

VICTORIAN

LANDCARE

Summer 2020 Issue 77

& CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT



LANDCARE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Karen refugees plant for Hindmarsh

Social media tips

Recording oral histories



Victorian
Landcare
Program



Victorian Landcare and Catchment Management

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Cover photograph

Karen community volunteers celebrate another successful planting day near Dimboola in 2017. Photograph by Karen Fuller.



From the Minister

The devastating bushfires in East Gippsland and North East Victoria have had a significant impact across the landscape, destroyed hundreds of homes, and required thousands of people to be evacuated. It's a challenging time for many Victorians, including those fighting the fires, those who have lost their homes and livelihoods, those who have been evacuated, and those who are watching and waiting to see if their homes have survived or may still be under threat.

I would like to thank our wonderful firefighters for their tireless and important work to keep our communities safe. This includes the firefighters from Forest Fire Management Victoria and the Country Fire Authority, and others, such as Parks Victoria, Victoria Police and the Australian Defence Force. Their efforts have been supported by thousands of volunteers from community organisations such as the Country Women's Association and Red Cross, who provide meals for firefighters, and the Victorian Farmers Federation, and many others who have organised themselves informally, to transport fodder for hungry livestock in fire-affected areas.

The Victorian Government is working hard to support our fire-affected communities to recover and rebuild. The fire recovery process will be long and require much community resilience.

Our Landcare groups and networks will also play a vital role in the fire recovery process, as they are well connected with their local communities. This enables Landcare groups and networks to respond quickly and effectively by helping with the recovery such as organising materials, fire recovery workshops, securing funding for recovery projects, and providing places for people to talk about their experiences.

Community engagement is pivotal to Landcare and all environmental volunteer groups and networks. Reaching out to

all sectors of the community has benefits that flow both ways. It broadens and strengthens the Landcare community while helping form important social bonds.

This issue of the magazine is full of fantastic community engagement stories. You will read about a group of young people recovering from addiction who were introduced to Landcare through a leadership retreat facilitated by Intrepid Landcare at Gembrook. Some of the participants were inspired to form the Western Port Intrepid Landcare Group, who have been working with other Landcare and Friends groups on tree planting, weed and rubbish removal, track work, and fire recovery projects. The on-ground work precedes an adventure activity such as bushwalking, caving, abseiling, or canoeing. Western Port Intrepid Landcare Group is attracting more young people to Landcare and the model is contributing to the healing process of those recovering from addiction.

The Bairnsdale Urban Landcare Group has had success with involving local VCAL students in environmental works along the Mitchell River by encouraging and supporting them to adopt a site for two years. The students have quickly established a sense of ownership for their patch, which has fuelled their interest and enthusiasm.

Landcare and golf may seem unrelated, but in the sand-belt area of Melbourne, indigenous plants are being actively preserved and regenerated. Horticultural staff from the Bayside Community Nursery collect seed stock from sites such as Royal Melbourne Golf Course and the public Sandringham Golf Course, and volunteers propagate around 100,000 seedlings a year that are planted in bushland reserves, nature strips and private gardens. Golfers are also learning about regenerative burning practices and the rare and endangered plants that grow on the courses.

In the Otways, a small Landcare group keen to learn more about regenerative farming organised a major three-day conference, inviting scientists and land managers from across Australia to the region to share their experiences. The conference generated new knowledge and tremendous enthusiasm. The Otway Coast Regenerative Farmers Group is now expanding and is intent on becoming a source of regenerative farming information for all of Victoria.

You will also read some useful tips on how to use social media to engage young people, how to run a citizen science project, and how to record the oral history of your Landcare group.

The current bushfire season still has months to go. Please look after yourselves and one another. Please stay up-to-date with the advice in your area by listening to your local ABC radio station and staying across the updates via Vic Emergency at www.emergency.vic.gov.au

We also need to look out for injured native animals that may require our help. If you need to find help for injured wildlife, please contact Wildlife Victoria's hotline on 8400 7300 or visit www.wildlifevictoria.org.au for information and advice. If you wish to support the recovery effort for Victoria's fire-affected wildlife, you can donate to Zoos Victoria's Official Bushfire Emergency Wildlife Fund here <https://donate.zoo.org.au/donation>

Thank you to all the wildlife shelter operators, carers and rehabilitators who do a wonderful job of caring for our sick and injured wildlife.

Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio MP

Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change

Minister for Solar Homes

Updated index

The magazine has published more than 1000 stories since it began in 1996. We've covered just about every area in Victoria and every Landcare-related subject.

The magazine index has recently been updated to include entries from issues 1–76. There are now around 7670 entries in the index, which makes it an extensive resource on Victorian

Landcare and Landcarers. You can search for stories by author, title, organisation and subject. Go to the Victorian Landcare Gateway landcare.vic.org.au (search under magazine for the index).



Andrew Northover taking pictures of the Arawata Landcare Group at their 40-year anniversary tree planting to promote the project on social media.

How to win at social media

By Kathleen Brack

Social media is one of the most effective ways your Landcare group can reach new people. Every day one in every two Australians use Facebook and one out of three use Instagram. There is loads of information available about social media. Here are some lessons from seven excellent Victorian Landcare group and network social media profiles.

1. Make a great bio/about section

The first stop for many new interested people is to read the bio on Instagram/ Twitter or visit the 'about' section on Facebook. Connecting Country's Facebook page bio is a great example of this. They clearly set out where they are located, what they do and how to join. This will quickly inform people about the page and encourage them to follow it or get involved. They also have a clear handle – @connectingcountry – so other people can easily tag them in posts.

2. Create Facebook events

Creating a Facebook event is an easy way of providing details of an upcoming tree planting, farm walk or workshop. Bass Coast Landcare Network regularly creates Facebook events where they include the event schedule, time, date and location. When people RSVP as interested, or going, a notification is created in their friend's newsfeeds promoting the event to a wider audience. It's free and also helps organisers communicate with planned attendees leading up to the event as automatic reminders are sent out.

3. Share the ordinary

Twitter is a brilliant way of showing what you do to a whole new audience. Basalt to Bay Landcare Network is a leader in using Twitter to showcase the day-to-day workings of their network. They post about big news – 'we got a grant' – and the ordinary – the delicious sticky buns for a Landcare morning tea – allowing their audience to develop affinity and understanding for the range of work they do.

4. Show the finished product – and the journey

Social media is an easy way of narrating your Landcare story arc, showing the journey from receiving a grant to the final finished project. The Project Platypus Facebook page provides beautiful updates on projects and events. Their posts enable their audience to develop knowledge of their projects and events and also strengthen understanding for the importance of the network.

5. Use photographs of people looking at the camera

Upper Campaspe Landcare Network's Instagram page uses stunning photographs to illustrate the scope of their activities. We may not all be such great photographers, but the easiest way to take effective images is to capture people looking at the camera. Encourage your members to share their photographs by tagging the group or network.

6. Create not-so great quality videos

Videos are a super effective way to engage with your audience. Gippsland Intrepid Landcare's Instagram page often features short videos of their events and members taken on their phones. Videos are effective at taking people behind the scenes and telling powerful narratives about events. The best thing about videos is you don't need to be a professional. Amateur videos, especially selfies, can be more authentic and interesting.

7. Work out if you need a Facebook group or a page

A Facebook group is a great way of creating a space for members to chat, share content and plan meetings and projects. A group is different to a Facebook page, which is a more top down approach as it allows an administrator to write posts. Loddon Plains Landcare Network's Facebook group encourages their members to share posts, ideas, plan upcoming events and organise meetings. The benefit of a group is that it also alerts members when someone has posted, ensuring all members are informed of what is happening.

Kathleen Brack is Regional Landcare Coordinator for the West Gippsland CMA. For more information email kathleenb@wgcm.vic.gov.au

Follow Landcare Victoria on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Share your content by tagging #LandcareVictoria or #VolunteerForNature



Healthy Hectares provides advice on farm planning. Here a tank and solar pump provide water for stock, leaving the dam undisturbed.

Healthy Hectares engages small property owners By Cathy Olive

A country property is a great change of pace for many living busy Melbourne lives. The chance to slow down, breathe deeply and inhale eucalyptus instead of fumes, maybe grow some vegies or raise some animals, is very appealing.

Many new landholders that I meet express their delight in the space, views and wildlife encounters and often mention they would like to earn some money from their property.

Property planning is the first big step – identifying sensitive areas – watercourses, steep hills and spring soaks. Where is the fire risk and what steps will you take to mitigate that risk? Do you have weed or

pest animal issues? Where are the existing fences and water points for stock? Will you have animals and what are the legal obligations you will need to address as a property owner? Where is your native vegetation and do you want to create better links for wildlife?

It's not easy navigating each of these questions on your own and it can be difficult to find good, general advice and contacts as a new landholder. Healthy Hectares was developed by Euroa Arboretum with funding from BeyondSoilCare and the Goulburn Broken CMA to address the needs of new and small property owners.

We were aware that small landholders were falling through the cracks for funding assistance, and were time poor, often restricted to visiting their property on weekends. We aimed to create materials that were practical and easily accessible to small landholders. Our Healthy Hectares – a guide for small landholders to create productive and environmentally sustainable properties – developed with Mary Trigger, is a basic introduction to land management. It is available as a download from our new

website where there are lots of useful links to websites and local Landcare networks.

A short course on land management that we run periodically around the Goulburn Broken catchment in conjunction with each local Landcare network has also been very successful. The course is a great way for new and small landholders to meet like-minded folk and get to know their local Landcare facilitators and other professionals who can guide them with property management.

We are really encouraged by the feedback we've received about Healthy Hectares. There are great suggestions for further courses and interest in more detailed information. We love the energy and interest our new and small landholders bring to their properties and the region, and look forward to continuing to support them.

For copies of the guidebook and more information about Healthy Hectares go to www.healthyhectares.org.au

Cathy Olive is project manager at the Euroa Arboretum. For more information email info@euroaarboretum.com.au



A Healthy Hectares tour at Mansfield on establishing a wetland.

Educational partnerships rewarding for Bairnsdale Urban Landcare Group

By Maxine Semple



Bairnsdale Urban Landcare Group Inc (BULG) works along the north and south banks of the Mitchell River that flows through the town of Bairnsdale. We acknowledge the original owners and managers of this land – the Gunaikurnai people. The early European settlers removed most of the native vegetation along the river and by the 1990s the lower Mitchell River was lined with imported plants including suckering poplars, swathes of blackberries plus the odd fruit tree.

BULG formed in 1999 following concerns from residents about the badly degraded state of the Mitchell River and its environs. Our group's area stretches for two kilometres either side of the river, a total of about 135 hectares. Community engagement has been one of our core activities from our first working bee to clean up rubbish to our 20th birthday celebrations in 2019.

BULG has donated more than \$100,000 of grant funds to the local council to facilitate poplar removal and redevelop the 5.4 kilometre walking track along the Mitchell River. The track is now a popular tourist and community destination and attracts thousands of visitors each year.

Community groups adopt a river

In 2003 the group divided the north bank of the river into 20 sites and asked for community groups to adopt a site for two years.

two years. Many schools, local businesses and Landcarers signed up and more than 35,000 trees and shrubs have now been planted across the sites. This has created habitat for the increasing number of native birds, insects and animals in the area.

In 2015 BULG worked with two other urban Landcare groups on an art project organised by the East Gippsland Art Gallery. We were paired with a local artist who, after some research, produced an artwork for the riverbank that reflected the area and was sympathetic to our Landcare philosophy.

In 2016 the local open garden scheme included BULG's projects in their list of sites to visit – the first time a Landcare group had been invited to participate.

National Tree Day is always a big event for BULG with up to 80 cubs, scouts and

parents joining Landcare members to plant, guard, water and mulch 400 to 500 seedlings in the ever-expanding scout plot on the north bank of the river. We have been working with the scouts for almost 10 years and have assisted scouts with their Landcare badges and the necessary volunteer work needed for the Duke of Edinburgh award.

VCAL students take stewardship

Federation Training VCAL students started working with the group in 2016 when they resurrected the old community college site on the north bank of the river. Some students initially admitted they chose Landcare as an escape from the classroom, but they quickly became interested and involved. Their work was rewarded with a regional Landcare award in 2017.

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In 2003 the group divided the north bank of the river into 20 sites and asked for community groups to adopt a site for two years.

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Federation Training VCAL students in 2017 with Aly Harrington from BULG at a working bee along the Mitchell River in 2017.



Cubs, scouts and parents from Bairnsdale Scout Group on the Mitchell River after planting more than 300 seedlings on National Tree Day in 2014.

According to former BULG president Ann Robson the students developed a sense of ownership of the work they had done and the seedlings they had planted.

"When some of their newly planted seedlings were stolen the students were quite upset. It was difficult to explain to the students why people stole their plants," Ann said.

For the past two years the group has been working regularly with VCAL students from Bairnsdale Secondary College. These students have taken responsibility for a site along the north bank and have erected a new sign for their patch. This work is part of the VCAL personal development program which provides opportunities for the students to expand their observational skills, practice problem solving and increase their creativity and team building skills.

BULG, Bairnsdale Scouts and Bairnsdale Secondary College's VCAL students were nominated for the 2019 Victorian Landcare Awards (in the Junior Landcare Team award category) for their revegetation work. VCAL teacher Sarah Lambie said although they didn't win, attending the presentation was a fantastic experience.

"The students were proud that their work was recognised by the nomination and they got to see the range of innovative projects that are being developed through Landcare," Sarah said.

In 2019 BULG began working with Noweyung, an organisation that caters for people with different abilities, and that was keen to include some meaningful environmental activities in its curriculum.



Ann Robson from BULG briefs members of the Green Army and Federation Training VCAL students on installing silt worms (hessian tubes filled with rice husks) to stop erosion while plants grow on the steep slopes of the south bank of the Mitchell River at the Port of Bairnsdale in 2016.

BULG members meet with Noweyung participants twice a month for Landcare related activities.

According to BULG president Dan Lambert they soon worked out who liked doing what.

"Sebastian is good at digging holes with the Hamilton Planter, Rachel organises the stakes for the guards, Lauren is a wonder at maintaining the water buckets and Jamie works best when wearing his super hero gardening gloves.

"We had both the VCAL students and Noweyung young adults working together for a few working bees, which was a wonderful experience for all concerned, but unfortunately the college timetable was altered so it's no longer possible," Dan said.

BULG works on the basis that a healthy environment is essential for a healthy society and that every individual should have easy access to nature. The group also

encourages collaboration, inclusion and partnerships with community groups. This strategy is showing great success and we have no doubt it will continue to do so.

Maxine Semple is secretary of BULG.
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VCAL students on Landcare

"It is a good opportunity to get out of the classroom and away from the textbooks, and also to do something great for the community along with our future. It's great and I really enjoy doing it."

Shyanna

"Helping the environment and climate is better than sitting in a classroom."

Ethan

Ground under repair – golf courses and urban bushland renewal

By Martin Curtis

The seeds for the preservation and regeneration of indigenous plants in the Bayside area of Melbourne lie, literally, on the world-famous golf courses of the area, the so-called sand belt courses of Beaumaris, Black Rock and Cheltenham.



Wallflower orchid (*Diuris orientis*).



Grass-leaved trigger plant (*Stylidium graminifolium*).

While there are quality bushland reserves in the Bayside area, the scale of the golf courses – 231 hectares of abutting land – and their undisturbed areas of indigenous vegetation, make them an extremely valuable part of Melbourne's open space (and breathing space) for humans and the hundreds of birds that roost, nest and feed in them.

Royal Melbourne Golf Club (RMGC), one of Australia's top ranked courses, is home to about 120 locally indigenous species including six rare orchids and lillies. From its beginnings in Black Rock in 1926, the natural dune landscape was admired for both its challenges as a golf course and as a wildflower wonderland.

The course was designed by Yorkshire-born Scot Alister MacKenzie. The dune landscape, contours, and vegetation on the Black Rock land reminded MacKenzie of the famous links courses in Scotland. While the fairways and greens would be manicured and mown, the remnant heathland and woodland would be left alone, creating a strong visual impact through contrasts in colours and textures.

Thanks to thoughtful designers, curators, ground staff and golf club members, the indigenous heathland and woodland on the course has been well managed over the years. Along with the nearby Long Hollow Reserve in Beaumaris, it is the most biodiverse area of remnant landscape in the area.

Regenerative burning

While many golf courses mow the rough to make it easier for players, Royal Melbourne has not, which has helped preserve orchids, lillies, grasses and groundcovers. For the past 18 years the club has employed a full-time horticulturalist, Stuart Moodie, who has introduced controlled burning of the heathland, an Aboriginal land management practice which regenerates seed lying dormant in the soil.

Not all golf clubs have followed this approach, with many preferring parklands to heathlands.

But golf course architect Mike Clayton says indigenous plants are the future for viable and sustainable golf courses because of the ability of these plants to thrive in the hot and dry summers and nutrient-poor Australian soils.

"Most golf clubs haven't done a very good job on maintaining indigenous plants or managing their land. Even when they have planted 'native' trees, they are not usually indigenous to the area. It's a mistake the whole country has made — not understanding indigenous vegetation. But there's a chance to turn that around now as a lot of the trees on established golf courses have come to the end of their lives. In the next 50 years we could make golf courses a great example of good land management. Indigenous plants require no watering once established. In the sand belt area, the aesthetic value of the natural vegetation on the RMGC is one of the reasons it is ranked as a world-class golf course."

Golf course seed revegetates local bushland

Horticultural staff from the Bayside Community Nursery collect seed stock from sites on RMGC and the public Sandringham Golf Course and volunteers propagate about 100,000 seedlings a year that get planted out in bushland reserves, nature strips and private gardens.



Horticulturalist Stuart Moodie inspects a rare Clustered lilly growing at the Royal Melbourne Golf Club.



Wedding bush (Ricinocarpus pinifolius), indigenous grasses and sedges frame a fairway at the Royal Melbourne Golf Club. Heathland plants grow on the crests and slopes of the deep sand hills of remnant bushland areas of Bayside, along with rare orchids and lillies.

The Sandringham Golf Course, currently undergoing a State Government-funded \$18 million redevelopment, will be replanted with this stock. Other clubs in the sand belt area – Victoria, Kingston Heath and Metropolitan – are also replanting with local heathland plants sourced from the Bayside Nursery.

The bushland areas of Beaumaris and Sandringham were favourites with botanists and bush walkers from the earliest days of European settlement and the common names the early residents gave to the plants tell their own stories: Wedding Bush, Eggs and Bacon, Spider Orchids, Nodding Greenhoods, Wild Heath, Jumping Jacks, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Billy Buttons, Cowslips, Blue Pincushion, Blue Squill, Chocolate Lillies, and Fly Catchers were among 140 local plants exhibited at Sandringham's first wildflower show in October 1932.

Around the turn of the 20th century botanists had given the term 'Sandringham flora' to the unique woodland/heathland vegetation of the area between Sandringham and Mordialloc, and inland to Oakleigh and Springvale. A census in 1911 listed 448 indigenous species in the area.

By the 1950s, with the spread of housing and industry, the golf courses and remnant bushland reserves held the last examples of this unique vegetation. By 1988 when another survey was done, 260 species had disappeared. It's now thought around 120 species survive on the four golf courses,

seven bushland reserves and foreshore in the Bayside Council area.

RMGC member Janet Noblet has preserved many of the wildflowers in pressed and dried form in a large format display that is regularly featured in the clubhouse entrance.

"There's always something to see. Spring is the really colourful time, but the wattles start to blossom in winter and in summer the native grasses are a feature waving in the wind."

Janet Noblet's mother was a golfer at Royal Melbourne and her interest in the native plants kindled Janet's interest.

"Mum would come home from golf and say, 'we saw such and such an orchid

today'. She would be really excited about it. Golf is a demanding game and hitting the ball accurately is the focus, but most of us appreciate the wildflowers too."

There are 20 volunteer Friends groups in the City of Bayside, including the Bayside Community Nursery group. Guided tours of the bushland reserves are held during September and October each year. The RMGC also conducts a guided tour each spring. Contact friends@bayside.vic.gov.au

Martin Curtis is a volunteer in the George Street Reserve, a two-hectare area of remnant heathland abutting the Sandringham and Royal Melbourne golf courses. Thank you to Pauline Reynolds for the botanical photographs.



Clustered lilly (Thelionema umbellatum).

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Nature helps us to balance our minds, bodies and spirits, and is a powerful asset in the healing process from addiction.

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A revegetation day at Maryknoll with the Back Creek Landcare Group in August 2019.

Experiences in nature assist young people recovering

For as long as we know people have been aware of the healing qualities of nature.

Nature helps us to balance our minds, bodies and spirits, and is a powerful asset in the healing process from addiction.

According to Richard Price, Team Leader at Windana Drug and Alcohol Recovery Inc., spending time in nature isn't just recreational, it is also therapeutic.

"The mental and physical health benefits of time spent in nature are well documented.

A huge part of wilderness and adventure therapy is building up a reciprocal relationship to nature," Richard said.

Windana is an Aboriginal word meaning 'which way.' Windana programs offer participants choices, believing that

change and growth are possible while acknowledging people as individuals.

Windana's outdoor adventure experiences assists recovery for young people as part of a holistic therapeutic process. Rather than reflecting on their habits, personalities,



In March 2019 Windana and Intrepid Landcare participants assisted a farmer with fire recovery work after the Bunyip Forest fires.



Windana and Intrepid Landcare participants seed collecting at Maryknoll in September 2019.

from addiction

By Marijke de Bever-Price

tendencies and triggers in an abstract way, residents take part in goal-based activities which provide an increased sense of well-being, endurance, physical resilience, increased confidence and greater social connection.

Outdoor adventure therapy is valuable as it allows clients to engage with their innate resilience, ability and resourcefulness – qualities that are often challenged or lost in substance abuse. By tapping into these experiences, participants begin to re-engage with and strengthen these inner-aspects while simultaneously experiencing the joys of a sensory rich and healthy life.

The activities take place in some of the most beautiful locations in Victoria. They provide individuals with a challenge, a perceived risk and an opportunity to overcome these challenges despite the risk. This can develop self-esteem, a sense of control over oneself, the experience of acceptance, working toward a specific goal, and assist with communication, social and problem-solving skills.

Participants are encouraged to find positive activities and behaviours to incorporate into their lives beyond the program to help them stay on the path to recovery. Being involved in nature is one of them.

In June 2018, Windana participants were introduced to Landcare through their involvement in a retreat facilitated by Intrepid

Landcare at Gilwell Park Scout Camp, Gembrook. According to retreat participant, Ryan Kel, everyone has a role to play.

"Making sure we give back is important. What better way to do that than by being in the environment where we are encouraged to be creative, to connect, to learn from our peers and to have a bit of fun while we are helping the environment," Ryan said.

A group of young people, including those from Windana, went on to form the Western Port Intrepid Landcare Group. The group has now worked with other Landcare and Friends groups on tree planting, weed and rubbish removal, track work and fire recovery. The Landcare work is followed by an adventure activity that may involve bushwalking, caving, abseiling, canoeing or initiative activities.

Western Port Intrepid Landcare Group committee member and Windana graduate Adam Jones has always been fond of spending time in nature.

"Being in nature and doing stuff that seems to matter gives me a great sense of accomplishment. When I come out into nature, everything in my head seems to go quiet. All the stresses go away for a while. I can hear myself again," Adam said.

The Western Port Intrepid Landcare Group has also demonstrated the vital importance of these new volunteers – young people

with fresh perspectives and energy to back up the ageing and dedicated environmental volunteers who have often been involved for more than 30 years.

Marijke de Bever-Price is President of the Western Port Catchment Landcare Network. For more information email outcon@outlook.com

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Participants are encouraged to find positive activities and behaviours to incorporate into their lives beyond the program to help them stay on the path to recovery.

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Listening to the land – recording our Landcare voices

By Pam Robinson

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” – Helen Keller



Educator and skilled bushman Allan Murray shared his Aboriginal heritage and knowledge of working with the Warby Range Landcare Group in one of the interviews.

The Landcare Voices Oral History Project got underway in 2016 as part of the 30 years of Landcare celebrations in Victoria. There was a realisation that age was catching up with some of our Landcare movers and shakers, not to mention some of the pioneers who were unwell or had already passed away. The plan was to capture a range of voices and stories from people who were part of Victoria's early Farm Tree and Landcare groups.

The project management committee of Chair Sue Campbell OAM, Ed Adamson, Alex Arbuthnot AM and myself, along with Susi Johnson and Kelly Way from Landcare Victoria Inc. hunted for a suitable interviewer – someone with a good sense of the land and country people, along with a style of interviewing that would accommodate regional identities telling their story in their own way.

Funding from LVI allowed us to appoint Peter Evans, an experienced private historical research and heritage services consultant. We were delighted by the rich history captured in the first interviews and through additional funding provided by LVI were able to extend the number of

interviews. By the end of 2019 some 20 Landcare voices have been recorded.

There is a great deal of wisdom in the interviews and I encourage everyone to have a listen. As well as anecdotal local information the interviewees reveal the environmental, social and cultural changes that have taken place in Victoria as Landcare has developed. Several of the subjects had worked in departments and agencies so there is some good big picture information too.

As is the way with Landcare, every interviewer credited and celebrated a whole host of other Landcarers they had worked alongside. We are keen to follow up on these names and take the project into a phase two.

Capturing an area's oral history is a great project for local Landcare groups, networks and historical societies. It's important we don't lose the stories of the land; there's so much to learn from them.

There are many ways to make the recordings and there is the potential to engage a local education entity to work with your group. They are often looking

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As well as anecdotal local information the interviewees reveal the environmental, social and cultural changes that have taken place in Victoria as Landcare has developed.

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Terry and Fay White shared their experiences of working with Waterwatch, Saltwatch and Ribbons of Blue from the 1970s to the 1990s. Fay wrote, sang and recorded many tree planting and environmental songs over that period.



Sue Marriott AM and John Marriott provided insights into the early days of the Potter Farmland Plan in western Victoria. Sue went on to help develop the Secretariat for International Landcare.

“Capturing an area’s oral history is a great project for local Landcare groups, networks and historical societies. It’s important we don’t lose the stories of the land; there’s so much to learn from them.”

for projects for students and can have access to equipment. There’s also no reason to hesitate and just getting started with what you have at hand – smart phones can be used to record interviews and the files saved to computers for editing and upload to the web.

All of the interviews are available on the Landcare Gateway. Go to landcarevic.org.au and search for Landcare voices. The current committee stepped down in December 2019 after three years with the project. If you would like to be involved with the phase two committee contact info@lvi.org.au for more information.

Pam Robinson OAM was co-founder of the Warrenbayne-Boho Land Protection Group Inc., served on the inaugural National and State Landcare Advisory Committees and the first Municipal Association of Victoria Environment Committee.



Bob Carrail was interviewed about his experiences in many senior agency roles in agriculture, industry services and salinity, before joining the Victorian Farmers Federation as director of policy in 1987.

Tips for groups recording Landcare oral histories

By Peter Evans

- Test your recording equipment before you get to the interview, set-up and, once you have a quick voice level, leave it alone. Find somewhere quiet for the interview and try and avoid interruptions. Get a good photograph of the subject after the interview.
- Try to get the interview subject to talk about their early life and relax into the conversation. Their early life will influence their attitudes to the world and inform their values.
- Don’t try too hard to lead the interview in a particular direction unless it’s going way off track. If you do, you might miss something important.
- Dates can be important. In general, women remember dates better than men.
- If you are confused by something, try and clear the matter up straight away, otherwise you may forget.
- If you are not genuinely interested in your subject, you will not get a good interview. Some people are natural storytellers and these interviews can be a joy. Other people are not natural storytellers and these interviews will be hard work. About an hour is a good length, any longer than that and the subject will tire.



The sell out conference at Colac attracted participants from across Australia. The key message was — put the soil first.

From the ground up – growing regenerative agriculture

What happens when a small Landcare group interested in regenerative agriculture wants to learn more and build a bigger network of like-minded farmers? They hold a three-day regional conference.

The Otway Coast Regenerative Farmers (OCRF) Group formed in 2013 when a small group of landowners met while attending a series of whole farm planning workshops run by the Southern Otway Landcare Network (SOLN). We became a new Landcare group and did a lot of learning in subsequent years, largely funded by sausage sizzles. In 2018 we decided to apply for Australian Government National Landcare Program funding to enable us to hold a comprehensive two-day conference – From the Ground Up: Growing Regenerative Agriculture in Corangamite.

Our application was successful and OCRF President Ros Denney set about contacting the best of the best in the quickly growing field of regenerative agricultural practices. Charlie Arnott agreed to be our master of ceremonies. A bio-dynamic farmer from Boorowa, NSW, and recipient of the 2018 Bob Hawke Landcare Award, Charlie was the hook and anchor during the conference and had an easy rapport with the audience.

The final line-up of speakers included internationally renowned soil ecologist

Dr Christine Jones from NSW, Coles Weekly Times Farmer of the Year Grant Sims, regenerative agriculture practitioner Kym Kruse from QLD, President of the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance Tammi Jonas, and award winning Natural Intelligence Farmers Ian and Dianne Haggerty from WA. The conference grew to a three-day event with concurrent sessions and a choice of field trips so a broad range of topics and case studies could to be covered.

The conference was held at Colac from 18-20 September 2019. Tickets sold out two weeks in advance. We hosted 180 delegates from all over Victoria as well as Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania, New South Wales and Queensland. There were owners and managers of a variety of farming enterprises on properties of up to 3500 hectares, as well as service providers, consultants, catchment management, agency and Landcare staff.

Key message – put the soil first

The key message throughout the conference was the importance of looking after soil biology by nourishing the mycorrhiza,

bacteria and fungi that work symbiotically with plant roots to source nutrient uptake, and support carbon sequestration.

Land managers were encouraged to move away from synthetic fertilisers, pesticides, herbicides and fungicides, and instead foster life within the soil through more natural means such as biofertilisers, significantly increasing plant diversity, attracting increased beneficial insect populations and establishing productive shelter belts.

The conference field trips demonstrated different aspects of the regenerative approach including organic dairy farming, agroforestry, water infiltration systems and cover cropping. Conference break-out sessions delved deeper into topics such as carbon sequestration, climate change preparedness, ethical foods and integrated pest management.

The other key lesson for delegates was the importance of developing communities of like-minded people to support each other in making the change to regenerative practices. Many early adopters commented



From left, a regenerative agriculture panel discussion with Ian and Dianne Haggerty, Richard Cornish, Tammi Jonai, Kristy Stewart and Charlie Arnott.

“

The key message throughout the conference was the importance of looking after soil biology by nourishing the mycorrhiza, bacteria and fungi that work symbiotically with plant roots to source nutrient uptake, and support carbon sequestration.

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in Corangamite

By Ally Hughes and Helen Masters

on how isolated they felt when they started to change their practices. While it is undoubtedly much more enjoyable to farm this way, having a network of others to use as a resource and for support makes a big difference.

Local producers shine

The conference dinner was held at Otway Estate with chef Duncan Green showcasing a diverse range of produce from the region. More than 20 local producers contributed items for the menu. Food writer Richard Cornish gave the after dinner speech and later congratulated the conference organisers.

“It was a stunning piece of education, community building and emotional affirmation. What an amazing collection of human beings. It was like walking around a living library. So much information and experience in one place. It was a pleasure and privilege taking a small part in the conference,” Richard said.

Conference delegate John Carruthers, a landholder from central Victoria, was also impressed. “All great endeavours need a tipping point and I feel I’ve had the privilege to be at a fulcrum. The event’s magic for me was the mix of science and practice, and the remarkable ecosystem of speakers, providers, farmers and participants,” he said.

We were constantly impressed by the level of engagement from the 180 delegates.

The new knowledge and enthusiasm that they have taken back to their communities is the best indicator of the conference’s success.

A conference of this scale is a major undertaking. It wouldn’t have been possible without a huge volunteer effort, and the collaboration between OCRF, the Corangamite CMA, SOLN and many other parties including the Central Otway Landcare Network and the Colac Otway Shire.

The OCRF group is now expanding beyond the Otways to become a source

of regenerative farming information for all of Victoria.

Ally Hughes was Landcare Facilitator and Manager, Southern Otway Landcare Network until November 2019 and Helen Masters is Treasurer of the Otway Coast Regenerative Farmers Group. Ally’s position was funded through the Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program. To learn more about regenerative agriculture and to view OCRF’s practice standards go to www.otwaycoastregenerativefarmers.com.au



From left, conference speakers Colin Seis, Kym Kruse, Dr Christine Jones, Dianne Haggerty and Ian Haggerty.

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DELWP and Victoria's CMAs are surveying wetland animals and plants to see how they respond to environmental watering events.

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A pobblebonk, or banjo frog, is a common and charismatic frog of Victoria's wetlands.

Citizen scientists record frog calls for wetland management

By Lynette Plenderleith

As the weather warms up and spring rain fills the wetlands, Victoria's frogs are getting busy, filling the bush with the sound of their mating calls. The lifecycle of most frog species has remained unchanged for millions of years.



Little Lake Meran in northern Victoria is a WetMAP monitoring site which receives environmental water.

They lay eggs in water, which hatch into tadpoles with gills, then they metamorphose and leave the water to become ground or tree dwelling animals with lungs, but still dependent on moisture. This double life is just one of the reasons frogs are so fascinating, but it's also their Achilles heel – nearly all frogs need water in which to breed.

In the rainforests and mountain streams, water may be fairly easy to come by, but in the drying areas of southern Australia, water is harder for frogs to find. Environmental water entitlements were introduced to help balance the needs of the environment with the consumption of water by people, and a keen effort is being made to ensure that the right amount of environmental water goes to the right wetlands at the right times.

DELWP and Victoria's CMAs are surveying wetland animals and plants to see how they respond to environmental watering events.



WetMAP scientists visit a frog monitoring site at Wallpolla Horseshoe Lagoon.

The Wetland Monitoring and Assessment Program (WetMAP) was set up by DELWP in 2017 to measure the response of wetland plants and animals to natural water patterns that are supplemented by environmental water.

WetMAP ecologists study tree condition, plant diversity and the numbers and breeding activity of waterbirds, fish and frogs. The authorities that manage waterways can then use this information to make informed decisions about where and when environmental water should be delivered.

Engaging citizens for science

To assist with data collection, citizen scientists are being recruited to help record frog calls in their local area. Volunteers capture short sound files on their mobile phones using the Australian Museum's FrogID app. The recordings can be made at any time and place and the app provides the geographic location of the data collection.

The Frogs Are Calling You program is a collaboration between DELWP, Frogs Victoria, Australian Museum, Goulburn Broken CMA, North Central CMA and the University of Melbourne. The data will be used to inform environmental watering regimes to help benefit frogs and other wildlife.

Many research projects are now harnessing the power of citizen science, particularly in ecology and conservation, where data collection can be difficult and expensive and

engagement with wildlife is an important objective. Citizen science projects are important and powerful tools to engage members of the general public in science as well as social and ecological issues. Citizen scientists make a meaningful contribution to conservation, gain an insight into scientific research and a sense of stewardship for the natural environment – a win for all involved.

Recruiting and retaining citizen scientists is not without its challenges. The internet and social media have made reaching remote participants much easier, but some people that would make great citizen scientists will often remain elusive, regardless of efforts to engage them.

Respect for participants

Some of the historical issues that citizen science aims to address, such as public distrust of science, can hinder initial engagement. Making sure participants are informed throughout the project helps keep them enthused and engaged. For the Frogs are Calling You program scientists respond to participants through the Frog ID app with details of which frog species were calling during the recordings.

People who live outside of the target areas of northern and western Victoria are still encouraged to download the FrogID app and record frog calls. The data collected by the Australian Museum is used by many different scientific projects as well as The Frogs Are Calling You.

Lynette Plenderleith is President of Frogs Victoria and project leader of The Frogs Are Calling You. For more information go to www.frogscalling.org or email Lynette@frogsvic.org

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Citizen scientists make a meaningful contribution to conservation, gain an insight into scientific research and a sense of stewardship for the natural environment – a win for all involved.

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Serrated tussock workshop a great way to share strategies

By Ivan Carter

Serrated tussock now covers more than 240,000 hectares of land in Victoria. Large infestations require ongoing management and the integration of several control techniques. Each mature serrated tussock plant can produce 100,000 seeds in a season, blowing up to 20 kilometres from the parent plant.

Over winter the Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party (VSTWP) hosted a free workshop on community engagement, knowledge and practice change with biosecurity consultant and engagement expert Lisa Adams.



A serrated tussock plant in full seed in the Rowsley Valley, showing the thousands of seeds per season that cover the plant in late spring.

The workshop was funded by the Federal Government Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper. The VSTWP decided on a workshop format due to past successes with face-to-face engagement.

The 13 attendees ranged from students studying conservation and land management to local government staff and landowners who have been impacted by serrated tussock. It was a terrific opportunity for attendees to share knowledge and experience in a professionally facilitated, peer-based learning environment.

It was widely agreed by those who attended, and gave feedback, that the workshop increased their knowledge and ability to engage with the community on managing serrated tussock. It also provided an opportunity for the community champions to learn some new ideas that

can help make a difference in engaging others.

According to workshop participant Martin Deering, attendees worked with others facing similar community engagement challenges.

"It was great to see people getting refreshed and motivated. It was all about making a difference in their respective communities and being the champion to engage with others facing similar management issues," Martin said.

The workshop attendees are planning to continue networking and meeting on a regular basis to review their implementation goals.

The VSTWP advises land managers that having competitive pasture and good ground cover is one of the most important aspects to controlling serrated tussock. Lower spring rainfall has resulted in reduced pasture growth, so care must be taken to reduce overgrazing and ensuring fodder is free of weeds.

According to VSTWP chair John Burgess identifying serrated tussock isn't difficult.

"Serrated tussock has a fine leaf and will roll smoothly between the index finger and thumb, while native tussocks feel as though they have flat edges. The leaves also feel rough when you run your fingers downwards due to fine serrations," John said.

Ivan Carter is VSTWP communication officer. For more information go to www.serratedtussock.com or email info@serratedtussock.com



The serrated tussock workshop empowered participants to engage with their communities on raising awareness of weed management.

The Karen refugee community made welcome by Project Hindmarsh

By Jonathan Starks



Project Hindmarsh began way back in 1998 with a vision to reconnect the Big Desert and Little Desert regions of western Victoria through a series of biolinks. Hundreds of volunteers descended on the small Wimmera township of Nhill that year to participate in a major revegetation project.

From the organised chaos of that first planting weekend, Project Hindmarsh has grown to become one of the largest and longest-running revegetation projects in Australia. The Hindmarsh Landcare Network (HLN) works with government agencies, local councils, Victorian National Parks Association, local community groups and landholders to deliver the tree planting weekend each year. More than one hundred volunteers, many from Melbourne, travel to the Wimmera to take part.

HLN is committed to bringing the city and country together and involving as many different sectors of the community in the revegetation effort as possible. When some families from Melbourne's Karen refugee community moved to Nhill to take up work, they were welcomed to the planting weekends.

The Karen people are from a rural background in Burma. They now make up 10 per cent of Nhill's population and have now been involved in Project Hindmarsh for more than five years, participating in all aspects of the planting weekends and working alongside other volunteers.

Kaw Doh Htoo and his family fled persecution in war-torn Burma and spent nine years in a refugee camp on the Thai Burma border before being resettled in Melbourne. He moved to Nhill in 2010 for work and became actively involved in many community projects, including Landcare.



Kaw Doh Htoo from Nhill getting his hands dirty at a Project Hindmarsh planting weekend at Dinyarrak in 2018.



Karen volunteers after a planting day at Outlet Creek near Rainbow in 2017.

"My interest in tree planting is that trees are healthy for the environment and provide homes for animals. I learn many different things being part of the tree planting. I learn how to look after them and how it is very important for us to have trees," Kaw Doh said.

The Karen volunteers have been wonderful to work with. We've learnt about each other – for example they eat two meals a day and would just have a drink when we took a break for lunch. Although their English skills are varied and speaking through translators is sometimes necessary, there is a universal language about putting a tree in the ground that transcends barriers. Everyone, regardless of background, gets their hands dirty at a Project Hindmarsh planting weekend and has a great time along the way.

For the last two years, the Karen community has catered for the Project Hindmarsh Saturday evening dinner, serving up a variety of delicious curries to our hungry volunteers. These dinners are now a highlight of our planting weekends.

Project Hindmarsh has planted nearly two million trees in our 21 years of community tree planting. With the ongoing support of our volunteers, the local community, government and landholders we will continue to build a healthier environment.

Nhill's Karen community is now an integral part of that journey.

Jonathan Starks is Landcare Facilitator for the Hindmarsh Landcare Network and his position is funded through the Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program. For more information email jstarks@hindmarshlandcare.org.au

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There is a universal language about putting a tree in the ground that transcends barriers.

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Community leads restoration of seagrass at Corner Inlet

By Trevor Colvin



Coastcare volunteer Leo Lubransky worked quickly to get seed sown into sandbags before it dried out and died.

A community-led seagrass restoration project at Corner Inlet is leading the world in restoring a vital and little understood habitat through cooperation between community, scientific organisations and government agencies.

Corner Inlet is one of the few remaining commercial fishing grounds able to deliver fresh fish to the Australian market. Nineteen commercial fishers are licenced to fish for King George Whiting, southern calamari, rock flathead, southern garfish and gummy shark and supplies much of Australia. The industry brings in \$2.8 million each year.

A healthy fishing industry requires healthy seagrass beds. A recent spike in the number of the native purple-spined sea urchin at Corner Inlet has decreased the broadleaf seagrass in the area by thousands of hectares. The urchin eats the seagrass, and this has reduced much of the seagrass beds to a marine desert. Local commercial fishermen were first to notice the problem and reached out for help.

Despite divers removing 57,000 urchins by hand in 2017 the problem persists. Broadleaf seagrass is slow growing, so a way had to be found to regenerate it as quickly as possible.

Seagrass beds critical for marine health

Healthy seagrass beds are vital for the marine environment. Seagrass is a huge living ecosystem providing shelter and food for a wide range of creatures, from tiny invertebrates, fish, turtles, dolphins, birds and many other creatures.

While seagrasses worldwide occupy only 0.1 per cent of the total ocean floor, they are estimated to be responsible for up to 11 per cent of the carbon buried in the ocean. One hectare of seagrass can

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Seagrass is a huge living ecosystem providing shelter and food for a wide range of creatures, from tiny invertebrates, fish, turtles, dolphins, birds and many other creatures.

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Volunteers quickly deliver the seed bags to boats where they are taken six kilometres out to sea.



Yarram Yarram Landcare Network's Project Officer Jason Pickering (in foreground) going out with a team to test the seagrass beds and check results.

capture up to 830 kilograms of carbon each year and it absorbs carbon 35 times faster than a rainforest. Each day one square metre of seagrass generates 10 litres of oxygen. Seagrass meadows also slow the flow of incoming water by trapping sand and nutrients in their root systems and this can minimise the damage caused by flooding.

In 2019 the Yarram Yarram Landcare Network (YYLN), commercial fishers and many volunteers supported by marine scientist Dr John Ford from the University of Melbourne trialed the planting of seagrass on a denuded site at Corner Inlet. Fishermen collected the seeds which were carefully placed into sand-filled hessian bags and taken out to sea in fishing boats to be 'sown' at low tide. This took many volunteers working skillfully and quickly. Various grades of sand and different densities of planting were tested. Reviews of the site have determined the best options for the major plantings that will get underway during the 2019/20 summer.

Dr Ford has been joined by Dr John Statton from the University of Western Australia who is involved in seagrass restoration projects in NSW and WA, and whose team also includes Professor Gary Kendrick from the University of Western Australia.

The project is being delivered in two phases with funding from a Victorian Government 2018 Community and

Volunteer Action Grant and a National Landcare Program Smart Farms Small Grants Round 2. The combined funding will help plant 200 hectares of seagrass in the next year or two.

Huge community support

The project has inspired the whole community. It involves commercial fishers, YYLN, DELWP, Parks Victoria, the West Gippsland CMA and Coastcare. Rotarians have expressed an interest with helping out, as have local primary and secondary school children. A number of Intrepid Landcare members from Melbourne will also assist and will camp out at the now disused Port Albert Racetrack, combining work with fun.

Dr John Ford said this was the first time the commercial fishing industry had united with scientists and Landcare to do something big for the environment.

"There are a couple of other projects around the country in WA and NSW, but the key thing about this project which makes it so different is that we are working with local Landcare groups and commercial fishermen. It's all about working together and if we can get people working together we can make a really big difference," Dr Ford said.

The project has also identified another potential use to help manage the numbers of purple-spined sea urchins. The government has issued commercial

fishing licences to remove them and local chefs are now working up their recipes. Hopefully they'll be coming to a table near you soon.

Trevor Colvin is a board member of Yarram Yarram Landcare Network and a former magazine publisher and journalist with The Age. For more information email trevorcolvin91@gmail.com

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It's all about working together and if we can get people working together we can make a really big difference.

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Around the State – News from the Regional

Aboriginal Landcare Facilitator

2019 was an action-packed year for Aboriginal Landcare filled with new partnerships, new projects and new ways of understanding each other to get the job done. It will be exciting to see this continue into 2020.

An *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Guide* has been produced to assist Landcare and environmental volunteer groups and networks to better understand the state's Aboriginal cultural heritage management process and increase appreciation of cultural heritage throughout our rich landscapes. The guide encourages the community to work actively with Traditional Owners. The guide is available from the Landcare Gateway www.landcarevic.org.au (search for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Guide).

The Victorian Rabbit Action Network held a Cultural Heritage Awareness and Rabbit Management Workshop at Neds Corner Station in the Mallee in October 2019. The workshop brought community and government land managers together to experience best practice rabbit control at highly sensitive Aboriginal sites. The workshop participants learnt that partnerships with Traditional Owners are vital to the successful delivery of weed and pest control in these areas.

For more information email jackson.chatfield@delwp.vic.gov.au or call Jackson on 0419 504 451.

Corangamite

The Corangamite Rural Women's Network celebrated the International Day of Rural Women at Pennyroyal in October 2019. The Rural Financial Counselling Service, Farming Community Support Program and farm succession planning were discussed at the event.

Congratulations to the region's project and group support grant recipients as part of the 2019/20 Victorian Landcare Grants. There are some exciting projects including a range of on-ground engagement activities and environmental improvement works.

We are currently working with our Landcare network chairs, Landcare facilitators and agricultural stakeholders to set future directions for sustainable agriculture in the region.

RMIT Creative Communications students have been let loose to help us communicate the value of Landcare to the community using a variety of innovative media and communications techniques.

For more information visit www.ccma.vic.gov.au (What we do/Community Landcare) or contact Elisia Dowling on 0418 397 521.

East Gippsland

The region's Landcarers are still being impacted by drought. Group members are spending a significant amount of time watering seedlings to ensure their survival. The Tambo Bluff Coastcare Landcare Group and the Eastwood Landcare Group received funding to purchase water carts from the Australian Government Stronger Communities Program and Australian Government Volunteer Grants.

Landcare Week activities included a gathering of the East Gippsland Landcare Network at The Abbey on Raymond Island where members shared what they do and why they do it. Landcare groups from the Far East Victoria Landcare Network gathered in Orbost to share information.

A fantastic mix of projects and groups have received Victorian Landcare Grants across the region and are excited to begin delivering their projects.

For more information visit www.egcma.com.au (What we do/Landcare) or contact Carolyn Cameron on 5150 3682.

Glenelg Hopkins

An international biochar field site tour was held at Portland last October. More than 100 delegates visited the biochar demonstration site at Gorea West. The Southwest Environmental Alliance has been running the trial site for the last four years to investigate biochar use in agriculture.

Victorian Landcare Grants contracts have now been signed by the successful groups and networks. The additional funding made available from the Victorian Government was welcomed by the CMA with five group projects being funded with the extra Victorian Landcare Grants funds.

The CMA is running a photographic competition to celebrate wetlands. The region's thousands of wetlands have abundant wildflowers, plants and animals. Entries close on 1 March 2020. For further information contact Jan Barton on 5571 2526.

For more information visit www.ghcma.vic.gov.au (Get involved/Landcare) or contact Tony Lithgow on 5571 2526.

Goulburn Broken

Here's hoping our hardworking Landcare community had a great festive season and are ready to take on the challenges of natural resource management in 2020.

Projects are moving along well in the region, which is a great effort considering the difficult seasonal conditions. Landcare continues to deliver innovative programs that provide information on land



Aboriginal Elder Uncle Norm Wilson standing under an Aboriginal canoe tree at the Victorian Rabbit Action Network's Cultural Heritage Awareness and Rabbit Management Workshop at Neds Corner Station in October 2019.

Landcare Coordinators

management for our diverse range of managers across the catchment.

In the first half of 2020 we will be providing training for community members and Landcare facilitators in group/network governance and Aboriginal cultural heritage with funding from the Victorian Landcare Program.

For more information visit www.gbcma.vic.gov.au (Community natural resource management) or contact Tony Kubeil on 5761 1619.

Mallee

The 2019/20 Victorian Landcare Grants recipients are actively working on their various projects including pest plant and animal control, track works, ecological surveys, habitat creation and revegetation. Many Landcare groups are taking advantage of dry conditions to control broadscale rabbit infestations, with pest plant treatment to occur when conditions are favourable.

We thank the outgoing Regional Landcare Coordinator James Walker for his role in administering the Victorian Landcare Grants program and wish him all the best for his future endeavours. Welcome to incoming Regional Landcare Coordinator Nelson Burand-Hicks. Nelson is from the Hunter Valley in NSW and has a background in environmental community engagement and project management.

For more information visit www.malleecma.vic.gov.au (Get involved/Landcare) or contact Nelson Burand-Hicks on 5051 4373.

North Central

The achievements of the 2018/19 Victorian Landcare Grants projects have been published through the most recent North Central Landcare Report Card. We look forward to supporting the current projects in the coming year.

We wish to recognise and thank Kevin Spence from the Buloke and Northern Grampians Landcare Network for his many years of service and dedication to the farmers, schools and local communities around the St Arnaud region. We also welcome several new local Landcare facilitators to the team.

Training opportunities in weed mapping, citizen science, platypus monitoring and media and communications are being planned. Landcare network facilitators are also undertaking training through the third peer-to-peer networking event, planned for March 2020.

For more information visit www.nccma.vic.gov.au (Landcare) or contact Tess Grieves on 5440 1893.

North East

A large cohort of Landcare representatives from across Victoria were among the more than 200 attendees at the National Nature Resource Management Knowledge Conference held in Wodonga in November 2019. The conference was hosted by NRM Regions Australia with support from the North East CMA. The theme focused on creating resilience through natural resource management.

Landcare and community groups have been working with the Atlas of Living Australia (ALA) to test and improve new forms for nest box monitoring projects. Swamps Rivers & Ranges helped develop the streamlined forms which are now used for all nest box projects on the ALA Biocollect system. Greta Valley and Burgoosee Landcare Groups have been testing the system, assisted by project officer Sally Day.

The Ovens Landcare Network and member groups thanked and farewelled Local Landcare Facilitator Gayle South at the end of 2019.

For more information visit www.necma.vic.gov.au (Landcare and community projects) or contact Tom Croft on 02 6043 7648.

Port Phillip and Western Port

The CMA ran a two-day Landcare Facilitator training event at Moorabool and Werribee in November 2019. Representatives from Wadawurrung Aboriginal Corporation explained the deep spiritual connection and practicalities of life of the Aboriginal people of the Western Volcanic Plains over millennia.

Participants visited Mt Rothwell Conservation Centre where remnant populations of eastern barred bandicoot, brush-tailed rock-wallaby and eastern quoll are protected. The achievements of the CMA-led Grow West project were also featured during the event.

The CMA signed a partnership agreement with Middle Yarra Landcare Network, whose activities centre around Warrandyte and other outer eastern suburbs, in December 2019.

Rob Fallon has joined the Northern Yarra Landcare Network and Lauren Linke has joined the Upper Deep Creek Landcare Network as new Landcare Facilitators.

For more information visit ppwcma.vic.gov.au (Landcare and Sustainable Agriculture) or contact Barry Kennedy on 9971 6506.

West Gippsland

Regenerative agriculture continues to be a trending topic in the region with two sold-

out workshops run by Maffra and Districts Landcare Network. The field days focused on cover cropping with Colin Seis and grazing management with Graeme Hand.

South Gippsland Landcare Network launched its Enhancing Soil Biology project which will run for the next two years and include forums and field days plus training for 30 farmers to set up soil biology demonstration sites to trial aeration, seaweed and mycorrhizal fungi.

Members of Yarram Yarram Landcare Network have been getting wet in Corner Inlet undertaking the largest community-led seagrass restoration project ever attempted in Australia. The network, in partnership with the commercial fishing industry, will replant 200 hectares of broadleaf seagrass over the coming two years. (See page 20.)

For more information visit wgcma.vic.gov.au (Getting involved/Landcare) or contact Kathleen Brack on 5613 5966.

Wimmera

Planning is underway with Barengi Gadjin Land Council (BGLC) and the statewide Aboriginal Landcare Facilitator for a Traditional Owner and Landcare engagement project to be delivered in coming months.

The project will provide further opportunities to build relationships between Traditional Owners, community members and Landcarers, while contributing to BGLC's Growing What is Good Country Plan – Voices of the Wotjobaluk Nations.

The Wimmera Machinery Field Days will be held at Longerenong on 3-5 March 2020.

The annual junior Landcare Nature Connection day with Chris Humfrey will be held at the Horsham Fishing Competition on 8 March 2020, and the Harmony Day and Landcare celebration with Sophie Thomson will be held in Horsham on 27 March 2020 to coincide with the International Year of Plant Health.

Wimmera Landcarers were saddened by the passing of Geoff Handbury in November 2019. Geoff and his wife Helen, through the Handbury Foundation and their extraordinary philanthropic support of Landcare in western Victoria, have left a unique legacy in the local landscape. Landcarers who were fortunate enough to know and work with Geoff were inspired by his knowledge and his enthusiasm for community-driven environmental efforts.

For more information visit wcma.vic.gov.au (Get involved/Landcare) or contact Joel Boyd on 5382 9919.

In brief



Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Guide

A guide to assist Landcare and environmental volunteer groups and networks who care for our landscapes to better understand the state's Aboriginal cultural heritage management process was released last October.

The *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Guide* outlines the process for meeting the requirements of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 and helps determine whether a Cultural Heritage Permit is required when undertaking on-ground works. The guide also provides the key Aboriginal cultural heritage contacts, including for the 11 Registered Aboriginal Parties in Victoria.

The guide is available on the Victorian Landcare Gateway at landcarevic.org.au (search under 'Resources' for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Guide).

Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program Review

The *Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program – Review: Final Report*, from the review of the program undertaken in

2019, is now available on the Victorian Landcare Gateway.

DELWP's response to the recommendations in the review's report and the actions it will take to implement the recommendations is in the *Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program Review: Key Findings, Recommendations, & Actions*.

These two documents, and updates on the Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program (VLFP) Review, are available on the Victorian Landcare Gateway at landcarevic.org.au (search under 'Resources' for Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program Review and VLFP Review Updates).

Fire recovery resources

The Victorian Landcare Gateway has a series of fire recovery webpages with practical natural resource management information for landowners who have been impacted by fire. This includes information on livestock, pastures, soils, erosion, waterways, fencing, weeds, fire ecology and more. Go to www.landcarevic.org.au/resources/fire-recovery/

The *Victorian Landcare & Catchment Management* magazine is published by the Victorian Government Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and distributed in partnership with Landcare Victoria Incorporated and the Victorian Catchment Management Council. The magazine aims to raise awareness of Landcare and natural resource management among Victorian farmers, landholders, the Victorian Landcare community and the wider community.



Next issue

The next issue of the magazine, to be published in Winter 2020, will feature stories on Landcare and emergency recovery.

We are interested in hearing how Landcare groups and networks have planned for and responded to environmental and social emergencies in their communities. Our readers are keen to learn about the successes of different projects, as well as what hasn't worked, and the insights and reflections of your group or network along the way.

The magazine fills up with stories very quickly so please get in touch with the editor well before the contribution deadline.

Contributions for the Winter 2020 issue should be sent to the editor by Friday 27 March 2020.

Email: editorviclandcare@gmail.com

Mailing list enquiries and to receive your copy via email alert

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Read the magazine online

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