

VICTORIAN

LANDCARE

SPRING 2021 Issue 82

& CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT



VICTORIAN LANDCARE AWARDS FEATURE

Celebrating Victoria's Landcarers

Tess Grieves wins Young Landcare Leadership Award

Andrew Bradey wins Joan Kirner Landcare Award



Victorian
Landcare
Program



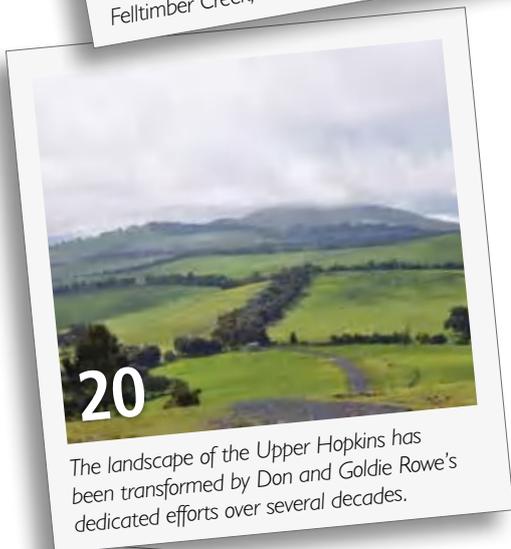
VICTORIA
State
Government

Victorian Landcare and Catchment Management

SPRING 2021 ISSUE 82

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Cover photograph

Winners of the Australian Government Landcare Farming Award. From left, Hannah, Jill, Andrew and Michelle Stewart, Nick Theodore and Kristy Stewart in front of a revegetated dam at Yan Yan Gurt West Farm. Photograph by Tracey McRae.



From the Minister

I was deeply honoured to be part of the 2021 Victorian Landcare Awards ceremony.

The awards acknowledge the enormous contributions made by dedicated volunteers, farmers, community groups, schools and organisations right across Victoria to protect and enhance our environment and to make our agriculture sector more sustainable for the years and decades ahead.

That work is more important now than ever as Victorians work together to minimise the impacts of climate change.

The spirit of volunteering and work ethic displayed by everyone nominated for these awards, and everyone who is involved with Landcare and environmental volunteering, is truly inspirational. Thank you for the amazing contributions that you are making for our communities and our state.

I would also like to thank the people that took the time to nominate the people who we celebrated at the ceremony and in this feature issue of the magazine, for valuing the work that these highly motivated people are doing, each and every day.

Thanks also to the judging panels for all the award categories. Each of you has given your time to carefully assess and weigh up the virtues of each nomination, and that was no easy task this year.

Landcare is a landmark organisation in

environmental volunteering, an example of how enthusiasm and community spirit can achieve great things.

It's highly appropriate that we celebrate the Victorian Landcare Awards in November. This month, it is 35 years since Landcare started in Victoria before going on to become a national movement.

It's also the 25-year anniversary of this magazine, which has been an important place for Victorians to tell their stories.

Landcare's work over the years has improved our environment, and it's an investment in Victoria's and Australia's future.

Landcare embodies that environmental adage, "Think global, act local".

Thank you to all our Landcare and environmental volunteers, for answering that call to action.

Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio MP
Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Minister for Solar Homes



The trophy for the 2021 Victorian Landcare Awards features Taungurung artist Mick Harding's Bundjil the Wedge Tailed Eagle, 2014. Three Victorian Aboriginal businesses and a family business were involved in creating the unique award which was produced ethically and equitably by Dreamtime Art Creative Consultancy.

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Submissions close on Sunday 27 February, 2022

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Environmental Youth Action Scholarship



Alice Miller School

The Environmental Youth Action Scholarship award is a new category for 2021 to support a youth or school group to design and deliver a project that will help improve Victoria's natural environment. Mentors will support the group to prepare and design the project.

The Alice Miller School at Macedon is planning to use its scholarship to run a youth-led pollinator patches program with Year 9 and 10 students, designed to create habitat for indigenous pollinators. Habitat loss, combined with chemical use,

introduced species, and climate change has seen a severe reduction in the number and diversity of native pollinators.

The program will be run as part of the Upper Campaspe Landcare Network's (UCLN) project to create pollinator

corridors in the catchment by connecting patches of vegetation of various scale so indigenous pollinators can move through the landscape and disperse more efficiently. Pollinator corridors are designed for native species including bees, insects, butterflies, moths, birds, and bats and other small mammals that pollinate plants and keep local ecosystems running.

Alice Miller School students will design and plant a series of pollinator patches at the school. The patches will consist of one canopy species, 10 mid-storey species and up to 50 understorey species. The aim is that many schools may ultimately participate in the program, which will create a series of connected biologically and ecologically diverse habitats and food sources for pollinators.

The program at Alice Miller School will be youth-led, with students developing monitoring protocols and breaking into smaller groups to adopt a pollinator species to research. The students will create videos and articles on indigenous pollinators and their unique relationships with the plants they favour, to be shared virtually with other schools within the Campaspe catchment.

Students will keep a virtual visual diary of the program, with reporting on project design, management and delivery carried out on a rotational basis. Rebekah Ritchie, Landcare Facilitator for UCLN, will work with Alice Miller School teachers as the project mentor. The students will share their resources through the UCLN's website and will also work with their local Landcare groups.

Rebekah Ritchie is excited to be working with young people on an environmental challenge that will become increasingly obvious over the next decade.

"These students will learn first-hand about the important, and often overlooked work of indigenous pollinators, and their unique relationships with the ecosystems that they rely on and that rely on them," Rebekah said.



Alice Miller School students will use their scholarship to establish a pollinator patch on their 32-hectare bush campus at Macedon.

Highly commended
Wyndham Central College

Dr Sidney Plowman Travel and Study Award



Jackson Chatfield

The Dr Sidney Plowman Travel and Study Award is made to a staff member of DELWP, DJPR, or one of the Victorian CMAs, who has influenced and improved sustainable land management practices.

Jackson Chatfield is a Gunditjmara and Kirrae Whurrong man working for DELWP as state-wide Aboriginal Landcare Facilitator in the Victorian Landcare Program. Jackson builds partnerships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community groups, government, and natural resource management organisations that create opportunities for Aboriginal participation in Landcare and caring for Country.

A big part of his role involves educating the community and advocating for the protection of cultural heritage across both public and private land in Victoria. He also supports the self-determination of Traditional Owners by developing and supporting programs that enable them to connect with and heal Country the way they want to. Some of the partnerships Jackson has fostered has seen Landcare projects also being undertaken on Aboriginal-owned properties.

One of Jackson's major achievements has been developing an *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Guide for Landcare and Environmental Volunteers*. The five-step guide helps volunteers assess the impact their project or activity may have on Aboriginal cultural heritage and identify areas of cultural heritage sensitivity to determine if approvals are required before starting their project.

The guide has made groups more aware and inclined to partner with Traditional Owners instead of simply consulting with them. This has helped ensure that Aboriginal cultural heritage is identified, registered, and protected for generations to come.

Jackson says the work is not without its challenges.

"When some landholders hear the words Traditional Owners or even Aboriginal cultural heritage there can be a lot of tension as they often associate this with 'we want to take your land from you' – which is not the case. This kind of thinking is often due to a lack of education and a lack of experience with Aboriginal people and culture.

"I've been actively trying to debunk this kind of thinking within the Landcare community by coordinating cultural awareness and cultural heritage workshops and events. By

demystifying what cultural heritage is we have been able to change the minds of people who initially resisted the idea of working with Traditional Owners. It's hugely satisfying when you see people starting to take the aspirations and priorities of Aboriginal people who want to care for Country into consideration as they plan and deliver their projects," Jackson said.

Partnerships are at the heart of what Jackson does. The partnerships he has fostered have seen Landcare projects being delivered on Aboriginal owned properties and strengthened connections between Traditional Owners and Landcare groups. The 'Yarns on Farms' partnership project brought Wathaurong Traditional Owners together with Moorabool Catchment Landcare Group to visit local Landcare properties to share their knowledge of the area and inform land use.

Jackson is also a Cultural Ambassador for the Victorian Nature Festival, which aims to connect more Victorians with nature, and he has recently been accepted into Melbourne University's Master of Environment course.

Jackson's enthusiasm, commitment and dedication to his role has improved the understanding and awareness of Aboriginal values and Aboriginal cultural heritage



Jackson Chatfield participating in a cultural burn with Barengi Gadjin Land Council on Wotjobaluk Country at Dyurrite (Mt Arapiles) in 2021.

in the Landcare community – providing benefits to communities and to Country.

Jackson plans to use the award to undertake a study tour at Black Duck Foods at Mallacoota. Jackson will spend time on Country at this innovative Aboriginal-run farming enterprise that specialises in Indigenous agriculture, producing native foods and caring for Country through cultural burning. Jackson hopes to bring his knowledge back to the wider Landcare community and support the strong interest in new developments in Aboriginal farming.



Jackson Chatfield (second from left) with local Landcare facilitators and representatives from Landcare Australia, Country Fire Authority, Glenelg Hopkins CMA and DELWP in front of a newly recorded Aboriginal scar tree on Gunditjmara Country.

Joan Kirner Landcare Award



Andrew Bradey

The Joan Kirner Landcare Award is made to an individual who has championed the Landcare movement in Victoria, contributed significantly to Landcare for at least 10 years, and has demonstrated commitment to forging partnerships and effectively engaging the community in Landcare.

Andrew Bradey has worked tirelessly with Kowree Farm Tree Group (KFTG) for more than 30 years to promote the benefits of farm conservation in the west Wimmera. KFTG works to protect and rehabilitate areas of native vegetation on farmland, focusing on the conservation of wetlands, grassy woodlands and creating links between remnant patches of native vegetation on a landscape scale. Andrew has supported research, encouraged beneficial partnerships to bring funding to local projects and advocated for the region to be incorporated into wider conservation plans, including Habitat 141.

When Andrew and Ros Bradey bought their farm in 1984, planting trees was one of the first jobs on the list. The Bradeys have since grown their profitable sheep and cattle business through purchasing more land and incorporating conservation and revegetation as part of farm improvements. Today 20 per cent of their land is managed for conservation.

Revegetation through drought and flood

Andrew's interest soon expanded beyond the farm boundary. He has led the KFTG in developing impressive revegetation skills, especially in establishing buloke through both drought and flood. He has fostered many successful partnerships for the group with Bank Australia, Trust for Nature, Melbourne University, Landcare Australia Limited, Greening Australia, Wimmera CMA, the South-Eastern Red-tail Black Cockatoo Recovery team and Habitat 141. Many of these partnerships have also involved wide-scale community participation and involvement with local schools.

For seven years Andrew managed Bank Australia Conservation Reserve in western Victoria. He oversaw revegetation work that saw 43 kilograms of seed sown, 70,000 indigenous seedlings planted and contributions from 680 volunteers.



Andrew and Ros Bradey have dedicated 20 per cent of their sheep and cattle property to conservation and been active in landscape-scale conservation projects across the region for more than 30 years.

The reserve was placed under a covenant with 562 hectares of remnant vegetation protected. Future carbon offsets of more than 87,000 tonnes are predicted within a 100-year time frame from the reserve.

In 2017 Andrew played a key role in engaging schools to grow seedlings for farmers to revegetate private land for south-eastern red-tail black cockatoo recovery. The project resulted in 450 hectares of pine removal, 80 hectares of remnant woodland fenced and 1200 stringybark paddock trees planted and guarded with sheep proof guards that Andrew had developed on his own farm.

Reconnecting open woodland habitats

Andrew has been actively involved in the establishment of Habitat 141 – an ambitious project to rehabilitate and reconnect degraded landscapes along the 141st degree of longitude. Less than three per cent of open woodland habitats remain in the Habitat 141 region. The clearance, degradation and fragmentation of woodlands have been identified as

the primary reasons for the decline of woodland birds in south-eastern Australia. Through his involvement in Habitat 141 Andrew has also worked with urban design students from RMIT to address the cultural and social conditions of towns in decline in the west Wimmera.

The KFTG's largest project has been the Kowree Biolink, which created a 13 by 70-kilometre conservation corridor between the Little Desert and the Glenelg River. More than 70 farmers worked together to renovate and link wetlands and other patches of remnant vegetation. Much of the revegetation work was completed by using a seed mix and methods trialled and developed by Andrew.

Andrew has held many field days both on his own property, and other KFTG properties to champion the benefits of farm conservation. He is an inspiring speaker and always keen to share his knowledge. His work on a planting guide has helped local farmers to easily establish locally indigenous trees by soil type. Each year he collects seed so that nurseries have access to locally endemic varieties for revegetation.

In their youth, Andrew and Ros spent their university holidays paddling rivers slated to be drowned by dams.

"In the weeks and months it took to negotiate the Mitta Mitta, the Thomson, the Pieman and the Franklin we were awed by the grandeur and wildness of these very special places. And at the same time appalled and saddened to know that they were about to vanish. This formative experience turned us into life-long rusted-on greenies," Andrew said.

Andrew is also chair of the Environmental Farmers Network. He has shown an outstanding commitment to Landcare in the south-west Wimmera.



From left, Andrew Bradey, Ros Bradey, Landcare Facilitator Rachel Farran and Roy Pails at a recent Kowree Farm Tree Group field day. The tiger snake was effective at ensuring social distancing.



In 2017 Andrew played a key role in engaging schools to grow seedlings for farmers to revegetate private land for south-eastern red-tail black cockatoo recovery.



Landcare stalwart Kaye Rodden represents Victoria on the National Landcare Network.

Highly commended
Kaye Rodden

Kaye Rodden has been involved in Landcare for 25 years. She is active in her local Barrabool Hills Landcare Group, has been a board member of the Corangamite CMA, Executive Officer of the Otway Agroforestry Network, Secretary of the Victorian Landcare Council, assisted in the formation of Landcare Victoria Inc., and is currently Victoria's Director on the National Landcare Network. Kaye has been a key contributor to the success of the Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party and the Victorian

Rabbit Action Network. In all of these roles Kaye champions grassroots Landcare and supports the efforts of individuals and groups improving the environment. Kaye and her husband Brent put their beliefs into practice on their sheep and cattle property in the Barrabool Hills with extensive shelter belts, environmental plantings, and protection of its Barwon River frontage. Kaye's energy, knowledge, persistence, and passion for the Landcare movement have been an inspiration to others.



Outstanding Landcarer Christine Brooke on her property at Faraday.

Highly commended
Christine Brooke

Christine Brooke is a long-standing and outstanding Landcarer. She was a founding member of the Loddon Vale Landcare Group and has been active in the Sutton Grange Landcare Group for many years. In 2017 Christine joined the committee of Connecting Country for the Mount Alexander Shire region – a community-driven landscape restoration organisation. Christine has also been active in Landcare Victoria Inc., serving on the committee and representing

the organisation on the Global Landcare Committee. Christine is a former board member and Deputy Chair of the North Central CMA and has served as a councillor and mayor of Loddon Shire. She has shown outstanding dedication and has developed exceptional skills in governance, leadership, organisation and communication. Christine has strengthened the voice of Landcare at a local, regional, state, and international level. She is a true Landcare champion.

Commended

David Allen, Susan Brunskill, Donald Cooper, Michelle Stacey, Graeme Stockton

Victorian Farmers Federation and Landcare Victoria Inc. Heather Mitchell Memorial Fellowship



Scott Elliott

The Victorian Farmers Federation and Landcare Victoria Inc. Heather Mitchell Memorial Fellowship is awarded to outstanding community Landcarers and Landcare support staff for the purpose of study, travel, or professional development.

Scott Elliott is a second-generation Landcarer. Scott cut his teeth as a boy assisting the facilitator of the Natte Yallock Landcare Group – his father Russell Elliott – one of the first Landcare facilitators in the world.

“I spent my childhood helping Dad plant trees, build fences, search for rare orchids and do Waterwatch testing. My brother joked I was going to end up as a Landcare facilitator and in truth I’ve never wanted to be anything else,” Scott said.

Scott moved to Gippsland where he was Landcare facilitator of the Yarram Yarram Landcare Network (YYLN). He oversaw nine Landcare groups and the broader network of more than 120 families. His days in the role were busy developing the Corner Inlet Broadleaf Seagrass Restoration Project – a partnership between Landcare, researchers, dairy farmers and professional fishers to restore 200 hectares of broadleaf seagrass by 2030. Each hectare of seagrass that is restored provides around \$35,000 of ecosystem services per annum in terms of nutrient cycling, carbon sequestration and habitat for commercial fish species.

Importantly, seagrass restoration activities have led to an improvement in the character of the Corner Inlet-Nooramunga Marine and Coastal Park, a Ramsar-listed wetland. The project was recognised by the Victorian Government in 2020 when it won the Marine and Coastal Council Award for Distinction in Biodiversity and Ecosystem Conservation.

Scott was immersed in this project from 2018 to 2021: writing successful grant applications, recruiting academic staff, reporting, managing budgets, coordinating risk management, and even developing a new technique for seagrass restoration that has garnered international attention. He attracted more than \$800,000 in funding for a diverse range of terrestrial and marine projects.

Scott’s land-based projects included developing a new approach to soil carbon



Scott Elliott with his kelpie Luna on his farm near Yarram.

capture using the Soilkee Renovator implement to plant multi-species cover crops on farms. Scott worked closely with the West Gippsland CMA to trial this new technology with the aim of increasing drought resilience in farming enterprises in the coastal plain region of the YYLN.

In 2020 Scott worked closely with consultants to develop two case studies for a cost-benefit analysis of Landcare’s contribution to the local community. In 2019 Scott hosted mental health first aid training for Landcare members to help with identifying and seeking assistance for mental health crises in farming communities. These workshops coincided with the rebuilding process from the recent drought in the region.

When he’s not at work Scott lives on a 12-hectare property near Yarram where he spends his weekends planting trees, spraying woody weeds, installing nest boxes for birds, and fencing sensitive areas from stock. The property is part of BirdLife Australia’s Birds on Farms program.

Scott is an active member of the local Albert River Landcare Group and was a professional Landcarer delegate on the board of Landcare Victoria Incorporated. In September 2021 Scott gave a (virtual) presentation at the World Fisheries Congress on restoring Corner Inlet’s seagrass meadows.

Scott will use the fellowship to assist him in obtaining a scientific scuba diving qualification and a coxswain commercial boat driving accreditation.

“These courses will provide me with the expert qualifications to guide future seagrass restoration projects. Heading underwater with scuba will allow us to target important seagrass species using a technique perfected by the University of Western Australia to translocate rhizomes from existing seagrass meadows,” Scott said.

Scott’s position as Landcare Facilitator was funded through the Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program.

Highly commended Marissa Shean

Marissa Shean started working in Landcare when she finished university 21 years ago and still loves her career today. Starting out as the Southern Mallee Landcare Facilitator at Hopetoun, Marissa is currently the South-Eastern Mallee Landcare Facilitator where she works with eight Landcare groups from Nullawil to Sea Lake. The groups are an important part of the social fabric of these small rural communities. Marissa has worked tirelessly on many local projects including the Flora and Fauna survey at Uttwillock Wetlands, Nullawil, large-scale rabbit control works, revegetation, and conservation projects with schools.



Nullawil Landcare Group President Donald Cooper discusses the benefits of environmental water at Uttwillock Wetland in Nullawil with Marissa Shean.

Victorian Environment Friends Network Best Friend Award



Nina Earl

Nina Earl has volunteered for the environment for more than 22 years. She has been a member of Friends of Bradshaw Bushland Reserve in Mordialloc since 1999, serving as vice president, and is also active with Friends of Mordialloc Catchment in the Mordialloc Creek Reserve, Yammerbook Nature Reserve, and Epsom Conservation Reserve.

Nina is a regular at working bees where she helps others to distinguish look-alike native grasses from weeds, so ensuring the integrity of the reserves she works on. Her outstanding observational skills enable her to note signs of ecological damage, which she reports to the Kingston Council's Natural Resource Area Team.

Nina's advocacy is determined, respectful and effective. She was one of a group that was instrumental in Kingston Council purchasing a development site for a bushland reserve that was the last remaining patch of coastal vegetation in the area. She influenced the course of the Environment Effects Statement on the Mordialloc Bypass (Freeway) to require environmental offsets that had not been part of the original scope. Nina consulted with the local Bunurong people to have Melbourne Water land in Aspendale Gardens renamed after the Aboriginal leader Yammerbook, and helped save rare grassland at the centre of the old Epsom horse training track.

Nina believes her love of nature stems from her parents. Her father worked as a

jobbing gardener in the UK and Nina and her siblings enjoyed being dinked to work with him on his bicycle.

"He worked in some amazing gardens. I loved spending time in them and liked to watch him as he gardened – the fork or spade was an extension of his body," Nina said.

Nina and her husband migrated to Australia in 1974 and moved to Mordialloc in 1998, attracted by the foreshore, creek, and many bush reserves.

"The flora and fauna of this country is so rich and interesting, the landscape and prehistory too. The Mordialloc Creek catchment was once a great wetland that rivalled Kakadu. I didn't grow up here so the learning curve has been steep, but the opportunity to protect remnant vegetation and restore the original plant communities of the area is so rewarding," Nina said.

Nina has been resourceful in attracting funding to environmental projects. She produced an informative leaflet to invite sponsorship from 90 local businesses. In 2004 Nina successfully applied for a grant from the Mordialloc Village Committee to provide shelter and additional security for the Friends of Bradshaw Bushland Reserve's water tank pump.

Nina is a committed and ingenious promoter for the Friends. She regularly contacts local newspapers about upcoming working bees and places brochures



Nina Earl at Bradshaw Bushland Reserve in 2021.

and leaflets in libraries and other public buildings. She contacted 21 local schools to request Bradshaw Reserve's Open Day be included in their newsletter then sent personal letters of thanks to each school.

VCAL students at Holmesglen TAFE have benefitted from Nina's presentations on the value of parks and reserves in urban settings and the need to protect them.

Nina is highly regarded by her colleagues for her kindness, empathy, and unwavering support. She has been an influential presence in the City of Kingston – a champion for the local environment and for her community.

30 Years of the Best Friend Award

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Victorian Environment Friends Network's Best Friend Award.

Friends groups are made up of passionate and dedicated volunteers who engage with the local community and foster the wellbeing of a specific reserve or species. Hundreds of groups across the state nurture coastal sites, bush, grasslands, watercourses, wetlands and indigenous plant and animal species.

The Victorian Environment Friends Network represents and advocates for the common interests of all Friends groups in Victoria. The network supports Friends groups to share knowledge,

goals, strengths, and resources, and to build their collective capacity. The first Best Friends Awards were presented in 1991. Since then, 90 winners have represented 55 different groups. In 2020 the first Young Best Friend Award was made to Matilda Venn for her outstanding contribution to the awareness of native orchids. Matilda attended her first planting at the age of three with the Upper Wimmera Landcare Network. The inaugural Lifetime Achievement Award went to Geoff Durham, one of the founders of the Victorian Environment Friends Network and a long-term contributor to Friends of Wanderslore, and Friends of Wyperfeld National Park.



From left, Merrin Butler, Andrea Fisher and Max Ross from Friends of Worth State Park building steps at Moonlight Creek to improve access for visitors.

Landcare Network Award



Buloke and Northern Grampians Landcare Network

This award is made to an outstanding Landcare network that has fostered sustainable land use through the adoption of improved land management practices to protect, enhance or restore a significant area on behalf of the community.

The Buloke and Northern Grampians Landcare Network (BNGLN) stretches from Natte Yallock in the south east, north to Wycheproof, across to Birchip and south to Callawadda. There are 20 member groups under the direction of a steering committee.

According to BNGLN's part-time Landcare Facilitator, Andrew Borg, Landcare is vitally important for local communities, because of the sense of purpose and hope it provides for residents.

The home of Landcare in the region

"Our area is large and quite remote. It's mainly a broad-acre farming community with a fairly low socio-economic status. The BNGLN has been the home of Landcare for 35 years now. That's a long history of caring for the land, educating the community, and seeking innovative ways of ensuring environmental stewardship in the region.

"We take a holistic approach to the environment. Our actions encompass a variety of smaller projects, all contributing to ensuring that our communities understand the environmental assets we have around us, and why it is vitally important to protect them," Andrew said.

In 2018 BNGLN began working with its member groups to develop a comprehensive strategic plan. The plan is used as the basis for all on-ground works and planning. It informs individual project briefs and forward work plans. These plans detail a range of 'shovel-ready' projects that can be further developed when funding is available.

All BNGLN planning uses a risk management approach which means decision making is based on identified opportunities and risk factors. The Landcare Facilitator and steering committee operate a risk log to identify, review and

manage each risk. Management software keeps track of the master schedule for all activities including budgets. This is reviewed fortnightly and communicated through the Landcare Facilitator's monthly activity report. Quarterly, six-monthly, and annual meetings are conducted between the steering group and Landcare Facilitator to discuss progress and make any changes.

Scorecard assessments assist project planning

Overall progress against the objectives of the strategic plan objectives are measured and presented at each committee meeting through a scorecard assessment which shows whether an activity is achieved, on track, planned, on hold or at risk.

Andrew Borg believes these processes have been of great benefit to the network.

"We are communicating better and have streamlined our information loops and schedules. Improved planning, ease of project reporting, evaluation and acquittal means we are able to prepare better grant applications. Ultimately this means the network is in a stronger position to get projects completed and to increase group capacity and skills," Andrew said.

2020 was a challenging year for community projects, yet BNGLN coordinated 28 re-vegetation projects which saw 20,032 seedlings established across 32 hectares of the region.

Each project included landscape and biodiversity assessments and educating group members and landholders about the environment.

Two new groups were recently established. The Kara Kara Regenerative Agriculture Group was created by the network at the request of local farming communities with a focus on soil health and biodiversity. Friends of Blue Gum Rise will work on a captive breeding program for squirrel gliders which have not been sighted in the BNGLN area since 1996.



Getting ideas flowing at the formation of the Kara Kara Regenerative Agriculture Group at St Arnaud in March 2021.



Completion of the Coonoor Bridge Community Hall Revegetation Project by local families in August 2020.

Network members also attended two rabbit management workshops which resulted in approximately 7000 hectares of both private and public land being surveyed to develop ongoing rabbit management treatments. Throughout the network area biodiversity surveys were completed, invasive weeds were treated, erosion scours were fixed, and rubbish removed from waterways and bush areas.

A biodiversity focus

Regional biodiversity has been a focus activity for the network. Multiple biodiversity mapping surveys have been undertaken and in 2020 BNGLN contributed to the Great Southern BioBlitz project – a biodiversity mapping project for all countries in the southern hemisphere. The BNGLN was amazed to finish in the top 25 – behind much more populous areas including Cape Town, Sydney, Melbourne, Buenos Aires, and Lima.

Photographs of the region's precious flora and fauna, including several endangered species, were shared with thousands of other participants and groups in the southern hemisphere.

The BNGLN has solid partnerships with Landcare Victoria Inc., DELWP, North Central CMA, Northern Grampians and Buloke Shires, Agriculture Victoria, Victorian Rabbit Action Network, 15 Trees, and the Victorian Field Naturalists. The network has also engaged with

community organisations including Charlton Neighbourhood House and the St. Arnaud Community Centre.

The last 18 months has presented some significant challenges to the network. Many of the BNGLN volunteers are involved in the CFA and were away for long periods fighting the 2019/2020 bushfires. Restrictions imposed by COVID-19 meant some on ground activities had to be cancelled and the network moved many of its meetings and forums online.

Andrew Borg believes the difficulties have highlighted the need for community resilience and for positive relationships with the natural environment.

"The bushfires and the pandemic have been the catalyst for many individuals to identify, evaluate and isolate the things that are really important to them – family, community, the area in which they live. The network used this community sentiment to attract new volunteers. We had a 12 per cent increase in membership which saw us planting more than 30 per cent more seedlings than we had originally planned. We used social media to reach out to people, created a new website and an Instagram page to share information and photographs of our projects.

"It's not uncommon for individuals to feel a sense of helplessness during

Regional biodiversity has been a focus activity for the network. Multiple biodiversity mapping surveys have been undertaken and in 2020 BNGLN contributed to the Great Southern BioBlitz project – a biodiversity mapping project for all countries in the southern hemisphere.

adverse events. Landcare is uniquely positioned to make an overwhelmingly positive contribution to the wellbeing of individuals and the community. Restoring and protecting the natural environment encourages a feeling a mateship and connection," Andrew said.

Despite challenging circumstances, the BNGLN continues to demonstrate leadership and capacity to care for the environment, while effectively engaging its communities. It's a network that leads by example.



Partnering with Agriculture Victoria and Northern Grampians Shire to develop a community Rabbit Action Plan at Walkers Lake in 2021.

Urban Landcare Award



June Johnstone

This award is made to a group, network, or individual who has delivered Landcare projects or initiatives that have inspired and involved an urban population.

June Johnstone lives in the gold rush town of Clunes. Her home and the B&B she ran were badly affected by floods in 2010 and 2011. June had always been interested in Landcare, but the flood events inspired June and six other residents to get together with the aim of rehabilitating the section of Creswick Creek that runs through the township. The creek was choked with poplars and elms and the floods had destroyed the walkways and footbridge.

The small group was overwhelmed by the scale of the task and complex issues around what to plant as many locals liked the look of the existing elms and poplars. A public meeting was called in 2013 to attract more people and more funding for the project and the Clunes Landcare & Waterways Group (CL&WG) began with 23 members.

June organised an early brainstorming session which identified that everyone in the town loved the creek's platypus.



June Johnstone at a working bee along the Creswick Creek at Clunes.



June organised an early brainstorming session which identified that everyone in the town loved the creek's platypus.



This led to a platypus weekend with the town's primary school children participating in a platypus art show and public walks and talks led by Geoff Williams from the Australian Platypus Conservancy. As soon as everyone understood how important indigenous plants are to platypus habitat objections to the choice of plants for revegetation works ceased.

The following year a frogtember event was also well attended with locals learning about the value of frogs as indicators of waterway health. June and the group have put a lot of effort into educating the Clunes community about local biodiversity. There's now a strong sense of ownership of the creek and its surrounds. Thousands of plants have been established and people

who are not members of the group often remove rubbish and report any issues. A spotlight walk will be held once the weather is warmer so that the local community can learn more about the insects, birds and bats that live in the heart of their town.

June is described by her fellow group members as a canny operator. She has a strong sense of the strengths of others around her and likes to lead by encouraging. She has been the president of the group through most of this period and has honed her skills as an expert negotiator.

CL&WG has established positive working partnerships with many other community groups including the angling club, local bowling and football club, primary school, the Clunes campus of Wesley College, the neighbourhood house, and the arts community, which co-hosted a native grasslands project. She has also developed excellent relationships between the group and DELWP, Hepburn Shire and the North Central CMA.

The major challenge over the years has been dealing with a variety of land managers. With June's encouragement a local environmental planner mapped the site and outlined the strategies for revegetation works along the creek. This demonstrated to the various managers the dedication of the group to the project.

June says she is inspired by the changes to the landscape over the last eight years.

"I believe in little-by-little. I'm very persistent and I don't give up easily. If every person just does a small amount we can achieve a great deal. Keeping the creek healthy for flora and fauna is its own reward, as is seeing people inspired to plant native species in their gardens as well as the exotics," June said.

When visitors come to Clunes, they are likely to bump into a local keen to describe the endangered local growling grass frogs and take them to view the beloved platypus. Much of this is thanks to the vision, enthusiasm and dedication of June Johnstone.

“

June is described by her fellow group members as a canny operator. She has a strong sense of the strengths of others around her and likes to lead by encouraging.

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Highly commended Matthew Odgers

In the last three years Matthew Odgers and fellow volunteers from the Links Community Group have transformed a disused area next to the rail reserve in Lalor into a thriving community space dedicated to sustainable food production, conservation advocacy, biodiversity learning and on-ground action. The group has built native bee hotels with the local primary school, undertaken revegetation, established a bush food garden, created pollinator habitats, and advocated to City of Whittlesea for community led indigenous plantings on nature strips.

Matthew's work with Links Community Group has strengthened the bonds between diverse urban community members as they work together to create a dynamic, welcoming, and accessible space for connecting, learning, and valuing nature.

Matthew Odgers from the Links Community Group with a nodding saltbush planted during the revegetation of a rail reserve at Lalor. In Aboriginal culture the fruit is eaten and used as dye and face paint.



To educate the community about responsible cat ownership, particularly the importance of containing cats in cat enclosures to keep them and wildlife safe, G4W Albury–Wodonga recruited volunteers to feature on nine cat enclosure Facebook case studies.



Gardens 4 Wildlife Albury–Wodonga volunteers Luke and Lauren Preston promoting cat enclosures in their Wodonga garden in August 2020.



Environmental Volunteer Award

Gardens 4 Wildlife Albury–Wodonga

This award recognises the outstanding contribution that volunteers make to protect, enhance or restore Victoria’s environment.

Gardens 4 Wildlife Albury–Wodonga (G4W) is an initiative of Wodonga Urban Landcare Network that inspires people to create wildlife-friendly gardens and become more involved in stewardship of Wodonga’s parks and reserves.

Initially established by Friends of Willow Park, the network took over the management of G4W Albury–Wodonga four years ago. In this time more than 330 local volunteers have been involved.

G4W Albury–Wodonga is coordinated by a part-time project officer. The program was created in response to community interest in creating wildlife friendly gardens. In addition to attracting traditional Landcare volunteers, G4W Albury–Wodonga has recruited people from new demographic groups including busy parents, devoted cat lovers and avid gardeners.

Volunteers have now planted 810 native species in residential gardens and more than 2700 native and indigenous species in local parks and reserves.

G4W Albury–Wodonga has fostered a huge increase in local awareness of environmental issues. It has generated more than 40 stories in the media on habitat gardening, community plantings,

managing feral pests, adapting gardens to climate change, creating frog ponds, bird baths, cat enclosures and wildlife watering stations.

According to G4W Albury–Wodonga project officer Lizette Salmon, one of the unexpected benefits of the scheme has been stronger social relationships.

“We are seeing really positive connections forming between neighbours, community members and across generations,” Lizette said. “Conversations about gardening and wildlife are a great way to bring people together.”

A new take on planting events

Along with supporting people to work in their own gardens, G4W Albury–Wodonga has hosted 45 free or low-cost events for 1800 residents. Community planting events were made more appealing to volunteers by adding a roadshow activity – stalls, plant giveaways and a free lunch – after the planting. This attracted a broader



Volunteer Joanne Diver (in red) conducting a tour of her habitat garden in November last year.

cross section of volunteers including busy parents and young children, who were drawn to eco treasure hunts and water bug detective activities.

Seven local gardeners were supported to showcase their biodiverse habitat gardens by opening them for visits, conducting tours and starring in wildlife garden videos that have been viewed more than a thousand times. It was a nerve-racking experience for some of the gardeners – who had little experience with public speaking and media interviews – but their passion for wildlife, conservation and habitat gardening was captivating and their confidence quickly increased.

Recruiting cat lovers

To educate the community about responsible cat ownership, particularly the importance of containing cats in cat enclosures to keep them and wildlife safe, G4W Albury–Wodonga recruited volunteers to feature on nine cat enclosure Facebook case studies. The videos have been viewed more than 700 times. Two volunteer veterinarians and several pet rescue representatives also got involved and donated their time to promote cat enclosures.

After hosting two successful DIY cat enclosure workshops Albury Wodonga's first cat enclosure business has now been established and has installed dozens of cat enclosures.

The challenge of media-shy volunteers

Since 2020 G4W Albury–Wodonga has been challenged by restrictions resulting from COVID-19. Pivoting to home-based activities including videos and virtual tours, webinars, and a children's art competition has kept volunteers interested and involved. When live events could be hosted, they often had to be repeated several times a day to comply with caps on attendee numbers. This created an additional burden for volunteers who responded with great energy and generosity.

G4W Albury–Wodonga has also struggled with the reluctance of volunteers to speak to the media or appear on videos. Good preparation, role-playing and training have been valuable in increasing the skills and confidence of volunteers. When dealing with the print media having prepared quotes has been a useful strategy.

Surveys conducted in 2020 and 2021 revealed that 80 per cent of G4W Albury–Wodonga participants reported having



Volunteer Pam Ilott (in high vis) leads a tour of her habitat garden in 2019.

done something differently in their garden as a result of a G4W activity. More than 70 per cent said G4W had helped them feel more connected to Wodonga's parks, reserves and wildlife corridors and more than 50 per cent of participants reported having attracted more native wildlife to their garden since participating in the scheme.

Along with supporting people to work in their own gardens, G4W Albury–Wodonga has hosted 45 free or low-cost events for 1800 residents.

Volunteers from all walks of life are the backbone of G4W Albury–Wodonga. The program has created a ground swell of new enthusiasts for wildlife habit across the community.



Dr Michael Moore has devoted decades to Landcare on the Loddon Plains, advancing community stewardship and awareness.

Highly commended Dr Michael Moore

Michael Moore has been the driving force of the Loddon Plains Landcare Network (LPLN) since it formed in 2009. His commitment to the LPLN and the Landcare community is unparalleled, devoting countless hours to the Wedderburn Conservation Management Network,

Friends of Kooyoora, wheel cactus control, the North-Western Goldfields Ephemeral Spring Soaks project and Wedderburn's endangered mallee fowl population. Michael's efforts have made a significant impact towards protecting and enhancing biodiversity across the Loddon Plains.

“

The Narrap Team was founded by Uncle Dave Wandin in 2012 as a works crew that had four casual staff. It has now grown to a crew of 20 full-time employees including a women's crew.

”



The Narrap Team have put Indigenous natural resource management on the map in their region.

KPMG Indigenous Land Management Award



Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation Narrap Team

The KPMG Indigenous Land Management Award acknowledges an outstanding Indigenous community group or individual who is working towards improving land use or protecting an area on behalf of the community.

The Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation's Narrap Team have had a huge impact on natural resource management on Wurundjeri Country within the Port Phillip and Western Port region as they bring Indigenous land management practices back into use.

The Narrap Team was founded by Uncle Dave Wandin in 2012 as a works crew that had four casual staff. It has now grown to a crew of 20 full-time employees including a women's crew. The team expects to expand to 35 employees by 2023.

The Narrap Team looks after Country returned to Wurundjeri including Sunbury Rings, Mt William Stone Axe Quarry and Nungunala in Healesville. They also contract their services to councils, Port Phillip and Westernport CMA, Landcare and Friends groups, DELWP and Melbourne Water, where they have preferred supplier status.

Culture and Country come together

The team has developed ongoing relationships with many community groups. Their practical skills in restoring and regenerating landscapes, establishing biodiversity corridors, fencing, managing feral animals and pest plants, controlling environmental weeds and ecological burns are complemented by site visits by Elders where discussions and learnings on culture and Country come together.

The Darebin Creek Management Committee, Merri Creek Management Committee and Friends of Steele Creek and Cairnlea Conservation Committee of Managements have multi-year projects with the Narrap Team.

The team works from a dedicated depot in Healesville, Nunganala, which is also being developed as an Indigenous land management demonstration site with a nursery and bush foods focus.

Team leader Sean Hunter worked for Parks Victoria for sixteen years before joining the Narrap Team. Sean has been focusing on skills training for the team and on establishing the women's team.

"There were no women on Narrap when I started here and now there are seven. The women's crew works independently on different projects and sites as well as joining the wider Narrap Team. Hume and Moreland Council provided support to help us establish the women's crew that will look after women's places on Wurundjeri Country," Sean said.

Hot interest in cool burns

Narrap Team members visited the north of Australia to relearn their skills in cool burns through the Firesticks Alliance. Cool burns are now a regular occurrence on Wurundjeri Country with 20 booked in for next spring. The team is training all its members in fire management (to a

minimum of Certificate III in Conservation Management) and is establishing two full-time fire dedicated roles.

Forest Management Victoria has partnered with the Narrap Team for cultural burning at Macedon Regional Park in a five-year project. Darebin Creek Management Committee, Latrobe University and Melbourne Water will work with the team on Nangak Tambore, a project of respecting, sharing and looking after waterways, which involves three years of cultural burns.

There is a great deal of anticipation and curiosity about the impact cultural burns can make to degraded landscapes over time. The technique has only recently been revived on Country and it has been identified as a key tool in mitigating climate change as it promotes the reestablishment of indigenous plants and landscapes.

Knowledge sharing

According to Danny Redden from the Darebin Creek Management Committee, working with the Narrap Team has been invaluable.

"I think everyone in natural resource management recognises there has been a gap in respect to the cultural side of land management. It's hard to understate the value of the Narrap Team's work. Many of their burns have involved a community knowledge sharing component – traditional ecological knowledge they are in a process of discovering and relearning.

When you are given an insight into some of their knowledge of the land, it gives you goosebumps," Danny said.

The Narrap Team is constantly challenged by the need to balance cultural protection with pressing environmental threats such as rabbit infestations and land degradation caused by weeds. There is often a community education aspect to their work as they help to build understanding of cultural heritage on Country.

The Friends of Steels Creek reported a boost in membership after locals attended cultural events led by Wurundjeri Elders, which are held alongside Narrap Team natural resource management projects.

Sean Hunter says the team has given regular ongoing employment to many Indigenous young people and showed them a career path that also strengthens their identity and builds their self-esteem.

"Our youngest team member is 18. It's great to see them develop their skills and confidence. Some of our team members have had difficult backgrounds and working to heal Country is such a strong force for healing yourself. Many of us on the team are related so the support and connections we make with mob are really valuable," Sean said.

Sean and the team have also been busy advising other Registered Aboriginal Parties on how to establish their own natural resource management teams.

“

There is often a community education aspect to their work as they help to build understanding of cultural heritage on Country.

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The Narrap Team is an excellent example of Indigenous self-determination underlined by sound relationships, integrity, and passion for their work. The Narrap Team has put Indigenous natural resource management on the map in their region and transformed how the wider community view Country.

Highly commended Damien Skurrie

Damien Skurrie is a Wotjobaluk man working with his community to lead the Aboriginal management of Wotjobaluk Country. Damien is Natural Resource Management Program Manager for the Borengi Gadjin Land Council – representing the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk people across the Wimmera and Grampians regions. Damien coordinates the Walpa Gunga Dja Dulk (right burning to make Country good) project using community cultural burning workshops to demonstrate slower and cooler burns that support biodiversity and help to restore a balanced and healthy landscape. Damien engages Traditional Owners, Elders and youth in his natural resource management work and is a role model for his community. His understanding of the importance of cultural practices in caring for Country is empowering the next generation of Aboriginal leaders.

Damien Skurrie taking part in the annual Dyurrite (Mt Arapiles) Walpa Wanjiip Burn-Fire workshop.



Woolworths Junior Landcare Team Award



Tempy Primary School

The Woolworths Junior Landcare Team Award acknowledges a school, youth organisation or young community Landcare team that contributes to raising awareness, sharing knowledge, and promoting participation of Landcare amongst young people.

Tempy Primary School (TPS) is an innovative small rural school situated between Horsham and Mildura in the far north of Victoria. The school has a family feel with just 18 students, but the commitment to conservation and sustainability runs deep.

The students have a recycling program and monitor their use of water and electricity. Shade sails and shade cloth helps cool the classrooms as much as possible. There are three resident chickens who clean up

food scraps and provide eggs to the school community.

TPS has a focus on birds. Students have been involved in major mitchell cockatoo conservation where they worked with Parks Victoria at Pine Plains to collect seed and propagate slender cypress pine trees that were planted in the local parks and throughout the community.

Children from the school became concerned about the endangered local malleefowl when they observed them

feeding on the edges of the highway near their homes. The students were concerned the birds would be hit by cars and wanted to alert the community to their importance.

In 2020 TPS received funding from the Victorian Malleefowl Recovery Group (VMRG) and the Mallee CMA for an education project on the endangered malleefowl. The project was auspiced by the Mallee Landcare Group Inc.

The project has seen the students become citizen scientists. They have learnt about the unique characteristics of malleefowl, one of only three mound building birds in Australia, their lifecycle, and the importance of minimising threats to ensure their survival. Students have been involved in monitoring local malleefowl and reporting their findings back to the VMRG.

TPS students have undertaken field trips to conduct their research led by VMRG volunteers who taught them how to use GPS and other field equipment. On a tour with a local Mallee tour company students discovered two active nests, learned about the diet of the bird and how to identify tracks and scats. The tour included a visit to the property of Tony and Bev Bingley, local seed collectors and conservationists, where the students helped with revegetation.

Field officers from the Mallee CMA visited TPS to discuss habitat fragmentation and landscape links and took the students to a revegetation site at Bronzewing Reserve. A Parks Victoria ranger from the local office at Speed also came to speak to students to share her knowledge of how the birds move between the local parks, private land and occasionally roadsides.

TPS students have also learnt about the connections Aboriginal people have to megapodes like malleefowl. In sessions on Aboriginal astronomy, they identified important star constellations that referred to malleefowl and Lake Tyrrell.

The project has crossed into art as well as science with TPS students designing malleefowl emblems that they presented



The big malleefowl at Patchewollock was a hit with students from Tempy Primary School.

to the VMRG. They wrote stories on malleefowl for a young writer's anthology, several of which will be published.

The project is set to continue with the school purchasing five remote sensing cameras to monitor the birds in the local area. In their desire to protect a unique and remarkable local bird this small group of primary school students have become inspiring environmental leaders and ambassadors.

"I learnt how to tell if a malleefowl nest is working or not." **Riah, Grade Prep.**

"I liked that malleefowl can lay a lot of eggs. I learnt that there are not many malleefowl left." **Zack, Grade 1.**

I liked seeing the malleefowl sculptures. I learnt about how when the malleefowl are laying eggs, there is a hole in the top of the nest." **Matilda, Grade 1.**

"Malleefowl get water from eating bugs. I like lerpis, they taste like fairy floss." **Kingsley, Grade 1.**

"I liked to plant the trees in the scrub. I learnt that when the chicks hatch only 10 per cent survive." **Zayden, Grade 2.**

"Malleefowl are very interesting, because the males know the temperature of the nest, with their beak." **Baxter, Grade 3.**

"When I saw my first malleefowl it was amazing and a once in a lifetime experience." **Angel, Grade 4.**

"I loved to get out in the scrub, get dirty and see some wildlife. Looking at the nests was fascinating." **Abby, Grade 5.**

"It was incredible! The stuff we didn't even know about our own country's birds!" **Nardia, Grade 6.**



Tempy Primary School learning about malleefowl at Bronzewing Reserve.

Highly commended Jeparit Primary School

The students at this small rural school at the end of the Wimmera River system have been asking the question how healthy is our river, for many years. Students conducted Waterwatch monitoring from 1996 to 2009 and since 2019 have been engaged in the River Detectives program. The school community is involved in monitoring the river for water quality, salinity, turbidity, temperature, and pH. After observing riverbank erosion, exposed tree roots, lack of reeds and litter at the site the students decided to act. They learnt to identify the plants along the river, visited the regional nursery at Wail and planned and carried out a revegetation project. Despite restrictions imposed by COVID-19 the school and the community



Ecologist Mirinda Thorpe answers questions from Jeparit Primary School students on how to protect their patch of the Wimmera River in November 2020.

have pulled together to tackle erosion and loss of native vegetation along their patch of the river.



Newham Primary School leaders with the 2021 National Woolworths Junior Landcare Team Award in front of a revegetation site at the school. From left standing, Minty, Tilly, Layla and Riley. From left sitting, Loki, Freddie, Harper and Zayne.

Newham Primary School wins National Woolworths Junior Landcare Team Award

Newham Primary School in Victoria's Macedon Ranges (winner of the 2019 Victorian Junior Landcare Team Award) was announced as the 2021 National Woolworths Junior Landcare Team Award winner. The National Landcare Awards were delayed from 2020 due to COVID-19. The school was awarded for its work on indigenous vegetation along

a tributary of Deep Creek that abuts the school, creating a nature corridor for local wildlife that connects with the Cobaw Biolink. They also designed and built a wetland to provide an alternative breeding ground for frogs which 10 southern brown tree frogs now call home. For more information see the article on page 14 of Victorian Landcare Magazine issue 76.

Australian Government Individual Landcarer Award



National
Landcare
Program



Don Rowe

This award acknowledges the significant contribution made by an individual who has demonstrated outstanding leadership and commitment to Landcare.

Don Rowe is a landholder and leading Landcarer in the Upper Hopkins region. He has been active in the Upper Hopkins Land Management Group (UHLMG) since it formed in 1991, helping to guide the strategic direction of the group under the banner of mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Well before UHLMG was formed, Don and his wife Goldie were erecting land class fencing and planting biodiversity corridors on their property, transforming the agricultural landscape. Many of the new trees and shrubs were grown from seed Don had collected. He also pioneered the use of direct seeding in the region as a way of sowing large areas with indigenous trees with excellent results.

Don and Goldie have hosted numerous paddock walks, field days and social gatherings for UHLMG on their property. Don is an important mentor and role model for other farmers who share his commitment to soil health and sustainable farming, as well as enhancing indigenous vegetation, protecting wetlands and waterways, and controlling pest plants and animals.

As a teacher at Ararat Secondary College, Don promoted sustainable farming practices and organised students to work on many tree planting projects from Elmhurst to Tatyoon. He believes revegetation is a positive way of improving the future.

"I think every landowner should have a revegetation project that they work on each year. The benefits are well known and with the immediate threat of climate change, it is one thing we can all do. Many of us despair at the lack of leadership in tackling the impending climate crisis but we can all make an effort to improve our small part of the planet," Don said.

Don has represented the interests of UHLMG members to promote sustainable and practical responses to climate change in the region. He has worked with the Ararat Rural City Council Environmental Sustainability Advisory Group, the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee, Glenelg Hopkins CMA Community Advisory Group, the Upper Hopkins Stakeholder Group convened



Don Rowe enjoying the regenerated landscape on his property 'Sidlaw' near Maroona.

by Ararat Rural City Council, and Ararat Greenhouse Action Group. His approach to strategic planning is pragmatic and realistic, recognising that Landcare members are volunteers with many other roles and responsibilities.

The region is facing rural population decline. As farm sizes increase, neighbours get further away from each other, and it can be challenging for people to connect. Don has led the UHLMG in engaging with the community and supporting and encouraging new landholders. Don is a regular contributor to the UHLMG newsletter, reaching more than 400 subscribers, and often pens letters to the editor of the local newspaper on environmental and climate change issues.

Don has worked tirelessly at the Maroona Reserve, adjacent to the Hopkins River, planting trees and controlling weeds with the local primary school.

His positive can-do attitude is an inspiration for all who know him.

Highly commended Susan Brunskill

Sue Brunskill has been a community leader for more than 30 years. She has worked with her husband Colin to protect 32 hectares of bush on their 50-hectare property at Wooragee, in north-east Victoria. An active member of the Wooragee Landcare Group (WLG), Sue's knowledge, enthusiasm and optimism has helped farmers, lifestylers, and gardeners understand they can quickly make a difference to biodiversity, erosion, weeds and water quality on their patch. She represents WLG on the Mid-Ovens Landcare Consortium, has assisted with riparian revegetation on five properties along Reedy Creek, has driven bird surveys, worked with VicRoads and the local council on a new rail trail and developed the Wooragee produce market. Recent projects include an Indigenous fire knowledge for Landcare project, developing a guide to local fungi and driving the silver banksia seed production project. Sue uses diverse events and projects to make Landcare relevant to many people's lives. She has an outstanding ability to connect people and ideas.



Sue Brunskill in the Chiltern Mt Pilot National Park at Wooragee taking a photograph for the local Landcare group's newsletter.

Commended Helen Barber Paul Speirs

Coastcare Award

Cape Paterson Residents and Ratepayers Association and Harmers Haven Residents and Ratepayers Group: Friends of Harmers Haven

The Coastcare Award acknowledges a community group or network that has contributed to the significant improvement of a coastal or marine environment.

The Cape Paterson Residents and Ratepayers Association (CPRRA) and Harmers Haven Residents and Ratepayers Group: Friends of Harmers Haven (HHRRG—FoHH) have worked together since 2009 to care for coastal foreshore habitat from Coal Point in the west through to the eastern end of Undertow Bay, respecting the culture, rights and aspirations of the Bunurong and Boonwurrung people.

The group's work on Harmers Haven Flora and Fauna Reserve, the Bunurong Marine Park, Harmers Haven Coastal Reserve, Cape Paterson Foreshore Reserve, and the Yallock-Bulluk Marine and Coastal Park has helped to protect unique intertidal rock platforms, sub-tidal reef areas, threatened beach-nesting shore birds, and rare remnant heath and coastal vegetation.

The groups have partnered with South Gippsland Conservation Society, Bass Coast Shire Council, West Gippsland CMA, Parks Victoria, Wonthaggi Seedbank and Nursery, and Coastcare over many decades and have supported local contractors to enhance their own and

community volunteers' expertise in improving environmental outcomes.

According to Amaryll Perlesz, Co-convenor of Friends of Harmers Haven, group members are inspired by the desire to protect rare and threatened flora and fauna species along the spectacular Bass Coast.

"The coastal foreshore and dune systems are blessed with pockets of rare, endangered and depleted native vegetation such as swamp paperbark heath, swamp scrub and banksia woodlands that provide habitat for endangered and vulnerable fauna such as the swamp antechinus, swamp skink, common bent-wing bat, southern brown bandicoot, orange-bellied parrot, Lewin's rail and hooded plovers.

"Our activities often have a community education angle. For example, when monitoring hooded plovers, we invite beachgoers to use birding scopes to view the hoodies with their chicks. This encourages beach walkers to be more protective of these birds by leashing their dogs," Amaryll said.

The groups have been successful with fox and feral cat control through soft-jaw and cage trapping. They have held scores of community weed control and coastal revegetation days, have engaged professional contractors in weed mapping



A briefing for Friends of Harmers Haven about the safety aspects of pulling sea spurge.

and used drones for aerial weed surveys. They have conducted a beach litter art show, built board walks, bridges and beach access paths to minimise dune erosion, commissioned ecological surveys, regenerated salt marsh habitat, protected a maritime archaeological wreck and hosted the Great Victorian Fish Count down at Wreck Beach.

The groups support the 2018 Bass Coast Shire Council Biolinks Plan, which identified the Wonthaggi Heathlands, Harmers Haven, Cape Paterson and the stretch of coastline east to Inverloch as a priority area of native vegetation that needs protection for landscape-scale biodiversity connectivity.

CPRRA and HHRRG—FoHH often need to consult with land managers, local contractors, residents and resident groups to resolve complex local issues. The future holds increasing challenges with threats from the severe impacts of global warming – higher tides, more extreme weather events, changing dune morphology and reduced breeding opportunities for beach-nesting shore birds. There is also a need to engage with younger volunteers. The groups have hosted local and Melbourne-based school groups and the Gippsland Intrepid Landcare Group, which ran successful sea spurge weeding activities at Harmers Haven.

By working together and independently these two groups are protecting and improving habitat along Victoria's unique and precious Bass Coast.



Volunteers pulling sea spurge at Harmers Haven.

“

The group formed in 2004 with 40 members and now has more than 100 households involved – that’s 35 per cent of the district’s population.

”



A raptor event organised by Newham and District Landcare Group in 2018 was a hit with young families.

ACM Landcare Community Group Award

Newham and District Landcare Group

The ACM Landcare Community Group Award acknowledges an outstanding community group that is improving sustainable land use through on-ground action to protect, enhance or restore the natural values of an area on behalf of the wider community.

Newham and District Landcare Group (NDLG) covers 21,800 hectares in the Newham, Cobaw, Heskett and Rochford areas. The group formed in 2004 with 40 members and now has more than 100 households involved – that’s 35 per cent of the district’s population. There has been a concerted effort to develop a sense of

community through Landcare by running educational and social events that are inclusive and fun.

Cobaw Biolink – vital for habitat connectivity

Since 2006 NDLG’s main project has been the Cobaw Biolink. The project encompasses pest plant and animal control,

revegetation, rehabilitation of waterways, and roadside activities to provide habitat connectivity for native species on public and private land between Mount Macedon and the Cobaw State Forest.

NDLG has been successful in attracting more than \$500,000 funding to support on ground works within the biolink area, with over \$600,000 in a combination of matching in-kind and cash contributions. Works have been undertaken on 32 private properties, at Hanging Rock Reserve and along roadsides. Works include fencing to protect remnant vegetation, revegetation, control of rabbits and woody weeds, property planning activities, educational events, and production of a biolink poster.

More than 140,000 tubestock have been planted in the Cobaw Biolink with many of these provided by the Newham Primary School’s propagating group (run by NDLG).



A Newham and District Landcare Group planting day at Hanging Rock.

Substantial fencing has also been completed to protect areas from grazing and allow them to be managed for conservation. Nesting boxes have been installed for brush-tailed phascogales, and members use a group owned motion-sensor camera to record wildlife on their properties.

In April 2021 the group released a video, to increase awareness among landholders and residents of the need to improve landscape connectivity along the biolink.

Long-term NDLG member Penny Roberts described each element of the biolink, no matter how big or small, as vitally important.

“The Cobaw Biolink is bigger than any of us, it is a model that can be used anywhere. It builds connections between remnants and it builds connections within community,” Penny said.

Advocating for roadsides

Helen Scott has been involved in the roadside management subgroup of NDLG since 2006. Known as ‘the weedies’ this team meets bi-monthly for working bees to cut and paint roadside weeds that they have recorded and mapped on the Macedon Ranges Shire’s database.

“Advocating for the importance of roadsides with high conservation values, highlighting habitat and the connectivity benefits of these roadsides, has been a major focus for us now for many years,” Helen said.

NDLG commissioned and funded a botanist to undertake roadside conservation surveys of 20 kilometres of significant roadside remnant vegetation in the district. Helen and the weedies have organised educational events and lobbied hard to get local government to lift its game in managing roadsides, and now successfully partner in the shire’s roadside projects.

NDLG also supports the Waterwatch program, runs roadside fauna spotlight evenings, Clean Up Australia Day activities, habitat assessment workshops, biochar demonstrations, and publicly advocates for the environment through submissions and the media. The group loans and hires equipment to members, operates a resource library for members and sends out a quarterly newsletter.

The executive meets monthly and despite the challenges of an ageing committee and recent COVID-19 restrictions, members are enthusiastic about the future of the environment and the community in their beautiful district.



Newham and District Landcare Group members inspect biodiversity plantings at the ‘Kolora’ property in 2019.

Highly commended

Friends of Lower Kororoit Creek Inc.

The 30-member Friends of Lower Kororoit Creek (FOLKC) was formed in 2000 in recognition that the highly degraded and heavily polluted creek was potentially one of the most important waterways in Melbourne’s west. The group formulated a plan to transform the creek. With advice and assistance from many partners including federal and state government agencies, local government, industry, local businesses, community groups and the local community, FOLKC set about planting along

the lower reaches of the creek. FOLKC events have protected and promoted the waterway through recognition of its environmental, recreational, and historic values. FOLKC has also been instrumental in linking Hobsons Bay to the Metropolitan Shared Trail Network to showcase the Kororoit Creek environmental corridor. FOLKC attributes its success in returning a degraded waterway to a corridor of green to the commitment and dedication of its members.



Friends of Lower Kororoit Creek at a National Tree Day planting event in 2019 marking the opening of a new community parkland as part of the Greater Melbourne Cemeteries Trust project to make memorial parks more welcoming.

“

Andrew and Jill's interest in agroforestry has seen them trial and establish many different species of trees and shrubs, which have formed a robust biological infrastructure underpinning the productivity, profitability, and sustainability of the farming system.

”



Andrew Stewart leading participants from the 2019 Otway Agroforestry Network Master TreeGrowers Course on a tour to demonstrate the principles of revegetation design and the management of multi-purpose forests on farms.

Australian Government Landcare Farming Award



Jill and Andrew Stewart

The Australian Government Landcare Farming Award acknowledges an individual, group, network or organisation that has demonstrated excellence and leadership in implementing sustainable and integrated land management practices that protect soils, water, vegetation and biodiversity, and who delivers improved natural resource management and farm productivity.

Andrew Stewart is a fourth-generation farmer. Along with his wife Jill and daughters Kristy, Hannah and Michelle, the Stewarts manage a family owned 230-hectare regenerative grazing and agroforestry property on the edge of the Otway Ranges. Yan Yan Gurt West Farm had previously been cleared of native vegetation causing gully erosion, salinity, waterlogging, ecological decline and livestock and pasture exposure.

The landscape change that has occurred since then has been formidable. More than 50,000 trees and shrubs have been established while maintaining high agricultural productivity with an annual turnover of 1600 to 1800 prime lambs and wool, value-added at times by farm forestry products.

The family's whole farm plan, completed in 1991, has provided the mission statement and strategic guidance for this change. The property has been fenced to land classes and trees and shrubs have been planted along boundaries. Creeks, drainage lines, remnant vegetation, salt affected areas and waterlogged sites have been fenced and revegetated with multi-purpose plantings. These plantings are connected to form a web of trees meandering across the farm's landscape providing soil, pasture and livestock protection, nutrient cycling, waterway protection, wildlife corridors, and improved wellbeing for the people who live, work, and visit the farm. One hundred and twenty bird species have been recorded on the farm.

Andrew and Jill's interest in agroforestry has seen them trial and establish many different species of trees and shrubs, which have formed a robust biological infrastructure underpinning the productivity, profitability and sustainability of the farming system. Modelling suggests that the farm is at or very close to being carbon neutral.

The Stewarts grow banksia flowers and foliage for floral arrangements which are sold at a farm gate stall and to florists, restaurants, and function centres. The plantings were established around an eroded dam in sandy, acidic soil not well suited to livestock grazing. The dam is now fenced with a gravity fed water trough in the paddock. Other trees on the property are managed for sawlogs and other tree products.

Andrew and Jill are also active in the wider community. They have been key drivers of the Yan Yan Gurt Creek Catchment community revegetation program with 98 per cent of the 18-kilometre creek now established as a wildlife corridor connecting many farms. They participate in East Otway Landcare Group activities such as maintenance of the Bamba Wetlands.

Andrew is a founding member of the Otway Agroforestry Network, a member of the East Otway Landcare Group, has served on the Australian Landcare Council and was a recipient of a Norman Wettenhall Foundation Landscape Restoration Fellowship. He is a former chair of the Victorian Farmers Federation Farm Tree & Landcare Association. In 1999 Andrew and Jill were the Australian Forest Growers Victorian Tree Farmer of the Year.

Over the past 25 years more than 5000 people have visited the farm. Secondary and tertiary students, Master TreeGrower Course groups, politicians and local and international visitors are all hosted with generosity and enthusiasm. Andrew and Jill are leaders in natural resource management and always keen to share their knowledge on how to achieve a more sustainable future.

According to Andrew, he and Jill have been inspired to continually improve the farm because of the enthusiasm and help of their extended family.

“Our daughters’ growing commitment to regenerative farming along with working with a great community committed to Landcare and agroforestry has kept us going,” Andrew said.

Highly commended The Blackwell Family

Bill and Cee Blackwell returned to the family property ‘Corea’ near Dunkeld in 1975 after it had been severely damaged by fires. Always interested in nature, Bill and Cee developed their own direct seeding systems and began to plant wildlife corridors. All family members were involved and now sons Woody and Charlie also farm the property. The family follow regenerative agriculture principles allowing paddocks to recover and regrow after grazing. This ensures long-term survival of pastures and reduces the need and cost of resowing.

Native vegetation provides valuable shade and shelter for stock and supports diverse insect, bird, and mammal populations, which help provide pest insect control and pollination in surrounding pastures and bush. Creeklines, contours, wetlands and waterbodies have been fenced to exclude domestic stock and planted with diverse flora. Bill and Cee are active in the local community and have hosted many field days and visitors to ‘Corea.’ The Blackwell family have successfully combined their love of nature with their high-production grazing system.



The Blackwell family on their property near Dunkeld.

Andrew Stewart national winner of Bob Hawke Landcare Award

Andrew Stewart received the prestigious Bob Hawke Landcare Award at the 2021 National Landcare Awards announced in early August 2021. The National Landcare Awards were delayed from 2020 due to COVID-19. The award is made to an individual who champions the uptake of sustainable agriculture practices and can demonstrate the adoption of improved practices among landholders as a consequence of this action.

The Bob Hawke Landcare Award acknowledges the role that former Prime Minister, the Honourable Bob Hawke AC, played in elevating Landcare from a grass-roots community initiative to a national movement with bi-partisan government support that endures today.

Andrew will receive a substantial prize package to allow him to further develop his knowledge and skills in sustainable land management to enable an even stronger contribution to Landcare.

All nominations for the award were assessed by an independent advisory panel, including representatives experienced in sustainable farming practices, natural resource management, community and Indigenous perspectives. The Bob Hawke Landcare Award is administered by Landcare Australia through support from the Australian Government’s National Landcare Program.

Australian Government Partnerships for Landcare Award



Northern Yarra Landcare Network in partnership with VicRoads

The Australian Government Partnerships for Landcare Award acknowledges the leadership and achievement of a partnership between individuals, groups, networks, or organisations.



Dixons Creek Landcare Group members stand near a treated outbreak of blackberry on the boundary with a local vineyard on Melba Highway north of Yarra Glen.

A partnership between Northern Yarra Landcare Network (NYLN) and VicRoads has achieved the treatment of 190 sites of invasive weeds along 14 kilometres of Melba Highway roadside in the Yarra Valley. The sites ranged from small outbreaks to large infestations of up to 1 000 square metres.

NYLN member Dixons Creek Landcare Group had identified weeds on the Melba Highway and adjacent properties as a priority for several years, concerned about the ongoing threat to private properties and waterways.

The Northern Yarra Weed Action Group (NYWAG) was established in 2011 with the support of the Victorian Blackberry Taskforce in response to the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires. NYWAG has worked with more than 300 landholders, aware that long-term weed control is only possible through collective action across boundaries. Many of the infestations along the Melba Highway were on VicRoad's land as well as 75 private properties including five substantial vineyards.

Discussions between NYWAG and VicRoads began in 2020 to develop a long-term plan for the project. Funding for a NYWAG part-time project officer

came through the Federal Government Communities Environment Program.

The project officer set about working with landholders to treat their own weeds to complement the work being done on roadsides through the partnership with VicRoads. This involved multi-owner consultation, property planning, contractor engagement, introductions to relevant agency partners and the borrowing of NYLN equipment. Melbourne Water was also instrumental in addressing weed issues on nearby waterways, including creek crossings and adjacent Yarra River tributaries on private land.

Negotiations and co-ordination were complex. Added to this was the challenge presented by the identification of new weeds, including St John's wort and watsonia which required adjustment to the treatment plan.

Access to roadside sites from inside private property boundaries needed to be coordinated. At times this involved vineyards which have traditionally been reluctant to be involved in weed treatment programs because of the perceived threat to vines. Treatment of weeds very close to vines was dictated by the seasons and local conditions. Decisions were often made on



Many of the infestations along the Melba Highway were on VicRoad's land as well as 75 private properties including five substantial vineyards.



Contractors engaged by the Northern Yarra Landcare Network ready to tackle new outbreaks of watsonia on the Melba Highway in October 2020.

an hour-by-hour basis depending on wind speed and direction.

According to Amy Orlowski from VicRoads the project benefitted from the knowledge and the agility of those on the ground.

“The project officer from NYWAG was able to reassure landholders that the weed control was going to be done effectively. VicRoads was also able to intervene and negotiate when it appeared roadside slashing had the potential to interfere with the planned works. We negotiated with the slashing contractors and alerted them to the specific needs at different locations to avoid damage to treated sites,” Amy said.

Monitoring of the 190 treated sites will be carried out this spring. John Birse from NYLN says the Melba Highway has long been regarded as a vector for weeds.

“We are proud to say this integral partnership with VicRoads has not only neutralised the threat of weeds spreading along the highway, but formed the basis of an ongoing arrangement with landowners founded on trust and cooperation,” John said.

Highly commended Strathallan Family Landcare Group



The existence of endangered squirrel gliders on members properties was discussed at an early meeting of the Strathallan Family Landcare Group. The group advocated for a study that was conducted by the then Department of Sustainability and Environment in 2009. Locals have now built and installed more than 300 nest boxes along the Campaspe River reserve. Local farming families monitor the boxes on their properties and river boundaries and report their sightings and findings. The group has partnered with researchers from Deakin University, the Strathallan Glider Sanctuary, Echuca-Moama Men's Shed, scout groups, school students, the Shire of Campaspe, North Central CMA, and Landcare groups in the Campaspe Shire on squirrel glider conservation and habitat protection.

John and Veronica Groat from Strathallan Family Landcare Group with nestboxes for squirrel gliders at the Rochester Market.

Highly commended Corangamite Catchment Management Authority

The Corangamite CMA's partnership with Landcare in its region involves 10 Landcare networks and 150 Landcare groups. In 2015 a statement of partnership based on principles of communication, respect, devolving responsibility and building capacity was developed and signed by the CMA and the Landcare networks. Network chairs and

Landcare facilitators meet on a quarterly basis with the CMA to work collaboratively on shared projects and informally through an online community of practice forum. This forum led to the co-development of the 'small blocks, big dreams' project, which engages peri-urban landholders in best practice integrated catchment management.

In 2014 the CMA fostered the formation of the Corangamite Rural Women's Network. The network brings rural women together to strengthen community resilience, empower them to contribute, be seen as equal, and to influence decision making both on and off farm.



Members of the Corangamite Rural Women's Network at Barwon Park Mansion in 2019.

Steadfast Young Landcare Leadership Award

Tess Grieves

The Steadfast Young Landcare Leadership Award acknowledges an individual or a youth group between the ages of 15–35 years who promote excellence in Landcare through on-ground projects and awareness raising activities.

Tess Grieves grew up in Castlemaine and went to university in Bendigo. Her qualifications and experience in outdoor education and landscape interpretation drew her to Landcare in 2015. Tess is Regional Landcare Coordinator at the North Central CMA – a catchment-wide role that sees her working with more than 160 groups and networks and thousands of landholders and volunteers.

Tess's focus is always on the bigger picture for Landcare, through advocacy, active partnerships and funding initiatives that provide multiple benefits for environmental volunteers. She revised the North Central CMA's community grants program and decision-making after undertaking critical analysis of grant allocations and has led the implementation of improved grant management processes across the Victorian Landcare Program.

Tess was instrumental in the formation of the Murray Mallee Landcare Network and the Mount Alexander Shire region Intrepid Landcare Group. Since 2013 Tess has led the annual Chicks in the Sticks rural women's events to celebrate the achievements of rural women in agriculture and the environment.

Creating partnerships is an area of excellence for Tess. Since 2017, she has created and led a peer-learning program for Landcare facilitators, involving a partnership across four CMA regions. This bi-annual forum encourages peer-support, networks and collaboration which leads to improved natural resource management practices being delivered by Victoria's Landcare professionals. She sits on the Loddon Mallee Good Neighbour Programs Technical Advisory Group and has undertaken grant assessments for the DELWP's Community Volunteer Action Grants program and the Victorian Junior Landcare and Biodiversity Grants program.

Tess has a strong interest in Aboriginal cultural heritage and cultural awareness. She has participated in training and development sessions with Aboriginal Victoria and four Traditional Owner groups from the North Central region, and in turn, she has engaged their cultural training staff from these groups



North Central CMA's Regional Landcare Coordinator Tess Grieves has practised Landcare from home during recent COVID restrictions.

to run workshops for the region's Landcare community and support staff.

Tess's leadership and partnership approach led to North Central Landcarers being the pilot community for a Rabbit Buster Roadshow to complement, promote and implement the national release of the RHDV1 (K5 strain) of Calicivirus.

Tess sees herself as a storyteller and advocate for Landcare. She co-manages the CMA's Instagram account and has produced 55 editions of a monthly newsletter (North Central Chat) featuring Landcare projects, faces and stories from across the region.

Tess Grieves is a creative and professional young Landcare leader with an unflagging passion for supporting Landcare volunteers, spreading the Landcare message, and engaging new audiences.

Highly commended Jackson Cass

Jackson Cass began his working life in the construction industry. In 2019 he decided to study Conservation and Land Management at Federation University. Jackson joined Garibaldi Landcare Group (GLG) as a volunteer and was soon overseeing revegetation projects. Not long after graduating in 2020 Jackson took on the role of Landcare Coordinator for Moorabool Catchment Landcare Group and stepped up as treasurer of GLG. Jackson's enthusiasm and optimism has invigorated both groups. He is managing revegetation works, aerial spraying of serrated tussock, fauna surveys using wildlife cameras, supporting Wadawurrung Traditional Owners with the management of Bostock Reservoir, rabbit control demonstrations, and advocacy for the Moorabool River.



Jackson Cass waterbug monitoring in the Moorabool River – a joint project with Moorabool Catchment Landcare Group and the Corangamite CMA.

Landcare magazine anniversary

Editor Carrie Tiffany reflects on 25 years of Landcare stories.

The first issue of the *Victorian Landcare and Catchment Management* magazine was published in 1996. In the spirit of Landcare, the editorial team was bringing together two earlier publications: *Trunkline* a VFF newsletter focused on farm trees, and the salinity journal *Salt Force News*.

The front cover of the first issue featured a picture of Barry Stewart from the Bass Valley Landcare Group attacking a stand of ragwort with a mattock. We reported proudly that it was 10 years since the birth of Landcare in Victoria in 1986, and there were more than 670 Landcare groups in the state (3000 nationally). David Clark gave a roundup on the 1996 Landcare conference held in Ballarat (I vividly remember near frostbite on a field trip to the Woody Yaloak catchment project), we marked the formation of the South Gippsland Landcare Network, got ready for the release of rabbit calicivirus, and reported on the activities of the then 10 Regional Catchment and Land Protection Boards.

We have now published 82 issues and have more than 22,000 readers – many of them online. The magazine has shifted focus from recording and promoting the successes of individual groups (most have their own newsletters and network publications) to more in-depth reporting on the environmental, social, and structural challenges Landcare is facing. Through many iterations of its editorial committee, the magazine has provided a constant voice for community Landcare to promote best practice in natural resource management.

While early issues focused on revegetation, the magazine has highlighted soil health, pest plants and animals, biodiversity, biolinks, roadsides, emergency recovery, research, urban Landcare, women in Landcare, planning, health, the arts, technology, international Landcare, young Landcare, recruiting volunteers, climate change, and the Victorian Landcare Awards.

The spirit of the magazine has always reflected the spirit of Landcare – a grassroots, community-led movement. To that end we work with groups and individuals to publish their stories and pictures rather than reprinting press releases. We encourage our contributors to share not only their successes, but their challenges and failures so we can continue to learn from each other.

It has been a privilege to work with so many of Victoria's Landcarers to help them hone their stories for publication. Some timorous early contributors have gone on to produce their own newsletters and have even written and published books about Landcare.

A searchable index of the magazine's stories available on the Victorian Landcare Gateway (www.landcarevic.org.au/landcare-magazine/) runs to more than 180 pages. Many of the stories first published in the magazine have been reprinted in other publications in Australia and overseas. Our most reprinted story, 'Shelterbelts for fire protection' by Rod Bird was published in issue 49, a special feature after the 2009 bushfires.

Reader surveys have helped us to keep the magazine on track and make sure we are meeting the needs of our readers. We also collate the feedback we receive on each issue and incorporate suggestions into future issues. Don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any ideas.

As editor of the magazine since the first issue, one of my most prized letters is from Landcare's founder, the Honourable Joan Kirner AC. Joan wrote not long before she died in 2015 to say she was continuing to read the magazine and that Landcare was one of her proudest achievements.



Around the State – News from the Regional

Aboriginal Landcare Facilitator

Congratulations to all the nominees and winners at the 2021 Victorian Landcare Awards. We thank you all for your continued dedication towards doing Landcare to heal Country.

I was honoured to receive the Dr. Sidney Plowman Travel and Study Award. I will use the award to explore real-world examples of Traditional Owners and farmers combining Aboriginal caring for Country with regenerative agricultural principles and practices. This growing movement is breaking new ground and having a positive impact in the community. I look forward to sharing my learnings.

The Victorian Government's 2021 Aboriginal Community Caring for Country Grants were recently announced with funding for 10 Aboriginal caring for Country projects over the next 12-months. Projects include revegetation, cultural burning, seed collection, bio-cultural landscape mapping of Country and strengthening connections with the Victorian environmental community.

For more information please contact Jackson Chatfield on Jackson.chatfield@delwp.vic.gov.au or 0419 504 451.

Corangamite

Congratulations to Corangamite farmer, Andrew Stewart on receiving the prestigious National Bob Hawke Award at the 2021 National Landcare Awards. We thank him for his ongoing commitment to Landcare.

We are pleased to announce the region has secured three years of funding through the 2021–24 Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program, to employ 10 Landcare facilitators to support 75 Landcare and environmental volunteer groups.

We have recently welcomed Stephanie Rosestone to the CMA team. Stephanie will job share with Elisia Dowling to deliver regional Landcare coordination and citizen science volunteer programs.

Consultation is now underway with our networks to develop the next Landcare Support Plan for the region.

For more information visit ([Get Involved/Landcare](#)) or contact Elisia Dowling on 0418 397 521.

East Gippsland

In September 2021 the Landcare community welcomed the announcement of \$3.8 million in bushfire recovery grants through the Landcare Led Bushfire Recovery Grants program. This funding will assist the local community to deliver projects on erosion mitigation, weed control, habitat and species preservation, and monitoring.

Landcare groups have been busy preparing to deliver projects funded through the 2021 Victorian Landcare Grants Program. These grants are highly valued by our local Landcarers.

As COVID-19 restrictions begin to ease, the Landcare community has begun to undertake planning and administration for another year. Groups are holding working bees and scoping out new project ideas. AGMs are being held online or face-to-face as numbers permit.

For more information visit www.egcma.vic.gov.au ([What we do/Landcare](#)) or contact Carolyn Cameron on 0419 892 268.

Glenelg Hopkins

Congratulations to all our groups that have overcome COVID-19 related difficulties to deliver activities. Meetings, training and information sessions have all moved online. Getting plants in the ground has been challenging. Landholders who traditionally used volunteers from Landmate, Conservation Volunteers Australia and tertiary students have had to find alternatives – in most cases families have rolled up their sleeves and got on with it.

Community planting days have been difficult to organise with postponements and cancellations being the norm. Once again it has been many dedicated volunteers working in ones and twos that have been getting the job done.

The CMA has had a strong response to the Victorian Landcare Grants this year. It was a difficult task for the assessment panel to allocate the funds with such a long list of great projects. Extra funds from the Victorian Government resulted in a total of 25 group projects being funded.

For more information visit www.ghcma.vic.gov.au ([Get Involved/Landcare](#)) or contact Tony Lithgow on 0418 180 996.

Goulburn Broken

The region has embraced the current round of Victorian Landcare Grants with some innovative projects being supported this year. We hope the delivery restrictions imposed by COVID-19 social distancing allows for projects to be undertaken without the stop and start of 2020 and 2021.

It was great to see some projects that are nearing completion share their successes through the media. Gecko CLaN was interviewed recently for the local ABC Country Hour. The group highlighted their recent dung beetle project and how it has assisted landholders to achieve their sustainable agriculture goals and for others to increase their knowledge.

The CMA is nearing completion of its renewed Regional Catchment Strategy. The community-based natural resource management groups of the region have been critical in the review process, shaping the strategy to drive direction and activity into the future. We are now asking groups to pledge their commitment to delivery. Many have done so already.

We are looking forward to the return of face-to-face meetings and social interaction in the region.

For more information visit www.gbcma.vic.gov.au ([The Region/Community natural resource management](#)) or contact Tony Kubeil on 0408 597 213.

Mallee

Mallee CMA extends congratulations to the organisations that were successful in receiving funding through the 2021–24 Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program (VLFP). The five positions in the Mallee funded through VLFP are supporting 20 Landcare groups over a substantial area of the Mallee landscape. We look forward to working with them to achieve shared goals.

Mallee CMA is pleased to announce the release of a monthly e-newsletter to inform Landcarers about local news, resources, grant opportunities and much more. Contact Nelson Burand-Hicks to be added to the distribution list.

For more information visit www.malleecma.vic.gov.au ([Get involved/Landcare](#)) or contact Nelson Burand-Hicks on 0427 540 469.

North Central

Congratulations to the region's Landcare nominees who were recognised as part of the 2021 Victorian Landcare Awards. The awards are a great opportunity to reflect on how committed, proficient, talented and pragmatic our Landcare community is, and how willing people are to take the time to recognise and nominate groups, networks, schools and individuals through the awards.

Spring was stunning across the region. We hosted our ninth annual Chicks in the Sticks event with the theme of Grasslands for Good – Celebrating Farming and Conservation. Despite the splendid floral displays on the Northern Plains grasslands we had to present the event online.

Participants learnt about the critically endangered plains wanderer and their habitat. Presentations from Zoos Victoria, Trust for Nature and the Northern Plains Conservation Management Network highlighted the importance of this unusual bird.

Landcare Coordinators



Georges Paddock on the Northern Plains Grasslands featured during the 2021 Chicks in the Sticks event.

Groups are now implementing their 2021 Victorian Landcare Grants. We look forward to hearing more about the award-worthy work being done across our landscapes, farms and communities.

For more information visit nccma.vic.gov.au (Get involved/Landcare) or contact Tess Grieves on 0438 357 874.

North East

With cold weather and various restrictions in place for most of winter, Landcarers spent much of their time indoors, but they were still busy with many online events and planning for future projects. Online training in Traditional Owners Cultural Safety was offered and many Landcarers participated with enthusiasm.

The region received a record number of applications for 2021 Victorian Landcare Grants. There is a lot of enthusiasm for future projects. Collaboration has also been underway with several joint grant applications made for the Murray Darling: Healthy Rivers Program and National Landcare Program's Smart Farms Small Grants programs. We look forward to hearing the outcome of these applications.

Now the sun is shining again the Landcare community is keen to get out and about.

For more information visit www.necma.vic.gov.au (Solutions/Landcare & community groups) or contact Richard Dalkin on 0409 683 467.

Port Phillip and Western Port

Landcare and other environmental volunteers in the region have endured another long period where hands-on Landcare activities have not been possible. There's a lot of motivation and lots to do as we open up.

Nicole Walsh has left the Western Port Catchment Landcare Network. Anne Fitzpatrick has left the Yarra Ranges

Landcare Network. We welcome new Landcare facilitators employed through the 2021–24 Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program Chris Cobern to the Merri Creek Management Committee; Nicci Starke to the Cardinia Environmental Coalition; Cecilia Imre to the Western Port Catchment Landcare Network; and Jye Andersen from Bass Coast Landcare Network. Yarra Ranges Shire Council will employ a new Landcare facilitator who will support Yarra Ranges Landcare Network and its member groups.

The CMA is in the last few months of operation before its integration into Melbourne Water. The CMA will ratify a Regional Landcare Support Plan to guide service delivery. There are also plans to sign a host of partnership agreements among our Landcare network partners.

Congratulations to our regional winners in the 2021 Victorian Landcare Awards. Thanks to all our partners and volunteers who have worked with the CMA over the years. As an agency we have prided ourselves on our strong community links. We look forward to continuing this at Melbourne Water.

For more information visit ppwcm.vic.gov.au/landcare/ or contact Barry Kennedy on 0447 821 559.

West Gippsland

Despite the challenges of storms, power outages, flooding, earthquakes and COVID-19 lockdowns, our Landcare networks continue to deliver an enormous variety of activities.

Dung beetle nurseries have been established in South Gippsland and the Bass Coast Landcare Network areas. The aim is to have a regular supply of winter and spring active beetles to distribute across local farms, ultimately improving soil health and reducing nutrient run off.

Maffra and District Landcare Network successfully delivered a series of six integrated weed and pest animal management planning workshops and have delivered a number of community planting days.

West Gippsland Landcare Subnetwork welcomed Kelsey Tong as Landcare facilitator employed through the 2021–24 Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program; Yarram Yarram Landcare Network welcomed Emily Physick as their new Landcare facilitator; and Latrobe Landcare Network (LLN) welcomed back Marnie Ellis as Landcare facilitator. LLN is working closely with the Latrobe City Council on its bio links project to improve habitat connectivity.

Yarram Yarram Landcare Network is trialing multi-species cover crops sown using the Soil Kee Renovator prior to establishing perennial pasture and are gearing up for a busy season of seagrass restoration in Corner Inlet.

For more information visit wgcm.vic.gov.au (Getting involved/Landcare) or contact Sam Shannon on 0409 944 114.

Wimmera

Several local Landcare groups demonstrated interest in the rollout of the Great Australian Platypus Search in the Wimmera region. This Victoria wide initiative led by Waterwatch Victoria and Odonata has called on community members to take part in eDNA sampling of waterways and wetlands. The aim is to detect every type of animal present at each location using eDNA technology, including platypuses. Roughly 100 sites were identified for sampling across the Wimmera.

This year's Wimmera Biodiversity Seminar was delivered online as a series of webinars during September 2021. The theme was farming and biodiversity. This event has now been running for 24 years. Presenters included Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitators Bronwyn Bant, hosted by Wimmera CMA, and Karen O'Keefe, hosted by Corangamite CMA.

Wimmera-based Landcare facilitators participated in extension training with agroecologist David Hardwick in October 2021 to improve skills and confidence and help kickstart the next phase of the Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program. Congratulations to all Wimmera nominees representing our region in this year's Victorian Landcare Awards.

For more information visit wcma.vic.gov.au (Get involved/Landcare) or contact Joel Boyd on 0429 949 196.

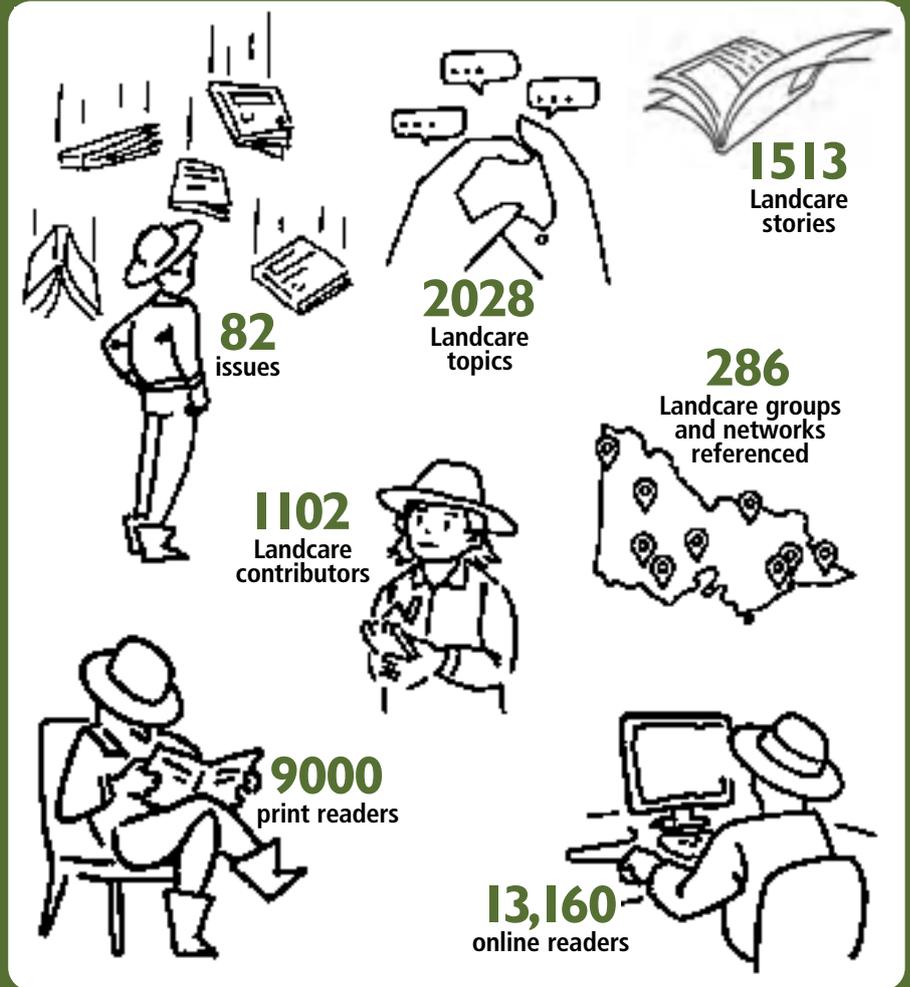
25th ANNIVERSARY

Magazine milestones

The first issue of the magazine was published in Spring 1996. This year is our 25th anniversary. The magazine has been a forum for case studies, best practice reports, new developments in research and technology, news items and personal reflections on the diversity of concerns relevant to Landcarers across the state.

The magazine's online index is a rich resource of fascinating stories. It reveals some impressive numbers.

Access the magazine's index to search for stories by author, title, and subject on the Victorian Landcare Gateway at www.landcarevic.org.au



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. The magazine aims to raise awareness of Landcare and natural resource management among Victorian farmers, landholders, the Victorian Landcare community and the wider community.



Mailing list enquiries and to receive your copy via email alert

Contact Landcare Victoria Incorporated
Phone: 9034 1940 Email: info@lvi.org.au

Read the magazine online

To access the *Victorian Landcare & Catchment Management* magazine online (as web pages or pdfs) go to www.landcarevic.org.au/landcare-magazine/
Back issues of the magazine can be accessed online as pdfs.

Next issue

Issue 83 of the magazine, to be published in Summer 2022, will feature stories on biodiversity. Contributions to this issue have closed.

Issue 84, to be published in Winter 2022, will feature stories on how Landcare groups and networks are using online tools to publicise, plan, communicate and report on their projects. Our readers are keen to learn about the successes of different approaches as well as what hasn't worked and the insights and reflections of your group or network along the way.

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

Contributions for the Winter 2022 issue should be sent to the editor by Friday 18 March 2022.

Carrie Tiffany, editor

Victorian Landcare and Catchment Management Magazine

Email: editorviclandcare@gmail.com



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