador for Landcare in the area. Godfrey was nominated for his efforts to raise awareness of rising watertables, lead tours



Tom Dumaresq's commitment in Landcare has no boundaries. He has been involved in an agroforestry aid project in southern India for over 20 years and has visited there many times.

of the local area, plant trees and be involved in local area planning.

Kim Mundie was president of the Nanneella Timmering Landcare Group for 10 years and is currently the secretary. She has been continuously involved in fox baiting, blackberry removal, tree planting and drought recovery and assistance.

Wayne Backway has held many positions in the Undera Landcare Group since it formed in 1986. He delivered the Saltwatch Program to school students for 19 years and has also been involved in weed eradication, a dung beetle program, farm plantings and Watertable Watch.

Supported by the Shepparton Irrigation Region Implementation Committee of the Goulburn Broken CMA, the Shepparton Irrigation Region Landcare Award aims to reward a voluntary Landcarer who has shown commitment to Landcare over a period of time. There are clearly many winners in the region.

For more information contact Lucy Breen on 5833 5222.



Tom's property from the air in 1986.



Tom's property from the air in 2006.

Around the State – News from the Regional Landcare Co-ordinators



David Holmgren, one of the co-founders of permaculture, presenting at the Ovens Network Soil Health Forum.

Glenelg Hopkins

The recent rains have been welcomed across the region; however, farmers recognise livestock management is now more crucial than ever. A brochure advising farmers about exiting livestock from stock containment areas and managing pasture following the autumn break is available from the CMA. The Glenelg Hopkins Draft Weed Plan is also available for community comment.

The newly formed Tarragal Landcare Group hosted a very successful Landcare common ground seminar.

20-year Landcare celebrations were held as part of the Buskers Festival at Mortlake with Landcare groups and networks proudly displaying their achievements. The Lake Bolac Eel Festival was also well attended.

Meetings with networks are underway in preparation for New Generation Landcare Grant opportunities. The CMA has also run a second round Second Generation Landcare Grants process to distribute remaining funds. Community Landcare facilitators have been kept busy with Envirofund and water grant applications.

For further information contact Shelley Lipscombe on 5571 2526.

North Central

Despite the never-ending dry conditions the Landcare ethic in the North Central is thriving.

The North Central CMA hosted a very successful Demystifying the Funding Buckets seminar in early March.

The Loddon Landcare celebrations were held in April and attracted over 150 people. In May the Landcare Support Review community consultation began with a fantastic attendance at three public workshops around the catchment. This input will form the basis of the future model for Landcare support in the region.

We welcome Sheri Streilein, the new Gannawarra Shire Landcare Co-ordinator, to the North Central support team.

For more information contact Allison Long on 5440 1814.

Goulburn Broken

Recent rain has brought some smiles back to weary faces within the Goulburn Broken, but unfortunately it doesn't rain fodder. The dairy

industry is at the point where it just can't get fodder, not even from the Northern Territory. At a recent drought information workshop one landowner had resorted to feeding sawdust.

Landcare within the Mid Goulburn Catchment is in the process of working up a funding application to support a large-scale fox control project. Meetings have been held across the catchment to look at taking advantage of the upcoming Next Generation Landcare Grants.

Tony Kubeil has been appointed as the new Regional Landcare Co-ordinator. Thanks are due to Geoff Boyes who acted in the position prior to Tony being appointed.

For more information contact Tony Kubeil on 5820 1123.

Port Phillip and Westernport

Compilation of the inaugural Port Phillip and Westernport Landcare Report Card, illustrating the status and achievements of Landcare in the region for 2005-2006 has been finalised and will be printed and circulated to all Landcare groups and their supporting organisations in the near future.

The CMA has recently collaborated with Melbourne Water in the major task of updating our respective databases of community group contact details. A combined 650 or so groups were asked to provide current details, and about 500 have responded. This will greatly enhance our ability to support such groups.

For further information contact Doug Evans on 9296 4662.

East Gippsland

Recent weeks have seen some widespread rainfall across most of the region with this being the topic of many conversations at recent Landcare gatherings. With the smoke now dispersed and green pick emerging the community is getting back to a more normal routine of Landcare meetings and events.

The Executive Committee of the East Gippsland Landcare Network has been working on some refinements to the support structures and governance arrangements, which will be finalised in the next few weeks.

The review and renewal of the Regional Landcare Support Strategy have also been completed and endorsed by the CMA board.



The Wimmera River at Antwerp. Locals say they have never known it to be dry before.

There are still a few places available in the community training initiative. Participants will improve their skills at running effective meetings, develop confidence to be a public speaker, and improve general leadership. On completion of the training, participants will receive a Certificate IV in Business/Governance.

For further information contact Darren Williams on 5150 3575.

North East

The effects of the drought and fires have been a primary concern for our Landcare groups and networks, with continued efforts in promoting and assisting sustainable productivity through information sessions and field days.

The Ovens Network hosted their second Soil Health Forum, with over 120 landholders attending to hear a range of speakers including Allan Youmans and David Holmgren on soil health and soil carbon.

A highly effective partnership between the Beechworth and Dhurringile Prisons Landmate teams, DSE and Landcare has been assisting landholders affected by fires. The Landmate crews are assisting landholders to rebuild fences and feedback from landholders is very positive.

For further information please contact Tom Croft on (02) 6043 7600.

Corangamite

An accredited leadership and governance training course is currently being developed for community volunteers in the region. The content of the course will be Landcare specific allowing flexibility in the course content.

The training will be conducted over a six-month period from October/November 2007. A combination of full-day and evening sessions is proposed. An expression of interest process will be run in the coming months to gauge community interest.

For further information contact Polly Hall on 5232 9100.

West Gippsland

A major regional issue for Landcare is funding post NHT2. A paper is being developed to help guide thinking around the role Landcare plays in the region while exploring the opportunities moving into the future.

This is being auspiced by the CMA Regional Landcare Forum; the principal mechanism for providing strategic Landcare advice to the CMA Board. The forum also facilitates communication, strategic thinking and information exchange across the region's four Landcare networks.

GippsLandcare continues to deliver successful outcomes. By April 2007 the 2006/07 project has delivered 304 approved projects, 484 hectares of onground works, 164 kilometres of fencing, 53 hectares of fenced remnant vegetation and 180 hectares of riparian land fenced and revegetated.

For further information contact Phillip McGarry on 5662 4555.

Mallee

After recent rains spirits have lifted in the region with a focus now on sowing crops. Some areas of the Mallee have retained some amount of moisture while others are still relatively dry.

The Mallee Environmental Employment Program will wind up in the next few weeks with an outstanding effort from all of the Landcare co-ordinators, CMA staff, works crews, partners and community supporters. Building on the Landcare platform, benefits identified include environmental, community capacity to deliver, skills development through all levels of the program and opening up a great networking base across the Mallee.

Planning for the 21-year celebrations/recognition of Landcare in the Mallee is well under way with funding support through the Victorian Action Plan for Second Generation Landcare.

For more information contact Brendon Thomas on 5051 4385.

Wimmera

Over 400 people were involved in the Mountains to Mallee – a community river journey, which saw a small group of Landcare members walk and ride the entire 350 kilometres of the Wimmera River. The event was extremely successful at linking Landcare communities along the journey while experiencing the dry, yet still remarkable, environment of the Wimmera River.

The Yarriambiack Landcare Network Co-ordinator has recently been appointed and is now working from the Wimmera CMA. The West Wimmera and Upper Wimmera Co-ordinator positions are currently vacant and will be filled in the near future.

For more information please contact Max Skeen on 5382 1544.



Recent rain has brought some smiles back to weary faces within the Goulburn Broken, but unfortunately it doesn't rain fodder.





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