

VICTORIAN

LANDCARE

Spring/Summer 2012 Issue 56

& CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT



INTERNATIONAL LANDCARE FEATURE

African Landcarers meet in Mafikeng

Landcare rebuilds in Indonesia after volcano tragedy

Sharing conservation stories in Montana



Victorian Landcare and Catchment Management

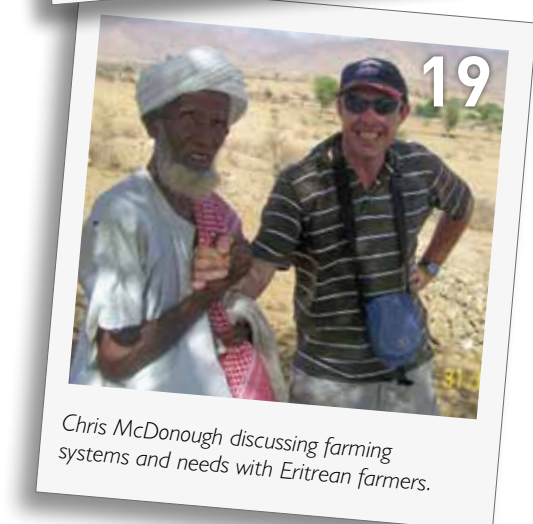
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Editorial Advisory Committee

Karen Brisbane Victorian Landcare Team,
Melissa Whitelaw Landcare Australia Limited,
Tracey Koper Victorian Catchment Management
Council, Ugo Mantelli DPI, Susi Johnson FTLA,
Jessica Barnes DSE, Tara Dalton DSE.

Editorial contributions

Carrie Tiffany, PO Box 1135,
Mitcham North 3132 Phone 0405 697 548
E-mail: editorviclandcare@gmail.com

Cover photograph

Ugandan Landcare farmers welcome participants to a Landcare master class held at Mbale, 250 kilometres east of Kampala in March this year, by Rob Youl.

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From the Minister

In this edition, we pack our bags for an international adventure to see how different countries have picked up Landcare and successfully run with it.

We look to Africa, New Zealand, Tonga, Indonesia and Germany to find out how communities have adapted Landcare to suit their own culture, landscape and natural resource management priorities.

The international uptake of Landcare is a testament to those pioneering Landcarers who travelled abroad to share their knowledge and expertise, as well as hosting study tours back home to share their lessons and experience.

During Landcare week in September, I launched the Victorian Landcare Program Strategic Plan, which will guide the Victorian Government's key program of support to strengthen Landcare.

Working in partnership with the Landcare community, the Victorian Government welcomes the opportunity to continue working towards achieving the goal of the Victorian Landcare Program, which is to have a shared responsibility for a healthy environment.

The strategic plan was developed with the input of the Landcare community with feedback coming in from all across the state, and I would like to thank everyone for their valuable contributions.

During a visit to the Mallee CMA region in September, I visited the area's newest Landcare group, which runs out of the Red Cliffs Secondary College, thanks to funding provided by the Victorian Landcare Program.

Since getting started last year, the Red Cliffs Community Landcare Group, made up of students, teachers and parents, has been focusing on local actions that benefit the wider community.

Activities such as the sustainable garden, built to grow the produce used in the school cooking classes, are a great way of using resources and I congratulate everyone involved for their contribution to the environment and wider community.

At the beginning of October I had the privilege of launching a new plan to co-ordinate \$1 billion worth of works over the next five years across the state's waterways to improve the health of the Yarra River and Port Phillip Bay.

The plan of action – *A Cleaner Yarra River and Port Phillip Bay* – sets out a clear path of investment, action and responsibility to improve the quality of the Yarra and Bay. I hope you will take the opportunity to have a look at the plan, which can be found at www.dse.vic.gov.au

As the warm weather settles in, I'd like to wish you a safe and happy festive season as we all look forward to more inspiring Landcare stories and successes in 2013.

Ryan Smith
Minister for Environment and
Climate Change

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During Landcare week in September, I launched the Victorian Landcare Program Strategic Plan, which will guide the Victorian Government's key program of support to strengthen Landcare.

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The program highlights the importance of maintaining a healthy environment by investigating the little creatures that we often don't think about.

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Wonthaggi Primary School students conduct a macro invertebrate survey at the Wonthaggi wetlands.

Bass Coast Landcare groups enlist local students as environmental detectives

By Sara Van Stokrom

Covering transport costs and providing technical knowledge and equipment have been the key to getting local school students involved in Landcare in the Bass Coast area.

The Bass Coast Landcare Network (BCLN) has been involved with schools in the network area since it was set up in 2004, but it had always been on an ad hoc basis. The relationship between BCLN and local schools has been significantly strengthened through the development of an environmental detectives program.

Students search for bugs in local wetlands, count worms in soil samples, squish mud through their fingers to determine soil type, listen for frog calls and watch the flight of birds in a local patch of remnant bush. The activities are provided as part of a set list that is aligned with school curriculum.

A major barrier to schools participating in Landcare activities has been the cost of transport and lack of technical knowledge and equipment. Each of the 10 Landcare groups in the network sponsor schools in their area every year to help with bus hire. Group members also open

up their properties as monitoring sites and volunteer to help tutor students with monitoring techniques alongside trained Landcare staff. Other funding has been contributed by DSE through a Landcare Volunteer Action Grant Project to help with purchasing equipment kits and to subsidise transport costs.

According to Nick Sibly, a teacher at Wonthaggi Secondary College, the program fits into the environmental science component of the horticulture course taught in year nine at the college.

“The students respond very well to the hands on aspect of the activities and gain much insight into a world that they previously had not been aware of.

“The program highlights the importance of maintaining a healthy environment by investigating the little creatures that we often don't think about. It shows students that if the environment is healthy at the macro level, then we can be confident that the land practices are heading in the right direction. If the results are poor then it challenges the students to think about what may need to change with regards

to land management,” Nick said.

The network sees the program as a way of connecting with young people and encouraging them to get involved in Landcare activities in the future.

For more information go to www.basscoastlandcare.org.au or contact Sarah Van Stokrom on 5678 2335.



Students from Wonthaggi Secondary College gain insight into the work of Landcare with activities at the local wetlands.



Holly in the otherwise pristine Back Creek at Blackwood.

Holly is a thorny enemy in Blackwood

By Shane Scanlan

Holly enjoys a positive reputation with the public, which makes it a difficult environmental weed to combat in our Landcare region based around Blackwood in the Wombat State Forest.



This immaculately maintained holly hedge is within several hundred metres of the infested Back Creek at Blackwood.

The weed is grown ornamentally in gardens throughout the town. The Garden of St Erth grows the weed in well-manicured hedges while only a few hundred metres away, holly dominates the bed and banks of the shaded Back Creek, a tributary of the Lerderberg River.

Holly was allowed to flourish for decades (possibly even more than a century) and had colonised vast areas of our local waterways before any serious attempt at eradication was undertaken. In recent years Melbourne Water has been spending significant sums in the battle against this destructive weed.

Controlling holly is difficult as its waxy leaves make it resistant to sprays. Trees have to be cut and the stumps painted. Cut branches will regrow if they come into contact with the ground.

It costs up to six times more to tackle holly than weeds which respond to chemical sprays. Holly is not a declared or regional priority weed as it will only flourish in specific micro-climates. It is a major concern for the Blackwood and Barry's Reef Landcare Group as we are aware of the environmental damage it causes.

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Controlling holly is difficult as its waxy leaves make it resistant to sprays. Trees have to be cut and the stumps painted. Cut branches will regrow if they come into contact with the ground.

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Blackwood Landcare Group member John Davies has been at the forefront of the battle against invasive weeds in the Blackwood area. John is working with Melbourne Water to clear Back Creek of holly.

The group is gearing up for a public education campaign to target the emotional attachment that local gardeners have for holly. We are also talking to the Shire of Moorabool about other options to assist with control of holly and other local problem weeds.

The fight against weeds needs to be assessed at a local level. Most landowners within our shire are primarily concerned with serrated tussock, but it's not a problem for our group. Some people wouldn't give holly a second thought.

Shane Scanlan is the president of the Blackwood and Barry's Reef Landcare Group. For further information email shane@mediacomms.com.au

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We treat all volunteers with respect. We give them interesting and worthwhile activities to complete and take the time for a chat.

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Footscray City Primary School students have fun at Westgate Park last year.

Respect is the key to working with

Tucked under Melbourne's Westgate Bridge is a gem of a park that has been created almost entirely by volunteers. Westgate Park was established in 1985 to mark the 150th anniversary of the founding of Melbourne. By 2000 the park was badly degraded. Much of the vegetation that had been planted fifteen years earlier was dying and weeds had a stranglehold.

The Westgate Park site is managed by Parks Victoria, with the Friends of Westgate Park who are delivering the revegetation project across the 40-hectare park. The aim is for maximum biodiversity, with volunteers gradually converting the park to appropriate ecosystems closely resembling the pre-settlement vegetation, with regionally indigenous trees, shrubs and grasses.

The Friends program averages 1000 volunteer hours each month. A few regular Friends contribute up to 150 hours monthly, with others managing 10–20 hours. More significant is the wide variety of support that the Friends group has been able to attract from the wider community.

Strong relationships with corporations whose employees are paid to participate in community projects have brought huge numbers of volunteers to the park, sometimes accompanied by generous donations. A number of these major corporations have been returning to complete different activities at the park for more than seven years.

Other volunteers include work-for-the-dole participants, retirees seeking worthwhile and satisfying activities, school children, local and overseas people enlisted by Conservation Volunteers Australia, clients of Landcare Australia Limited,

Green Job Corps volunteers, Women from the Good Shepherd Foundation's Outlandish Program which assists marginalised people, adults with minor disabilities fostered by Central Bayside Community Health Services, other diverse cultural, youth and religious groups and birdwatchers.



Westgate Park neighbours spread mulch with staff from Boeing.



IBM staff appreciated the physical workout and a day in the park as they moved mulch for their centenary celebration in June 2011.

volunteers at Westgate Park

By Rob Youl

According to Friends group member Tony Flude there are two main reasons why the Friends have been so successful at recruiting and retaining volunteers.

"First of all we have this terrific site very close to Melbourne. It is a surprisingly beautiful place to be. People get a real sense of satisfaction from working here and if they come back they can clearly see how things are improving and what they have achieved.

"Respect is the other critical ingredient. We treat all volunteers with respect. We give them interesting and worthwhile activities to complete and take the time for a chat."

Respect is evident in how volunteer activities are planned. All tools and equipment are on hand and occupational health and safety training is conducted. Members of the Friends group explain the different tasks to volunteers and what their contribution will achieve.

"We don't just ask people to plant trees," Tony said.

"We talk about what we are planting and why. We explain the sort of bird species different plants will attract. And social activities are critical. All of our activities start and finish at the depot with tea, coffee and biscuits. In winter we have

a chat around the fire – it's a good way to get to know people."

The Friends target activities to particular groups. Corporate teams are often made up of energetic young people who like to get stuck in and achieve a lot. Other volunteers work at a different pace, but may be more inclined to return to the park and make a long-term commitment. The Friends group has retained work-for-the-dole volunteers after their obligations have finished.

"Five of our most active and regular Friends originally came to us through work-for-the-dole and have kept on coming," Tony said.

According to George Fotheringham, president of Friends of Westgate Park, the impetus for attracting volunteers to the park came from Landcare Australia Limited in the late 1990s.

"The Melbourne office was fielding numerous enquiries from people wanting to work for the environment. They were looking for a long-term, iconic project near the city that was close to public transport. They wanted a project with interesting human dimensions, that was flexible and reliable and that gave volunteers an insight into the complexity of Landcare.



Staff from PricewaterhouseCoopers chat while they plant trees at Westgate Park.

They picked us and have helped us to find the funding to make the project work."

George admits that this has placed an obligation on the group to perform well, but they don't regret a minute of it.

"Working to transform the park provides us with an enormous sense of satisfaction. Being able to share that with so many other people has been a gift."

For further information visit
www.friends-of-westgatepark.org.au

Site visits recruit new members in the Southern Dandenongs

By Vicki Boyle

The Dandenongs are a tourist drawcard with their tall mountain ash forests and lush fern gullies. However, tourist and residential pressures are taking their toll with environmental weeds threatening to change the nature of the forest unless their spread can be halted.

Most of these weeds are garden escapes such as ivy, holly, sycamore maple, honeysuckle and agapanthus.

The Southern Dandenongs Landcare Group had a large email list but needed to recruit more hands-on members to the cause. The group used a DSE Landcare Volunteer Action Project Grant to offer free site assessments for local landholders who joined the group. The assessments were seen as a positive way to connect with people and introduce them to Landcare.

Group members were trained to do the basic site assessments by local ecologist and group member Darcy Duggan. The focus was the sustainable management of environmental weeds and protection of remnant indigenous vegetation to protect local biodiversity.



Southern Dandenongs Landcare Group member and ecologist Darcy Duggan training volunteer site assessors in an area infested by Tradescantia fluminensis, a common environmental weed.

Each participant received a written assessment report and a resource file with information on sustainable living. Group members underestimated the time each assessment would take, finding some blocks much larger than others and some very steep with accessibility problems. Participants were eager for general environmental information.

Group members found they needed to have a good knowledge of exotic garden plants as well as indigenous plants and to be able to answer questions about fruit and vegetable gardening, permaculture, local by-laws, indigenous fauna, the management of stream frontage and other local Friends groups. The resource file just kept expanding.

The site assessments provided the group with good information on localised weed infestations and arrangements were made to have many of these removed by the landholder or a contractor. Advice was given on the protection of locally threatened orchid species and other locally rare plants. The assessments also allowed for participants to be referred to other community groups for assistance with

their particular interests. This included the local food harvest group, visual platypus monitoring, wildlife monitoring, community nursery, stormwater management and various Friends groups.

The assessments were a great opportunity to welcome participants into the Landcare group and explain to them that managing their property sustainably makes a huge impact on the protection of significant environmental assets such as the Dandenong Ranges National Park.

According to the group secretary, Anne Elizabeth, the assessors also benefited from their participation with increased confidence and skills.

"It has been a really worthwhile endeavour for all concerned. We will continue the project as part of our long-term community education and engagement program. We would like to thank DSE and Port Phillip and Westernport CMA who helped to fund the project and encouraged us to try something new."

For further information email Vicki Boyle from the Southern Dandenongs Landcare Group at selbyboyles@dodo.com.au

African Landcarers meet in Mafikeng

By Mieke Bourne and Clinton Muller

Delegates from Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Rwanda, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe gathered in Mafikeng, in October to attend the Republic of South Africa's fifth biennial LandCare Conference, at which Australian Rob Youl spoke on Landcare across the world.

The African Landcare Network (ALN) held its third meeting during the conference. ALN is a network of individuals, institutions, government and non-government organisations committed to championing Landcare in Africa. The main goal of ALN is to build and support a network of country Landcare programs across Africa.

The ALN is chaired by South Africa and the secretariat is housed at the World Agroforestry Centre in Nairobi, Kenya. South Africa Landcare's support for the network is a wonderful example of the multiplier effect stemming from Australia's investment in South African Landcare that started in 1997.

With the support of ALN many more African countries will be able to further adopt and develop the Landcare model to assist in achieving community empowerment, project sustainability and improved food security.

The introduction of more developed Landcare programs to other countries is a cyclic process. Jan Smit, a Landcare Manager from Western Cape in South Africa, recently attended the National Landcare Conference in Sydney and witnessed the bottom up approach of Landcare.

"The thing that hit me the most is the foundation that I saw. In Australia Landcare is built on honesty, trust, respect and voluntary work in the community to manage the natural resources in support of livelihoods, the caring for your land,



Members of the African Landcare Network held their third meeting during the recent Republic of South Africa's fifth biennial LandCare Conference.

and the communities that drive it," Jan said.

The Mafikeng conference was a great opportunity for delegates to share ideas and approaches. Awadh Chemangi from Kapchorwa District Landcare Chapter in Uganda said, "The conference also gave me the understanding that Landcare could be carried to where we used to think it could not be applied, such as the dry pastoral lands in the northern parts of Uganda."

According to Dr Joseph Mutua from Kenya the most important part of Landcare is the inspiration.

"It gives you the energy and drive to move your process a step higher. The biggest steps in establishing Landcare in Kenya have happened after seeing other places and sharing experiences," he said.

All of the delegates left the conference having had a positive cross-learning experience. The success of the conference

and the ALN demonstrates that there are no boundaries or borders when sharing Landcare experience and the value of doing so should never be underestimated.

Mieke Bourne and Clinton Muller work for the World Agroforestry Centre in Nairobi which provides secretariat support for the African Landcare Network. For further information go to www.worldagroforestry.org/projects/landcare or email Mieke or Clinton on m.bourne@cgiar.org or c.muller@cgiar.org



A field trip to Eska-Newham and Kgokojane in the north-west province of South Africa to look at veld improvement projects.

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The introduction of more developed Landcare programs to other countries is a cyclic process.

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Landcare rebuilds in Indonesia after volcano tragedy

By Victoria Mack

On 26 October 2010 Indonesia's most active volcano, Mt Merapi, erupted and 353 people lost their lives. It was the worst eruption in 100 years. More than 300,000 people were evacuated from a 20-kilometre exclusion zone around the volcano's core, leaving crops, livestock and livelihoods untended for many weeks.

The eruption also destroyed plant nurseries and more than 14,000 shrubs, grasses, timber, fruit and coffee trees established by Indonesia's first Landcare program – Merapi Landcare.

Merapi Landcare, with its four operational Landcare groups, is centred on the villages of Samiran and Lencoh within the larger village of Selo on the northern slopes of Mt Merapi in Central Java. The area is home to 7000 people.

These villages were not in the direct deadly path of the eruption, but they were significantly affected by damaging ash which blanketed the northern slopes. The ash also wiped out farmers' crops and set back the lives of the villagers, and the Landcare program, by over 12 months.

Merapi Landcare is run solely by Indonesians. Landcare support has been provided since 2009 on a voluntary basis by the Victorian non-government organisation, the Secretariat for International Landcare (SILC).

Merapi Landcare works like any Australian Landcare network with a cluster of self-governing groups setting goals, strategies and implementation plans. In Samiran and Lencoh these goals have included planting deep-rooted vegetation to prevent land slips and erosion after torrential rain, new crops to diversify and improve economic opportunities, women's enterprise groups to improve family incomes, nurseries to propagate trees, shrubs, grasses and crops, value adding to existing crops and dairy production, a community radio station

to communicate with villagers and biogas installations to provide alternative energy for cooking and lighting.

Since the eruption, the Landcare project has gradually returned to its agenda although the momentum and direction have changed. The installation of biogas plants, the upgrading of the radio station, support for the women's enterprise group and value adding to the village dairy production are now top priority.

The biogas project involves collecting methane from housed dairy and beef cattle. The manure from one or two cows can power more than 50 per cent of the energy needs of one home. It reduces the time-consuming harvesting of timber from surrounding reserves and national parks.

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Merapi Landcare works like any Australian Landcare network with a cluster of self-governing groups setting goals, strategies and implementation plans.

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Indonesian delegates at the National Landcare Conference in Sydney in September 2012, Sartono, Ujung Pramudiyanto and Sutar.



The challenging Merapi slopes in Central Java.

It also saves extra money spent on kerosene or LPG for cooking. Biogas improves the health of women who had previously worked over smoky kitchen fires. Manure can also be sold to other villagers who do not have cows, requiring only a small amount each month to power a domestic unit.

The radio station is now fully operational. In September 2010 a \$500 donation from the Dhurringile and District Landcare Group from the Goulburn Broken region in Victoria helped Merapi Landcare to repair a broken radio transmitter. Locals went on to purchase additional radio equipment with their own funds and the station, run by farmers on a voluntary roster, now broadcasts daily.

The women's enterprise group started a catering service and has now completed training in the vacuum frying of vegetable and fruit chips from indigenous persimmon and farmed carrots.

Two years on Landcare members are still cleaning up after the eruption. The ash sets like concrete when wet and much work still needs to be done clearing drainage lines and waterways. The groups meet regularly and organise working bees on community and environmental projects.

Three members of Merapi Landcare attended the National Landcare Conference in Sydney this year supported by AUSAID's International Seminar Support Scheme. The delegates participated in the full six-day program including Landcare field trips aimed at increasing their

understanding of how Landcare works in Australia. They tell me their visit has re-energised their Landcare plans.

SILC plans to continue to support the Indonesian Landcare program in coming months and years in collaboration with the Indonesian Landcare team, which is currently based in Yogyakarta. A study tour to Indonesia for interested Australian Landcare volunteers is also planned in 2013.

Victoria Mack (along with Sue Marriott) is a Director of SILC and provides Landcare support to the Merapi Landcare Project. For more information please contact Victoria Mack at vmack@silc.com.au

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Two years on Landcare members are still cleaning up after the eruption.

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A community radio station staffed by farmers on a voluntary basis helps spread the Landcare message.

The Secretariat for International Landcare

The Secretariat for International Landcare (SILC) Inc. is an Australian non-profit organisation based in Victoria, Australia.

After working with South Africa between 1995 and 1997, the founding directors of SILC realised the potential benefits of extending the principles of Landcare internationally. When SILC started there was no organisation, government or non-government, dedicated to showcasing Australian Landcare to other countries.

SILC has been a major driver of the international Landcare movement since 1998. A key component in Landcare is

demonstrating what is possible; what ordinary people can do. SILC creates opportunities for positive and informed interaction between the existing Landcare movement and emerging international interest in Landcare.

One of SILC's strengths is that it is a small and dedicated group that is able to respond to enquiries quickly, flexibly and effectively. SILC is highly collaborative and has extensive networks throughout the international Landcare family.

For information contact www.silc.com.au



The entrance to Maungatautari, New Zealand's largest ecological island.

A grand vision in Waikato delivers

My career in natural resource management has been long, varied and always interesting. As one of for Environmental Resources (INFFER) I have been involved in efforts to improve the rigour and across Australia and internationally in Canada, China and New Zealand.

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During the ten-day study tour I visited projects in the North Island and met people doing innovative and inspiring work on community-based biodiversity conservation.

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For the past 10 years I have also been a trustee of the Norman Wettenhall Foundation, a philanthropic organisation dedicated to enhancing and maintaining the vitality and diversity of Australia's natural living environment. In recent years the foundation has committed to supporting grass-roots approaches to biodiversity conservation.

In September 2009 I was honoured to receive the Dr. Sidney Plowman Travel and Study Award. I used the award to examine community-based approaches to biodiversity conservation in New Zealand. Regional councils in New Zealand are superficially similar to Australian CMAs, but they have greater statutory power and autonomy in decision making. I was keen to explore these arrangements and learn how they have influenced community participation in decision making compared with Australia.

During the 10-day study tour I visited projects in the North Island and met

people doing innovative and inspiring work on community-based biodiversity conservation. One of the highlights was my visit to the Maungatautari Restoration Project. Located in the Waikato region near Cambridge, this is the largest ecological project in the country.

The project is engineered to remove all non-native pest mammals and predators and restore endangered native flora and fauna to Maungatautari. This is a community project that includes private land and a government-owned scenic reserve administered by Waipa District Council.

With 47 kilometres of predator proof fence enclosing 3400 hectares of largely intact native forest, Maungatautari is the largest ecological island on mainland New Zealand. The project is a truly community-driven initiative, involving a complex array of stakeholders.

My visit to Maungatautari highlighted the importance of having a grand and



Norman Wettenhall Foundation Trustees on a field trip near Castlemaine. Geoff Park hopes he can bring lessons learned from his study tour to New Zealand back to the work of community organisations like the Norman Wettenhall Foundation.

Travel and study fellowships on offer

Entries for the Victorian Landcare Awards will be open in 2013 and applications will be sought for the Heather Mitchell Memorial Fellowship and the Dr Sidney Plowman Travel and Study Award.

The Heather Mitchell Memorial Fellowship is open to community members and support staff of Victorian Landcare (or other community natural resource management) groups or networks. The fellowship is awarded to a Landcarer who has demonstrated a substantial contribution to Victorian community Landcare at a group or network level and is to be used for travel, study or some other form of professional development.

The fellowship honours Heather Mitchell, a former Victorian Farmers Federation president, who was fundamental in the formation of the Landcare movement.

The Dr Sidney Plowman Travel and Study Award is presented to an employee of DPI, DSE or a Victorian CMA who has demonstrated an outstanding contribution towards reversing land degradation on farms. The award can be used for a study tour or professional development.

Further information will be available when the Victorian Landcare Awards are announced next year. Go to the Landcare Gateway at www.landcarevic.net.au

local wisdom

By Geoff Park

the developers of the Investment Framework transparency of environmental decision making

compelling vision underpinned by appropriate governance and decision-making structures. The project is managed by a board of adjoining landholders, community representatives, Mana Whenua (the local Maori people with territorial authority), conservation agencies and the district council. The level of volunteer effort involved in the project is inspirational.

The trip to New Zealand has had a number of impacts on my work back in Australia. It has made me more aware that we live in a world of complexity, where interwoven ecological, social and economic factors often hamper the ability of people and communities to work together for productive outcomes.

Over the years a number of my friends and colleagues have received the study award and hearing about their experiences motivated me to apply. A 10-day trip may seem like a minor detour in a 25-year career, but this was not the case.

The tour gave me a chance to reflect on many aspects of my work, it re-energised me and affirmed the direction I thought I should take. Looking back three years later I realise what a wonderful opportunity it was. I pay tribute to Dr Plowman for establishing the award and encourage others to apply.

More information on the Maungatautari Ecological Trust is available at www.maungatrutrust.org

The Norman Wettenhall Foundation website is www.nwf.org

INFFER is a natural asset-based approach to environmental planning. It integrates community and scientific knowledge, bringing a transparent, evidence-based and pragmatic approach to natural resource management. Go to www.inffer.org

A week of Landcare guidance in

In March this year the International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF) organised a Landcare master class at Mbale, Uganda, 250 kilometres east of Kampala. The five-day master class included a field day examining successful Landcare projects at Kapchorwa on the slopes of Mt Elgon.



Eastern Ugandan Landcare by Rob Youl. Master class participants and local farmers on the slopes of Mt Elgon. The two groups represented were the Kaplelko Agro Forestry Farmers Group and Juwa Kali Sunflower Farmers Association.

The master class attracted participants from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Malawi and Ethiopia. They included national-level policy makers, community facilitators, existing Landcare partners and staff from non-government organisations.

Participants met empowered Landcare groups and examined some of their activities which included domestic dairy cattle coupled with biogas plants, honey production to help stabilise park and forest boundaries, agroforestry and sunflower oil co-operatives and tackling streamside erosion.

Australians Dennis Garrity, Mieke Bourne, Julian Prior, Theo Nabben, Mary Johnson, Bruce Lloyd, Rowan Reid and myself were involved in facilitating the master class. East African facilitators included Joseph Mutua, Charles Lyamchai, Awadh Simon, Simon Nyangas, Awadh Chemangei and Masingita Chauke.

The training covered Landcare principles, policy, organisational and financial management, fundraising, incentives, communication, technology, monitoring, evaluation and networking. The Australians

shared and analysed the lessons that had been learned in these areas. Sessions on building effective community groups and facilitation skills were well received along with the role of women in Landcare.

During the final master class sessions the different groups produced basic Landcare plans for their home countries. ICRAF is assisting the African Landcare Network to run a master class for Southern Africa next year. Other international Landcare partners are looking at classes in other parts of the world.



Kapchorwa's mayor, Sam Cheptoris (centre), a great advocate for Landcare, speaks to the master class students and local farmers.

Australian Landcare International

Australian Landcare International (ALI) is a not-for-profit organisation started in 2008. Its members have been involved in Landcare in Australia at policy, program and operational levels for more than 20 years.

The goal of ALI is to use our collective Landcare experience to support people in other countries to manage their land and water resources more sustainably. ALI promotes Landcare to national and international organisations, trains overseas participants in Landcare within Australia and in home countries and makes connections between people and projects in Australia and overseas.

Australian Landcare International draws upon expertise through its specific database of members, its wider network and its relationships with various organisations, both corporate and government. ALI manages a travel fellowship, funded by private donors, for an experienced Australian Landcarer to visit a nominated country. Fellows have visited Sri Lanka, USA, New Zealand, South Korea and Kenya.

ALI members have made visits to Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Tonga, the Philippines, South Korea and the United States to discuss the implementation of a Landcare approach to sustainable food production and resource conservation.

With help from Landcare International, ALI is currently developing a plan for a professional multinational bureau to promote Landcare. It also continues to seek funding from the corporate and government sectors to develop new projects. Anyone can become a member and companies or organisations can also get involved.

For further information visit www.australianlandcareinternational.com

Rob Youl has been involved in Landcare in Australia since its formation. He is a forester and the chair of Australian Landcare International. For further information email Rob at robmyoul@gmail.com

Community-owned catchment management in NZ

By James Barnett

Water quality is a key issue in New Zealand and pressure is building among many water users, which in some cases has resulted in conflict and division.

The National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management that was released by the New Zealand Government in 2011 specifies the requirements for regionally set minimum standards before 2014 and further regulation is inevitable. This will help clarify the issue, but tension around the needs of primary producers is also likely to increase.

There are water management success stories in New Zealand and they often share a common theme – collaboration. Established in 1996, the New Zealand Landcare Trust has been involved in a number of community driven projects where collaboration has played a major role. By engaging and working with farmers, landowners, industry, local authorities, iwi (tribal people), scientists, recreational users and conservationists, the Trust has helped communities to identify their own solutions.

With this in mind the NZ Landcare Trust was approached by the Ministry for the Environment and asked to produce a publication and education program to highlight the benefits of community engagement in rural catchment management projects.

The theory of community engagement may sound great, but delivery is far from straightforward. *Community-owned Rural Catchment Management: A guide for partners* is a publication that examines common themes running through successful projects. The guide underlines the idea that communities must own an issue to

achieve effective, sustained change. It outlines the role and value of community ownership, and addresses strategic approaches as well as practical actions. In addition, a series of master classes will build upon aspects of the guide and provide an opportunity to discuss ideas.

The ultimate aim of the new initiative is to highlight genuine value of community engagement within catchment level projects and how this approach offers long-term benefits that can improve the quality of New Zealand's freshwater resources.

James Barnett is the Communications Manager at the NZ Landcare Trust. Further information is available at www.landcare.org.nz or by emailing james.barnett@landcare.org.nz



Landcare in Germany – working together for varied landscapes

By Beate Krettinger and Marie Kaerlein

Landcare got underway in Germany in 1985 with the formation of the first Landcare Association. There are 155 Landcare Associations – at least one in every federal state across the country.

The Landcare Associations are made up of farmers, environmentalists and local authorities and they work closely with local and regional communities.

The Landcare Associations act as advisers and mediate schemes on private and community land. They give nature conservation advice for biodiversity protection and plan measures to improve the ecological value of man-made landscapes.

The work of the associations can include planting hedges and preserving orchards, mowing wetlands and cutting scrub on ecologically valuable grazing grounds. The Landcare Associations open up financial resources (European and/or state funds) and co-ordinate the implementation of works mainly done by local farmers. More than 20,000 farmers work for nature protection within our Landcare Associations in Germany each year.

The success and popularity of the associations is based on the fact they are non-government organisations, they work on the basis of parity (there are equal numbers of environmentalists, farmers and local politicians on the boards) and all participation is voluntary. Landcare Associations only offer advice to local authorities, farmers and other private landowners on request.

Landcare in Bavaria

The idea of Landcare started in Bavaria in the mid-eighties. There are now 55 Landcare Associations in Bavaria, working together with 3500 farmers and 220 shepherds. More than 60 per cent of the state-funded Landcare measures are implemented by the Landcare Associations.

Supporting regional identity is one of the aims of Landcare in Germany. In Bavaria one of the Landcare priorities is to keep ecologically valuable orchards in use by the exchange of old and new knowledge (tree pruning and the use of apple collectors), planting new orchards and supporting the regional processing and marketing of the cider and apple-juice products.

Ecologically valuable grazing grounds are also being enhanced and protected by introducing regional marketing projects for lamb meat to support local sheep farmers and co-operating with local restaurants, hotels and butchers. With the help of farmers and community, bushes and trees are cut back on grazing grounds to create open habitats for endangered herbs.

Landcare in Bavaria is co-ordinated by a state facilitator, employed at the German Association of Landcare (DVL), the umbrella organisation of all regional Landcare Associations.

In Bavaria the DVL manages a project called Bayern Ureinwohner – a public relations campaign focusing on the region's rare animal and plant species. Inventive and creative events such as hill races, concerts and art shows organised by Landcare Associations help to raise awareness for environmental issues in the wider community.

For further information contact Beate Krettinger by email at krettinger@lpv.de



The Lichtenfels Landcare Association organised a hill race to raise awareness for an endangered beetle, Sandlaufkäfer. The participation of a world champion created community interest.



Members of the Landcare Association of Central Franconia clearing scrub at Hesselberg, the highest peak in Central Franconia.

Australia's Master TreeGrower course heads to Africa

By Clinton Tepper

Australian forester Rowan Reid ran the first Master TreeGrower course in the Otways in 1996. Since then he has run 98 courses across Australia involving 2000 Australian landholders and more than 100 contractors, extension staff and professionals who work with them.

The course is considered to have changed the nature of farm forestry extension in Australia.

In 2010 Rowan Reid and Jon Lambert were invited to participate in an agroforestry workshop in Nairobi, Kenya. Jon, a forester and former student of Rowan's, is the director of the non-profit Christian development organisation, Beyond Subsistence. Beyond Subsistence provides forestry and agroforestry expertise and support to aid organisations operating in developing countries, particularly Africa.

Jon and Rowan recognised the immense need for knowledge about tree growing in Africa and made a commitment to try to get the Master TreeGrower course up and running. The first step was to invite a group of African extension agents and researchers to Australia to see how the courses are run and explore how they could help design and promote the course back in their home countries.

With funding and support from a range of groups including the Crawford Fund, Beyond Subsistence brought five African nationals from Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya and Lesotho,

and two Americans currently working in Niger to Victoria for the two-week course.

The first week was spent in Gippsland and included tours of various forestry projects and sawmills. The African participants saw how farmers are taught about markets, measurement and the management of trees on farms. The second week was spent with the Otway Agroforestry Network and focused on the design of revegetation projects that reflect the interests and aspirations of landholders.

The participants visited nurseries, farms and native forests and had a chance to experience Australia's unique wildlife and rural hospitality. At the conclusion of the course all of the African nationals felt the course could be adapted to suit the needs, aspirations and opportunities facing farmers and foresters across Africa.

Beyond Subsistence is now raising funds for courses to be run in Uganda and Niger in 2013. These preliminary courses will involve researchers, extension agents and leading local farmers and will kick start a series of local courses run by Africans in their own communities.



Participants and supporters of the first African Master TreeGrower course from top left: Andrew Stewart, Niguse Gebremedhin, Sammy Carsan, Joy Tukahirwa, Clinton Tepper, Tafere Desta, Arron Thacher, Jon Lambert, Peter Cunningham, John Ballantyne, Steve Sywulka, Bokang Ntloko and Rowan Reid.

Jon and Rowan believe that trees and shrubs have a significant role to play on African farms, but they don't necessarily know what species will work or the most appropriate management options. These are decisions that farmers will need to make for themselves as they explore the local issues and potential solutions through the course.

Like the Australian Master TreeGrower, the course will not be promoting forestry on farms: it will assist farmers to explore opportunities for using trees to improve their livelihoods. In Africa the course has the potential to save the lives of many people who face starvation on a regular basis.

For more information on the Master TreeGrower course go to www.agroforestry.net.au the Beyond Subsistence website is at www.beyondsubsistence.org.au or email Jon Lambert at jlambert@beyondsubsistence.org.au



Rowan Reid leading a mensuration exercise for the African Master TreeGrower course at Bunyip.



From left: Jeff Bectell, Martin Goebel, Jess Gardner and Anne Truslow in a break-out discussion during the Blackfoot Challenge Workshop.

Sharing landscape-scale conservation stories in Montana

By Jess Gardner

In September I attended a workshop in the Blackfoot watershed of Montana, USA to share different experiences of landscape-scale collaborative conservation projects.

Landholders, community and agency staff from America, Canada and Australia met at the workshop to share their successes and challenges. We discussed what has worked, what hasn't and had discussions around the reasons why.

I represented Habitat 141 and Sarah Lance from the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources in South Australia represented Naturelinks.

It was remarkable to see how similar the challenges and issues faced by groups tackling landscape-scale projects are across the world. All groups talked about the importance of building trust between partners before launching into serious collaborations. Projects that are led by the community and landholders but supported by agencies and the government were the most successful. It was acknowledged that there is no set model for collaboration and engagement; however, there are tried and true principles.

The Australian presentations emphasised the strong foundation that the Landcare

movement has provided. This has enabled people to have many of the relationships in place and to gain confidence from established successful projects when they begin to think and plan at a landscape scale.

The Blackfoot Challenge faces challenges similar to, but much greater than, Habitat 141 in working across political boundaries. The challenge project involves efforts to collaborate effectively across international borders into Canada and Mexico where a whole raft of different issues come into play. They've had a lot of success in transferring knowledge, ideas and the benefits of collaboration across the border.

One of the key lessons learned by community groups at the workshop is when tackling an environmental issue in your community, it's best to focus on the majority issues that everyone agrees on and don't use all your energy and efforts on the minor issues of disagreement. Also, science is definitely important but the real effort should be put into the art of delivery on the ground.

Carcass composting brings ranchers and conservationists together

A good example is the issue of predator management in the United States and Canada. Trying to convince ranchers to protect bears, wolves and prairie dogs when their domestic herds are under constant attack was causing conflict between conservationists and ranchers.

Seth Wilson of the Blackfoot Challenge introduced a successful carcass composting program to the Blackfoot Watershed where he works. After many discussions with local ranchers, they obtained funding to employ a person with a truck to drive around and collect carcasses from the local ranches once a week. This removed the predator attractants from the ranch.

The composting depot is predator fenced. Bark chips and soil are added and after two months all that is left of the carcasses is bones and high quality compost. Far less cattle and sheep are falling prey to these predators and far less bears, wolves and prairie dogs are



Blackfoot Challenge Workshop participants.



A carcass composting facility in the Blackfoot watershed of Montana.

being shot when they venture out onto the private lands. It's a great example of how when listening to and respecting people's concerns, really practical solutions can be found.

This approach has much in common to the Landcare movement in Australia where we regularly get together to swap stories and learn from each other's efforts. There was overwhelming interest in Landcare from Americans and Canadians, but we also have much to learn from them.

Key principles from the Blackfoot Challenge Community Based Collaborative Conservation Transferability Workshop included:

- Give everyone the opportunity to come to the table
- You can't achieve landscape conservation without landscape conversation
- Show people rather than tell them
- Local implementation teams make it happen.
- Top down support is necessary so the efforts on the ground are not let down
- Under promise – over deliver
- Politicians are always hearing complaints – put forward solutions
- Listen and build trust wherever you can
- Use science to target and measure success

Jess Gardner works for Greening Australia in the Wimmera. Her trip was funded by the Blackfoot Challenge, The Nature Conservancy and Greening Australia. For further information contact Jess at jgardner@gavic.org.au



A no till farming project is demonstrated in Eritrea.

Using Landcare principles in developing countries

As a young Landcare officer in South Australia in 1989 I worked with local farmer, community and school groups to help bring about lasting changes in our rural environments. The catch-phrase was 'working from the grass roots up'. This involved engaging all the local stakeholders with their enthusiasm and often innovative ideas, bringing in new technologies as resources were required and being prepared to try things out and make things work together.

My work now involves teaching participatory methods in developing countries. Many African and Middle Eastern countries have traditionally used top down approaches to agricultural development. Expert researchers are told to find the technical answers to problems, or to bring in expertise from overseas, which is then demonstrated on local research stations or key properties. It is expected that innovative local farmers will see results and adopt the new technologies, followed, in time, by the majority of other farmers.

This model can work well in areas with obvious needs, and where the solutions are affordable, available and easy to implement (such as changing

to a new disease resistant variety to increase yields). However, it is far less effective as problems become more complex, where poor farmers have less capacity to change and when support services are extremely limited.

Having worked with farmers and agricultural extension workers on various projects in Eritrea, Niger, Iraq and Egypt a number of clear messages emerge about top down approaches. These approaches often don't meet the majority of farmers' real needs, which are much broader than receiving good technical information and they generally do not respect the local knowledge of the farmers. Many farmers are reluctant to get involved in these top down programs because they do not trust the government workers, particularly when they are under more authoritarian regimes.

The growth of Landcare activities across the world is testament to the fact that we have a great deal to offer through our own Australian Landcare experience.

Chris McDonough is a farming systems consultant from Rural Solutions SA. For more information email Chris at chris.mcdonough@sa.gov.au

Landcare success in a Tongan village

By Bob Edgar

Tonga is a small independent Pacific kingdom with an economy that relies heavily upon international aid and family remittances. A problem with many aid projects in Tonga is that they don't satisfy real local needs and fall into disrepair soon after the donor leaves.

A Landcare project initiated by the Rotary Club of Frankston North in the village of Popua is proving a local success. The village of Popua was established for migrants from the outer islands who came to the Tongan capital seeking work. Unfortunately the land provided by the government is very low lying and subject to storm surge and inundation during the regular tropical cyclones.

Landcare was seen to provide an excellent framework for developing vegetable and poultry production in the village. The Tonga Community Development Trust acted as the local manager of the project. Several meetings were held with the community to discuss, plan and review what was needed.

The project complemented the community structure of the village. The community selected twenty families to take part. Four work groups were established to spread the crushed coral and topsoil. Each group was provided with a wheelbarrow and hand tools. This process achieved a high level of community participation and ownership of the gardens.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Forests and Fisheries provided training in compost making and crop protection and provided seedlings for the gardens. The first vegetables were planted in September 2011 and grew through the wet season. The wet season is challenging due to rain

damage and disease damage to crops, but production was satisfactory with each family harvesting \$20 per week of produce during the initial six-week harvest.

Unfortunately the harvest was cut short by the arrival of Cyclone Jasmine in mid-February. Flooding was made worse by recently constructed roads and some crops were destroyed. Culverts have since been installed to rectify the problem and good yields were obtained during the recent cool season.

Poultry shelters are currently being built. The shelters protect young chickens from roaming cats and dogs. The project aims to increase village poultry numbers and introduce improved strains of poultry to boost the amount of meat per bird while retaining the flavour of the village chickens.

The project budget provided for three shelters but at a review and planning meeting the community decided to build the shelters themselves rather than buy kits from the suppliers. Construction is underway and all 20 participants will now receive shelters.

More families from Popua will be included in the next stage of the work and the model will be used in other villages.

The Crawford Fund for International Agriculture funded the development of a village Landcare plan and technical training in soils, plant propagation and protection. Further funding is being sought for tree growing, coastal protection and mangrove rehabilitation works.

The project was initiated by the Rotary Club of Frankston North and supported by the Rotary Clubs of Croydon, Phillip Island-

San Remo and Nuku'alofa (the capital of Tonga). The Rotary Foundation also provided additional funding.

For further information contact Bob Edgar at redgar@netspace.net.au



Before: A site for a prospective Landcare garden in the Tongan village of Popua in April 2010.



After: Tomatoes and carrots are growing well by March 2012. The garden uses raised beds with topsoil placed on layers of crushed coral. This method draws on experience in Tuvalu and Kiribati where rising sea levels present a major problem.



National Tree Day at Strathallan

National Tree Day was a lot of fun for the children who climbed and played around this ancient yellow gum after the Strathallan Family Landcare Group's planting project.

More than 40 local volunteers attended the Shire of Campaspe sponsored project that saw 800 indigenous understorey shrubs and grasses planted before the adults shared a delicious lunch and the children enjoyed some tree play.

Dedication and innovation recognised at Port Phillip and Western Port Landcare Awards

The winners of the 2012 Port Phillip and Western Port Landcare Awards were announced at a celebration held at Melbourne Zoo in September. The major sponsors of the awards

are DSE, Melbourne Water and Landcare Australia Limited.

Regional Landcare Co-ordinator Doug Evans said the awards highlighted innovation in Landcare and served as

impressive examples of voluntary natural resource management.

"The awards are a great way for us to share that knowledge amongst Landcare groups – what's worked in one area could be applied in another – we want to demonstrate what's possible."



Port Phillip and Western Port Landcare Award winners, Barbara Setchell from Olinda Landcare Group, Robin Ford representing Deep Creek Landcare Group, Josh Blanchard representing Somerville Secondary College, Anthony Dufty President of Pentland Hills Landcare Group and Stanley Barker from Burke Road Billabong Committee of Management, Friends of Herring Island. Trevor Mills was absent.

Report from the National Landcare Conference

By Susi Johnson

More than 550 people attended the National Landcare Conference held in Sydney during Landcare Week.

Social media was one of the conference themes and expert Mia Freedman encouraged Landcarers to become active on Twitter and Facebook. Her advice to hook onto an emotional entry point was referred to many times by other presenters and participants. The gala dinner where the 2012 National Landcare Award winners were announced was the first time I ever felt the need to tweet!

A session called 'Landcare in the lunchbox' looked at the link between healthy soils, healthy animals and healthy food, but also the need for farmers to make a profit in order to be able to take care of their land.

A fantastic presentation by David Suzuki via telepresence opened the second day. Participants were spellbound as Suzuki talked about the challenges.



Presenters at the Landcare – The Future in Our Hands session included Melissa George, Megan Rowlatt, Doug Avery, Ian Thompson, Margie Jenkin and Ben Forsyth.

"...not in managing the lands, the air and the oceans, but the challenge in managing ourselves," Dr Suzuki said.

The question and answer session afterwards was almost intimate as people expressed how inspired they felt. Conference participants chose between a variety of different field trips and workshops. International Landcare was prominent with speakers from New Zealand, Germany, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

Other highlights included the Women in the Landscape project in NSW, the Illawarra Youth Project, Tom Croft's very practical social media workshop, and Cam Nicholson's presentation which demonstrated the power of farmer-led research at Woody Yaloak.

Plenary sessions and presentations from the conference are available to download from www.daff.gov.au/landcareconference

Around the State – News from the

Wimmera

Project Platypus held a successful Carbon in Agriculture event in conjunction with the network's 2012 AGM, where a panel of carbon experts answered questions from the community on a broad range of issues. Project Platypus also used the event to launch a new publication on the history of Landcare in the upper Wimmera. This outstanding story of community achievement is available on the Project Platypus website at www.platypus.org.au/

Other Landcare highlights include endangered orchid recovery efforts and an increase in junior Landcare activity. This is a direct result of the enthusiasm and hard work of our Landcare Facilitators. Our local Junior Landcare group in the West Wimmera deserves credit for their efforts to learn more about brotgas and frogs, indigenous planting, and other issues of local importance.

For further information contact
Joel Boyd on 5382 1544.

West Gippsland

Landcare has been busy with many local activities. A dinosaur dreaming event was held in Korumburra, quoll corridors were planted in Wonyip, a pizza and social media event was held in Briagolong, local birds were spotted and discussed in Moe, a dealing with landslips event was held in Leongatha and an art exhibition celebrating 25 years of Landcare was held on the Bass Coast.

Landcare network websites are the best way to find a group and get involved with events and activities. Bass Coast is at www.basscoastlandcare.org.au Latrobe Catchment is at www.lcn.org.au Maffra and District Landcare is at westgippsland.landcarevic.net.au/mdln South Gippsland is at www.sgln.org.au and Yarram Yarram is at www.yyln.org.au

For further information contact
Phillip McGarry on 1300 094 262.

Mallee

The Minister for Environment and Climate Change, the Hon. Ryan Smith, visited the Mallee in September to meet with the Red Cliffs Community Landcare Group and the Yelta Landcare Group and view their projects. The groups were appreciative of the Minister's visit and of his interest shown in the local issues and priorities that were raised.

Interest in Landcare is slowly increasing in the peri-urban areas with a handful of new

groups applying for funds for the first time to conduct local on-ground works. These projects have been supported by the new Victorian Local Landcare Facilitator Initiative positions and the interest being shown by sporting and recreation clubs such as the Mildura 4WD Club and Sunraysia Field and Game is a positive development.

Landcare groups have been busy planning next year's projects and applying for Victorian Government Landcare Grants to target important issues. Rabbits and weeds are a priority as favourable conditions over the last couple of seasons have seen both increase. Groups are keen to ensure that they remain under control.

For further information contact
Kevin Chaplin on 5051 4344.

Goulburn Broken

The Goulburn Broken Victorian Landcare Grants have now been finalised and released to community groups and networks.

A number of staff and volunteers attended the National Landcare Conference in Sydney. Attendees participated in workshops, listened to guest speakers and attended the National Landcare Awards and the launch of the new Landcare Community Service Announcement.

The region celebrated 90 days of biodiversity with more than 75 events run during September, October and November to incorporate Landcare

Week, Biodiversity Month, Spring into Nature and National Water Week. The four campaigns were successfully combined for the first time this year.

Events targeting soil health, wildlife, weed identification, direct seeding and wetlands created considerable community interest. Other events included the flood plain ecology course, Elmore Field Days and the Ausbike Expo in Melbourne.

For further information contact
Tony Kubeil on 5761 1619.

North Central

The Landcare team recently launched the newly designed regional Landcare newsletter, now known as *North Central Chat*. The monthly newsletter aims to keep the community up-to-date with all of the north central Landcare news.

The Victorian Landcare Grants Program is supporting 37 groups to undertake projects in the region and assisting one new network to form. Maintenance grants have been provided for 46 groups.

The CMA Landcare team, in conjunction with Trust for Nature, hosted a Native Grass Identification Short Course in November. This was the second year of this successful course involving lectures, hands-on experience in the lab and a field trip.

For further information contact
Jodie Odgers on 5440 1883.



John Drinkwater's flying duck orchid won first prize in the East Gippsland Landcare Network's Amateur Photographic Competition.

Regional Landcare Co-ordinators



Stella Sakkeus's red gum won the choice award in the East Gippsland Landcare Network's Amateur Photographic Competition.

East Gippsland

Many events have been held across the region including Integrated Pest Management, Soil Health, Regenerative Farming, Farm Track Design and Erosion Control, Fireweed Identification and Prevention, Managing Horses on Small Properties and Grass, Money and Livestock – Understanding how to Manage your Assets. The Environmental Film Festival was hosted again by Far East Victoria Landcare (FEVL).

Over 90 beautiful photographs of local flora were submitted to the East Gippsland Landcare Network's Amateur Photographic Competition. First prize was awarded to John Drinkwater, second prize to Sean Phillipson and third prize to Fran Bright. Peter Murrell was highly commended and the choice award went to Stella Sakkeus. The primary schools category was won by Clifton Creek Primary School, with Annie Rogers taking out second and Jemma Davies third. Congratulations to all of the entrants.

Congratulations also to FEVL for winning a Gift Fund Prize, as part of the Keeping Australia Beautiful – Sustainable Communities Award, in recognition of the innovative ideas presented at the Sustainability Expo.

For further information contact
Amanda Bartkowski on 5150 3851.

Glenelg Hopkins

A Landcare Gathering was held at Hamilton in October. A number of Landcare groups in the region showcased projects that they have conducted over the past twelve months. Presentations were also given by CMA staff on their Redgum-Woodlands, Large Scale River Restoration and Land Health Event projects.

FarmGate Signs are being allocated to each Landcare group who placed an order for them. The signs are to promote group membership and will be displayed on the entrance to members' properties

Funds have been distributed to 22 groups under the Victorian Government Landcare Grants. In addition, 50 groups have received administration grants of either \$400 for groups or \$600 for networks.

For further information contact
Tony Lithgow on 5571 2526.

Corangamite

More than 120 farmers, service providers and government personnel attended the inaugural South West Soils Conference in Warrnambool. The Caring for our Country funded Corangamite and Glenelg-Hopkins CMAs' Regional Landcare Facilitators and land health programs supported the Heytesbury and District Landcare Network to organise the DPI-facilitated event.

Scientists from Australia and New Zealand conducted lectures on soil physics, chemistry and biology and provided an interpretation of local farmers' soil tests.

Landcare is gearing up for the next round of the Caring for our Country initiative. On behalf of the Victorian Landcare Forum committee, a huge thank you to all of the supporters and attendees. What a great event!

For further information contact
Tracey McRae on 5232 9100.

North East

All six Victorian Local Landcare Facilitator Initiative positions in the region are now operating with their groups and networks. The facilitators are training in peer learning and Landcare planning, to assist their groups to prepare for future opportunities.

The CMA has submitted the Regional Catchment Strategy and is now meeting with Landcare and other partners to develop ways to implement the priorities together.

The Wodonga Urban Landcare Network has been formalised and many local Friends and Landcare groups have joined. The network is planning a range of community activities for members and residents of the Wodonga Council area.

The major fire and flood recovery projects in the Mudgegonga and neighbouring areas have finished up with a celebration and booklet about the achievements. The Landcare groups involved have achieved significant restoration works in their areas.

For further information contact Tom Croft on (02) 6024 9107.

Port Phillip and Westernport

The CMA's Landcare and Community Outreach team has recently conducted a round of Catchment Advisory Round Table (CART) sessions in different parts of the region. This recent round encouraged collaboration between Landcare groups and local agencies on natural resource management projects.

During the CART sessions each group and agency shared their planned projects and activities in a simple but consistent manner, located them on a large aerial photograph and then invited other organisations to indicate their interest in working with them.

Collectively the three CARTs involved 54 people representing 29 different groups and networks as well as five local governments, agencies and consultants. The feedback indicates that the CARTs were valued by all of the participants. We plan to check if they have triggered new collaborations.

For further information contact
Doug Evans on 9712 2296.



Scientists from Australia and New Zealand shared their knowledge at the inaugural South West Soils Conference in Warrnambool.

In brief

Victorian Landcare Program Strategic Plan

The Victorian Landcare Program Strategic Plan – launched by the Minister for Environment and Climate Change during Landcare Week – will guide the Victorian Government's key program of support to strengthen Landcare.

The Victorian Landcare Program, managed by DSE, will provide targeted support to help Landcare groups and networks achieve the program's five key

functions – operate effectively, engage the community, collaborate, do on ground works and tell the Landcare story.

Through supporting these functions, the Victorian Government, in partnership with the Landcare community, will continue working to achieve the goal of the Victorian Landcare Program, which is to have a shared responsibility for a healthy environment.

For more information go to www.dse.vic.gov.au/land-management/land/landcare

Farm water resources now available

The DPI Farm Water Solutions project has produced a number of resources relating to farm water for use by service providers and farmers. The resources include a farm water balance calculator, agriculture notes, farmer stories, key contacts and technical booklets that are applicable to any farm situation at any time.

The newest publication is Trading Water Licences for groundwater and unregulated surface water which has been developed in conjunction with Southern Rural Water. In addition, there is a Farm Water Planning Presenters Resource Kit. The kit is designed as an awareness-level farm water planning training session.

The resources are on the Farm Water Solutions page of the DPI website at www.dpi.vic.gov.au/farmwatersolutions or by contacting Benita Kelsall on 5624 2218.

Reader survey

Thank you to our readers who took the time to complete the reader survey in the last issue of the magazine. We are currently collating all of the responses and will provide a report on the results in the next issue. Congratulations to the three readers who won prizes in the survey competition.

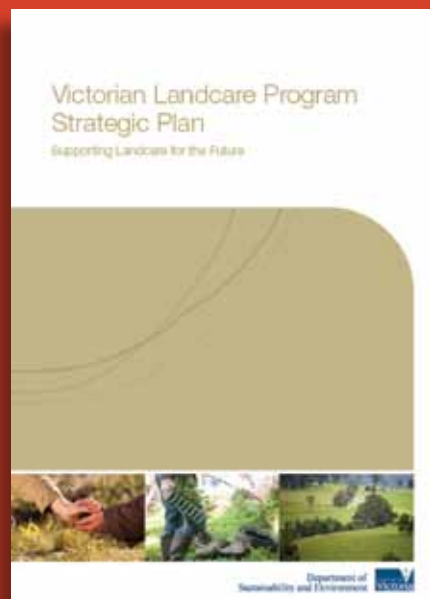
Next issue – revegetation

The next issue of the magazine will feature stories on revegetation. From mass planting events, to managing complex riparian vegetation, to the very latest direct seeding techniques, we are interested in hearing the experiences of your groups and networks.

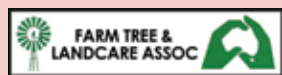
Contributions to the next issue should be sent to the editor by 8 February 2013.

Carrie Tiffany, editor
Victorian Landcare & Catchment Management magazine

PO Box 1135, Mitcham North 3132
Phone: 0405 697 548
Email: editorviclandcare@gmail.com



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Mailing list enquiries

Executive Officer
Farm Tree & Landcare Association
Phone: 9207 5527 Fax: 9207 5500 Email: ftla@vff.org.au

To receive your copy via email alert

Contact Jessica Barnes
Phone: 9637 8190 Email: landcare.magazine@dse.vic.gov.au

Read the magazine online

Back issues of the Victorian Landcare & Catchment Management magazine can be found at www.dse.vic.gov.au/victorianlandcaremagazine
The print size of the magazine can be enlarged online for easier reading.