

VICTORIAN

LANDCARE

Winter 2014 Issue 61

& CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT



YOUNG LANDCARE FEATURE

Junior Landcare Mallee style

Geocaching by the bay

Japanese researchers inspired by Landcare



Landcare
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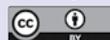
WINTER 2014 ISSUE 61

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Printed by Print Dynamics, Waverley.

ISBN 1327 5496

Accessibility

If you would like to receive this publication in an alternative format, please telephone the DEPI Customer Service Centre on 136186, email cel.hub@depi.vic.gov.au, or via the National Relay Service on 133 677 www.relayservice.com.au. This document is also available on the internet at www.landcarevic.net.au/resources/magazine/vic

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Cover photograph

Alice Van Dam (3) enjoyed the Trees for Mum planting event at Woodend on Mother's Day. Photograph by Kim Selby.



From the Minister

This edition covers two areas very important to me – youth and the environment. It's great to see how communities are linking them together to deliver positive environmental outcomes and supporting young Victorians to have healthy, active and fulfilling lives.

Young people play a vital role in building a better and more vibrant Victoria and many of the stories demonstrate the successful partnership between schools, youth groups and Landcare.

From families planting trees on Mother's Day, to college students from North America working with the Tarragal Landcare Group, this edition features many great opportunities for young people who are getting involved in Landcare and strengthening their sense of responsibility towards their local landscape.

This includes Catherine Arnold from Somerville Secondary College on the Mornington Peninsula who shares her story of how her school adopted and rehabilitated a local wetland. Congratulations to all involved in this great program. To see the wetland now integrated across the school's curriculum is a fantastic outcome.

Also in this edition we hear about kinder kids who are learning about sustainable

practices as part of the Victorian Government's \$8.3 million expansion of the Resource Smart AuSSI Vic program. This is another great initiative that teaches children how to be more environmentally friendly and has reached more than 1000 primary and secondary schools across our great state. Following the success of the program's expansion to nine early childhood centres, next year is set to be an even bigger one for the program with plans for further rollout.

September will be a huge month for Landcare groups (and I don't mean AFL finals!) as Melbourne gets ready to welcome the Landcare community at the 2014 National Landcare Conference. I look forward to meeting you and showcasing Victoria's Landcare achievements. Congratulations and good luck to all our bright Victorian finalists who have been nominated for the National Landcare Awards. The Awards gala dinner will be a fabulous night and a great way to wrap up day two of the conference. It will bring together nationwide finalists, and regardless of the outcome, our environment is the real winner from your dedication and hard work.

I also take this opportunity to reaffirm the Victorian Government's commitment

to supporting community and volunteer groups like Landcare that are vital to delivering the best outcomes for our environment. In the Victorian State Budget I was very pleased to announce \$5.5 million over the next two years to provide continued support for the Victorian Landcare Program, which includes funding for the 10 CMA-based Regional Landcare Coordinators and two theme-based statewide Landcare facilitator roles. These positions provide vital support for the Landcare community across the state, as they enable groups and networks to plan and deliver benefits for our local landscapes now and into the future.

Lastly, thank you to all our Landcare groups and networks for your contribution to the state's environmental knowledge, the lasting benefits you bring to our environment and the difference you make to our local communities.

The Hon. Ryan Smith M.P.
Minister for Environment and
Climate Change

2014 National Landcare Conference and Awards

Registrations are now open for what promises to be an engaging and diverse National Landcare Conference in Melbourne from September 17–19, at the Crown Conference Centre.

The first day of the three-day conference will comprise 12 full-day field trips and an afternoon field trip, that showcase Landcare projects across Victoria. The National Landcare Awards gala dinner will be held at the Royal Exhibition Building.

For registrations and full program details go to www.nationallandcareconference.floktu.com





International student volunteers have been assisting the Tarragal Landcare Group with environmental projects for the past five years.

A working Landcare holiday for international student volunteers

By Gary Milich

For the past five years the Tarragal Landcare Group, located west of Portland, has hosted a group of international student volunteers to assist with environmental projects. The program offers students from universities and colleges in the United States and Canada a chance to spend two weeks working on an Australian environmental project followed by two weeks touring the east coast of Australia.

The program has allowed the Tarragal Landcare Group to successfully apply for funding on behalf of landowners that has resulted in over 60,000 trees being planted. The volunteers have also built 197 nest boxes for sugar gliders and ringtail possums and carried out substantial weed eradication work.

Tarragal volunteers complete all of the preparation work for the projects and train the student volunteers in the skills required. They have proven to be incredibly enthusiastic young people who take pride in the positive impact they have made to the environment. Even when moving between several sites in one day they are able to plant and guard 2000 trees.

The students come with a range of backgrounds from locations all over America and Canada and are keen to share their way of life with Landcare group members. One volunteer spoke seven languages fluently and while training to be a doctor had assisted in providing medical care at several natural disasters in foreign countries. Another had just left the army after being a prison guard in Afghanistan and a girl with a native American background shared her culture.

They are keen to learn more about Australia and our way of life and the Landcare group organises as many Australian experiences as possible. These included a football match, showing the students native birds and animals and giving them an opportunity to shear a sheep and enjoy billy tea and damper around a campfire. Morning tea is always a selection of Australian treats including pavlova, Anzac biscuits and lamingtons.

Celebrating what has been achieved is important. After spending two weeks together Tarragal Landcare Group members teach the students to sand

surf on the huge sand hills close to Portland. This is a highlight for everyone, with lots of spills and laughs. Finally the volunteers share an evening dinner with the landowners whose farms they have worked on. This ranges from a restaurant meal to lamb cooked on a spit at a local shearing shed.

Feedback from the volunteers has been that while they enjoy all the tourist activities along the coast the highlight of the program is meeting local Landcarers, being invited into their homes, and learning about the Australian way of life on the land.

The students are provided with a DVD containing a photographic record of their two-week stay. The volunteers are supported by an experienced leader who works closely with the Tarragal project coordinator throughout the project. It is an enriching experience for both parties.

Gary Milich is the secretary of the Tarragal Landcare Group. For further information contact Gary by email at g.milich@skymesh.com.au

Sustainable garden designer inspires youngsters

By Wendy McInnes

The Wimmera Landcare team and Wimmera CMA ran a successful family event in Horsham in April that used an innovative approach to raising the profile of sustainability, the environment and the opportunities for community action.

International award-winning sustainable landscape designer Phillip Johnson spoke with passion about this work and the principles underpinning it at the event. Phillip won the best-in-show award at last year's Chelsea Flower Show. The Wimmera landscape was a source of inspiration for his winning design.

The family event was run in conjunction with a sustainable garden design competition for Wimmera school children. The response to this competition was overwhelming, with more than 200 high quality student entries received. Phillip judged the student designs and met and congratulated competition winners together with more than 300 local people who attended the event.

Attendees were inspired by Johnson's story, which focused on how he draws inspiration from nature to create landscape designs to suit Australia's natural environment.

Community partnerships played a key role in this success. The venue was provided by Holy Trinity Lutheran School in Horsham, with catering by volunteer members of the local migrant family support group OASIS Wimmera. Local artist Lynette Moore contributed material to help with promotion. McKenzie Creek woodturner Brendan Stemp, who produced the ladder that featured in the winning Chelsea design, introduced Phillip at the event and spoke about their collaboration and friendship. Halls Gap Zoo wildlife handlers and Landcare presenters also attended to provide children with hands-on experience with some of the local animals that will benefit from urban habitat created by sustainable landscape design.



Phillip Johnson explained how the Wimmera landscape was the inspiration for his Chelsea Flower Show winning garden design at a Landcare family event in Horsham in April.

The event and student designs were so well received that Horsham's major shopping centre offered to help showcase the students' work to the public over the Easter holiday period. The winning student designs will be used to provide inspiration for the rejuvenation of public land identified by Horsham Rural City Council.

Wendy McInnes is the Horsham Local Landcare Facilitator. For further information email Wendy at Wendy.McInnes@hrcc.vic.gov.au

Geocaching by the bay

By Liam Carroll and Barbara Jakob

S37 57.912 E145 02.959 say hello to my little (green) friend hanging, camouflaged. These coordinates and clues are the code to help real life treasure hunters or geocachers find a hidden container in a local park using a global positioning system (GPS).



Say hello to my little (green) friend hanging, camouflaged.

The Bayside Environment Friends Network has designed a geocaching course for the second year in Cheltenham Park and it's proving to be a successful method of getting teenagers to visit local parks and engage with environmental issues while competing and having fun.

The course designers hid the caches (containers to be found) within reach of the paths so as to take care of the precious indigenous plants in the park. The caches were hidden in interesting locations and concealed in various ways with differing degrees of difficulty. One of the caches was disguised to look like part of a tree and another resemble a bolt in a signpost.

A map and scoresheet was developed that showed all of the caches. The map and scoresheet used quirky names, facts and helpful descriptions to ensure environmental education was a focus of the activity.

Some of the geocaches came with questions about the local environment that needed to be answered. These included why blue tongue lizards live in Cheltenham Park, Aboriginal utilisation of the land and what the local blackwood trees are being used for now.

The geocaching events have been very successful for the network. They are aimed at families with young children and teenagers and have been an effective tool for engaging young people with the local environment. The events have encouraged a great deal of friendly enthusiasm and competition from parents and children alike.

Liam Carroll is a 16-year-old geocaching expert and Barbara Jakob is the coordinator of the Bayside Environment Friends Network. For further information email Barbara at baysidefriends@gmail.com

Junior Landcare – Mallee style

By Kevin Chaplin

Junior Landcare has existed in the Mallee in different forms for many years. Involving children in Landcare gives them an opportunity to spend time in the environment and discover a passion for it.

How we use our planet and its limited resources is a major focal point for learning in the classroom. At primary school level kinaesthetic, or hands-on learning, is often used as a way of gaining knowledge and this is where Junior Landcare can shine.

Schools will often have a vegetable garden, worm farm, recycling program and revegetation activities both inside and outside the school grounds. With a good support network of teachers, parents, community members and Landcare staff, these programs can really flourish.



At primary school level kinaesthetic, or hands-on learning, is often used as a way of gaining knowledge and this is where Junior Landcare can shine.



Students from the Red Cliffs Landcare Group working with visiting Chinese students on a revegetation project in the Millewa, west of Mildura.

Junior Landcare often presents activities that involve parents and other family members of students so it has an important community building function. Schools such as Tyrell College at Sea Lake and Murrayville Community College run school farms that embrace the Landcare ethic of maintaining a healthy environment while supporting rural communities.

In the past children were very involved with the day-to-day running of family farms by looking after animals and helping with seasonal work at planting and harvest times. This has changed. Today, farming is highly technical and mechanised and the size of individual farms is much larger so it is harder for children to be involved. Junior Landcare helps break down these barriers and encourages students to see farming as an exciting and progressive career option.

Home-based approach

Some schools in the region, such as Manangatang P-12 College, Nyah District Primary School, St Mary's Primary School in Sea Lake and Nangiloc Primary School, have focused their Junior Landcare programs on sustainability in the home. Children at these schools participate in growing organic fruit and vegetables, keeping chooks to produce fertiliser and eggs, worm farms, compost, recycling and revegetation.

The children really love these activities and get immense enjoyment out of eating and selling their produce while learning about soil fertility, recycling, sustainability, healthy living and organic food production that reduces reliance on chemicals and artificial fertilisers.

The secret to success for any Junior Landcare program is the enthusiasm of a core group of individuals who are willing to keep the program's wheels turning. In the case of a Junior Landcare program based within a school, teachers are the main drivers.

Jane Stacey from St Mary's Primary School is an enthusiastic supporter of Junior Landcare in schools.

"Without Landcare's contribution and involvement we would simply not be able to provide such a 'complete learning experience' for the students where they get to fully appreciate the environment in which we live," she said.

Sue Winbanks, principal at Nyah District Primary School, also values Landcare.

"Having access to the Junior Landcare program provides us with information and resources that really help our kids see the big picture when it comes to them understanding their place in the world and



Verrimull students with the banner they designed for Junior Landcare in the Mallee.

how their actions, both good and bad, can make a big difference,” she said.

A school Landcare group

Red Cliffs Secondary College took an innovative approach to Junior Landcare by starting its own Landcare group. The reasoning was that a Landcare group run by the students would provide a holistic, real world experience for their theoretical learning. When the group first formed,

teachers took on the executive roles as a temporary measure. They acted as mentors to the elected student executive committee to ensure that due diligence and good governance developed while the operation and direction of the group was led by the students themselves.

The Landcare group was the brainchild of former teacher Cheryl Bottrell. In accordance with Cheryl’s vision the running

of the group touched on each area of the curriculum in a holistic manner. Biology and ecology students worked on the vegetable and native garden beds, finance students managed the group’s finances, woodwork and metalwork students designed and built infrastructure such as chook sheds and raised garden beds and graphic design students produced marketing material.

Using this approach almost any curriculum subject can incorporate Landcare. In particular, students completing the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning benefit from this concept as it helps them to make the real life connection between physical actions and theoretical study.

The Junior Landcare program in the Mallee has shown that Landcare can be a wonderful tool for learning across all ages. Managing a committee, planning projects, sourcing funding, taking practical actions, managing publicity, monitoring and reporting are all useful, transferable skills that students can and will use for the rest of their lives.

The big winner is community capacity. Students experience what it means to be a volunteer and learn how a team approach to common problems can deliver results, while being personally rewarded and fulfilled at the same time.

Kevin Chaplin is the Mallee Regional Landcare Coordinator. For further information email Kevin at kevin.chaplin@depi.vic.gov.au



Landcare is integrated across the whole curriculum at Red Cliffs Secondary College.

“

Parents work on Landcare projects to propagate local provenance indigenous plants which are sold locally for use in environmental projects.

”



Penny Roberts from the Newham Landcare Group collecting indigenous seeds with students.

School and Landcare partnership improves the

Newham Primary School is surrounded by nature. Sitting in the shadow of iconic Hanging Rock, the school is bordered by farms and rural holdings. It is home to 90 students and a host of animals including galahs, magpies, possums, the occasional koala and lots of bugs.



Students from Newham Primary School revegetate the creek alongside members of the Newham Landcare Group.

Over the years a strong environmental focus and close relationship with Landcare has helped to make Newham Primary School an example of sustainability in the local area.

Partnering with Landcare

The Newham and District Landcare Group was formed in 2004 and has had an association with the school since 2006. The group works to revegetate and rehabilitate land and promote sustainability in the community.

By working closely with the school the group has helped to showcase the work of Landcare, as well as improving the school environmentally and aesthetically.

Parents also work on Landcare projects to propagate local provenance indigenous plants which are sold locally for use in environmental projects. Money from the sale of these plants is returned to the school for use on the grounds and for environmental excursions and presentations.



Younger students investigate a water bug sample from the creek.



Students have learnt about constructing wicking garden beds, composting and when best to plant and harvest.



environment and enriches learning

By Sam Harrison and the Newham Primary School Writers' Group

Waterwatch at the school creek

A tributary of Deep Creek runs along one border of the school. Jenny Waugh, a retired science teacher and trained Waterwatch monitor, works with the school to assess the creek. The program was started with the support of the Landcare group and the grade 5 and 6 students have been testing the water in the creek as part of the Waterwatch program for nearly eight years.

Jenny describes the site as ideal, as the creek runs right past the school and the students can collect water without having to travel far.

"Waterwatch testing is now embedded in the school's program and it has been an excellent way to involve the school and younger members of the community in Landcare," Jenny said.

"The first thing the students learn is where their local creek and community fit into the landscape. Deep Creek is in the uppermost headwaters of the Maribymong River, so our testing provides the first set of data along the course of the river to Melbourne."

Waterwatch also teaches students scientific skills such as the accurate use and reading of scientific equipment, recording of scientific data and interpreting results.

Newham Primary School principal Julie Soutter said Waterwatch has been a very valuable program that has helped students to experience real-world learning.

"I love seeing kids out here doing real science and using scientific equipment. It is good for the students' understanding as well as being good for the creek," Julie said.

Sustainable studies

At Newham Primary School it is not uncommon to walk into a classroom and find a mushroom farm, or an insect brought inside at the end of recess by an enthusiastic student. A key focus of the school's environmental and science curriculum is to study the environment at the back door. A specialist teacher takes students for weekly science lessons and the local environment is often featured in the students' learning.

Students have also worked with the Landcare group during science classes to learn about how to improve the environment. Seeds were collected from indigenous plants and sown in pots, which were later transplanted into tubes. After the holidays, a baby forest had sprung up. These will soon be planted, adding to the revegetation along the creek.

Living more sustainably has extended to the vegetable patch which is now part of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program. Students have learnt about constructing wicking garden beds, composting and when best to plant and harvest. The program also helps teach kitchen skills and cooking.

The school has recently committed to the ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic initiative that helps schools benefit from embedding sustainability in everything they do. Focusing on sustainability across the school will help save on energy, water and waste bills and students will be involved in making decisions about sustainability on a daily basis.

Working with Landcare and the community has helped everyone in the school to better understand the local environment. According to Julie Soutter it really helps with understanding the local plants and animals and how the environment works.

"It's important for kids to know about ways to conserve the planet for future generations."

Sam Harrison is a teacher at Newham Primary School and he worked with students to write this article. For more information email Sam at harrison.samuel.c@edumail.vic.gov.au

SEED reaches out to schools and teachers in the north east

By Linda Anania

In 2007, the School Environment Education Directory (SEED) was established to provide teachers, educators and environment staff with easy access to information on curriculum-related environmental sustainability for north east Victoria.

The long-term vision for SEED is for environmental sustainability to be a fundamental element of the educational experience of every child in the north east. The original idea for the project came from a number of natural resource educators in the region that were working separately to deliver education for local schools. SEED was developed to provide greater efficiency and the tools to disperse information throughout the catchment.

A project officer is employed one day a week to facilitate the project, which is funded through a partnership between North East Victoria Regional Waste Management Group (NevRwaste) and the North East CMA. Using a website, student environment days and a newsletter, SEED is now the local, up-to-date, one-stop shop for environmental education in the region.

School environment days

Each term school environment days are organised in rotation around the seven different municipalities in the north east. Local environmental organisations present hands-on sustainability activities to year

5 students. At smaller schools this often includes years 3–6.

A range of activities are run during the days including learning to be waste wise; using water bugs as indicators of river health; understanding the local catchment system and caring for waterways; the importance of biodiversity to the health of the planet; working towards energy efficiency; how traditional indigenous tools support life; and how to survive natural disasters. The days are run on sustainable principles. Lunch is rubbish-free and a drink tap water station, sponsored by the local water authority, is on hand for the students to refill their water bottles.

The days inform students on environmental issues and increase their skills and knowledge. They also help to develop a network of local environmental experts. Curriculum materials and links on the SEED website make further activities and follow-up easier.

During SEED's six years of operation 4000 primary school children and more than 160 primary schools have attended a school environment day event.

The days involve lots of partnerships between NevRwaste, the North East CMA and local groups. The host shire is also often involved supplying venues, risk management advice and helping to source presenters and equipment.



Students from the Tallangatta and Coryong regions learn about recycling with Kim Mueller from NevRwaste at the Tallangatta student environment day in March.



Students from the Benalla and Mansfield regions investigate the health of their local river by identifying water bugs in a workshop run by the North East CMA.

Website and newsletter a focus for resources

The SEED website allows teachers, students and environment staff to easily access a huge range of sustainability education resources. There is information on biodiversity, climate change, general sustainability, waste and water. Many units of work have been created by local providers and there are links to other resources from outside the region.

The website lists contact details for local resource management people, as well as good places for excursions. It also refers teachers to funding and professional development opportunities and highlights some special projects that some of our local schools are involved in. Around 1000 people a month use the SEED website.

An electronic newsletter is produced each term to provide an update on local activities. The newsletter has information about events, new resources, training and funding opportunities and local competitions.

The newsletter, website and student environment days are provided to schools free of charge. Although much of the website refers to north east Victoria anyone interested in environmental education can use it.

Linda Anania is the SEED project officer. For further information go to the SEED website at www.seed.vic.gov.au or email Linda at seed@nevrwaste.vic.gov.au

Comments from students after the environment day:

"That was awesome."

"I learnt a lot of new stuff."

"The activities were really good fun."

"I didn't know all that about a platypus. It was great."

Urban Landcare group a focus for younger folk in Stawell

By Angela Baker

I grew up in Stawell in western Victoria and moved back home three years ago after nine years in Melbourne. I have a young baby and live with my partner in a straw bale house on a small property on the outskirts of town. I'm passionate about caring for the land and sharing nature with people and have become an active member of the Stawell Urban Landcare Group.

The group has been a great way to meet people with similar interests. I've gained new skills and learnt a lot about our local area from other group members and special guests who have attended our meetings.

It's been terrific to contribute to improve the landscape and our community through the many working bees and land management activities that we've organised and run. I've taken part in litter clean ups, guided nature walks, track maintenance and tree planting. I'm on the committee for the group and enjoy planning our activities. It's also a great deal of fun and I've made some wonderful friends.

One of my favourite activities is the guided nature walks we conduct with local primary school students in the spring. We take grade 3 and 4 students into the local box ironbark forest explaining aspects of the forest, the history of the area, as well as observing and

educating about the changed landscape due to human activity – largely gold mining and more recently recreational activities.

I love leading these walks. I'm able to share my knowledge of the beautiful local environment through experiential learning. I tell stories and show the children how inappropriate use of the forest like rubbish dumping affects it. The walks help the children to appreciate nature – especially the ironbark forest which is close to where we live.

I try to practise what I preach at home through using sustainable living practices in our daily lives. We have planted hundreds of native trees as a wind break and wildlife habitat around the perimeter of our property and are aiming to grow as many edible plants as we can. So far we've planted more than 60 fruit and nut trees, grapevines and a large vegetable garden. We are slowly creating a food forest and

bringing wildlife back to the property.

On National Tree Planting Day in 2011 we were fortunate to have the local childcare centre come and plant native trees on our property. These local children will be able to watch our bare paddock transform into a beautiful forest in the years to come.

As part of the Landcare group's activities we held an open kitchen garden day last year where we opened our garden to the community. It was a dream come true for me to be able to share my passion with others. I'm looking forward to continuing my work with the Stawell Urban Landcare Group and to involving my son in our activities as he grows up.

Angela Baker is the president of the Stawell Urban Landcare Group.

For further information email Angela on angjones84@hotmail.com



Angela Baker and her son Jerome are reaping the rewards of a large kitchen garden on their property at Stawell.

Mother's Day planting honours mums with a legacy of trees

By Jodie Odgers



DEPI staff visited the 2013 Trees for Mum planting at Woodend.

Angela and her husband Jason were living in Sydney in 2011 when they read about Trees for Mum in the local paper. Trees for Mum is a series of free national Landcare events inviting children of all ages to celebrate their mothers by planting trees.

Angela and Jason planted in memory of Angela's mother and to honour Jason's mother in Victoria. It was a very special time for Angela as her daughter was born just a few weeks later.

"My mum was a passionate gardener and lover of nature. Because of Trees for Mum I now look forward to Mother's Day. It's been a great way of helping others to find a way to make the day a tiny bit less painful," says Angela.

A tribute and a celebration

Trees for Mum was started in Sydney in 2002 by friends and colleagues Deena Raphael and Lauren Adlam. It was a way of paying tribute to their mothers, who they had both lost to cancer. The first event was a huge success, attracting over 150 people to Manly to plant commemorative trees.

In the 12 years since Trees for Mum was created, more than 35,000 sons and daughters have planted trees for their mums, as a tribute to mums who have passed away or to celebrate those who are still alive.

Trees for Mum partnered with Landcare Australia in 2012. Founder Lauren Adlam has been inspired by the feedback that has been received.

When Angela Van Dam was 30 she never imagined her wedding day without her mother's guidance, or becoming a mum herself and not having her own mother's love, support and advice. To lose a parent at any age is incredibly tough. When Angela lost her mother in 2008 she knew she had to do something positive to make Mother's Day a day of celebration.

"It's incredible to think we have reached so many people and they are so grateful for the opportunity to nurture the environment and create living and growing legacies for their wonderful mothers," she said.

Woodend event is part of the town's calendar

Angela Van Dam is now the Trees for Mum Event Co-ordinator for Woodend. The event is in its third year in Woodend



Angela and Jason Van Dam with daughter Alice plant a tree in memory of Alice's grandmothers.



Kristy Woodhouse and her mum Bernadette Cossar with Isla and baby Joel at the Trees for Mum planting day at Woodend.

and has become part of the town's event calendar attracting around 200 people each year.

The project has been funded through the State Government's Victorian Landcare Grants, and there is no cost to participate. People who sign up for the Trees for Mum mailing list are added to the Woodend Landcare blog so they can keep up to date with local Landcare events.

According to Angela, Trees for Mum has created its own community.

"This year we had families from surrounding towns and Melbourne come for a day trip to plant in Woodend and they are keen to come again next year."

Trees for Mum is also underway in the Goulburn Broken region through the Goulburn Murray Landcare Network. A mums-without-mums support group is keen to set up an event in Echuca next year and another in the Yarra Valley. The recent Woodend planting received extensive media coverage, including a live broadcast on ABC television and radio. There is interest in creating a Melbourne-based event in 2015.

Angela Van Dam is indebted to Trees for Mum founders Lauren Adlam and Deena Raphael.

"Trees for Mum has given me a real purpose on Mother's Day and a wonderful connection to my community through Landcare," Angela said.

Jodie Odgers was the North Central CMA Regional Landcare Coordinator. For further information contact Angela Van Dam by email at treesformumwoodend@gmail.com or Facebook www.facebook.com/treesformum

From the Trees for Mum Facebook page:

"You gave our family a beautiful way to remember our much missed and loved mum, mother in law, grandmother and a special place near to us that we can visit to remember her. I was totally taken aback at the depth of emotion I felt for not just our family, but for the other families around us. It was like a tonne of love was planted with each of those trees. Thank you once again. We will be back next year."

"I celebrated my first Mother's Day as a new mum and planted with my mum in memory of my grandmother. I was joined by my brother and sister and their partners and it was a really special day for our whole family."

"Just wanted to say what a special time we had at the tree planting today. We are now left with a lovely memory of doing something extra special for our mums who are no longer with us."

"A tree planted for my gorgeous mum today; a positive thing to do on a tough day."

"My dear mum passed away in March and I was at a real loss at what to do on Mother's Day. I put a card under the mulch and some lovely chrysanthemums, and it all felt so good. Thanks so much again. I have a feeling this might become an annual thing for me."



My mum was a passionate gardener and lover of nature. Because of Trees for Mum I now look forward to Mother's Day.





A community planting day at the Yumarrala wetland in November 2013.

Somerville students repair a wetland and

A local wetland has become a source of pride and learning for students at Somerville Secondary College on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula. College students from years 7–12 are actively involved in all aspects of environmental rehabilitation at the formerly degraded site.

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Students have been able to apply real-world knowledge to a project that they are in charge of.

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The young people have worked with the Mornington Peninsula Shire Rangers and the wetlands organisation, Environmental Restorations, on flora species education and collecting seed for indigenous plants which are propagated at the school. Students are now planting 5000 seedlings in the first stage of revegetation at the site.

The project has allowed students to get out of the classroom and has been an opportunity to reinvigorate learning – always a challenge for those disengaged with normal schooling. Students have been able to apply real-world knowledge to a project that they are in charge of.

Each graduating class hands the project and knowledge base over to the upcoming students and teachers. There has been immense pride when the knowledge surrounding the project is shared with the new students.

Students work as mentors and educators

Along with improving their own skills and knowledge about the environment the students have become peer educators. They have shared their knowledge with the community, ranging from three-year-old kindergarten children through to elderly residents of local nursing homes.

The students have developed environmental learning resources such as posters for primary school students and games and flashcards for kinder kids.

One of the greatest challenges has been to address the public perception of the site as a dumping ground, four wheel drive track and dog park. The students were disheartened when they had to repair damage at the site so they decided to tackle the source of the problem rather than the consequences. After a concerted publicity campaign there has been a reduction in the anti-social behaviours.



Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning students from Somerville Secondary College hard at work at the Yumarrala wetland.

“

The eventual goal is for the site to be managed sustainably by the school and the wider community.

”

restore community

By Catherine Arnold

In 2012, the students were given permission by Wurundjeri elder Murrindindi to adopt the name Yumarrala for the site. Yumarrala means 'to share'.

The eventual goal is for the site to be managed sustainably by the school and the wider community. The students are working to form a Friends of Yumarrala group comprising students, teachers, residents, community organisations and businesses, supported by the shire council.

A focus for learning and developing employability skills

The wetland project has been incorporated into many different streams of the college curriculum. Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) students use the project in their literacy, numeracy, work-related skills and personal development subjects. Victorian Certificate of Education students of biology, chemistry, environmental studies and outdoor education use the site to apply theoretical concepts in a practical setting.

All of the college students at other levels explore environmental awareness through the pastoral care program and the student leaders of the college have recently formed a Student Environment Team as a focus for activities.

The project has also helped senior

students preparing to enter the workforce to develop their employability skills. They have produced newsletters and distributed them to the community through letterbox drops, while honing their public speaking skills at many different forums.

To improve their knowledge of best practice students met with management staff for other regional wetlands. Team members also interviewed Peninsula Link freeway construction management to discuss their commitment to preserving the local environment.

Students also created and ran a community survey to seek input into the potential Indigenous options for the naming of the site. An increased awareness of Indigenous history and culture then led to the creation of an artwork displayed at the site depicting the landscape before European settlement.

Partnerships and mentorships essential to success

The project has attracted the ongoing support of a range of organisations including Melbourne Water, Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, Transfield, Leighton Contractors, Ingham's Enterprises, Bunnings, Westernport Biosphere Reserve, Wetlands and Wildlife Creations, Vision Stream, NAB and Port Phillip and Westernport CMA.

The partnerships and mentorships from these organisations have been critical for the project. They work side by side with students but allow them to maintain ownership and control.

A cross-age mentorship with the Somerville Tyabb Men's Shed is a good example. Members have been assisting students with building bird hides, boardwalks and viewing platforms. The project benefits both parties. The students learn from the practical skills and experience of the older men, while they in turn enjoy the enthusiasm of the students and feel valued for their contribution to the community.

The Yumarrala wetlands project has seen the integration of environmental education into all aspects of the college curriculum and has allowed every student to contribute to an improved local environment. It is an environmental project, but it is also a community building project. The idea of community sustainability has always been at the heart of the project's success.

Catherine Arnold is the Senior Pathways/VCAL Coordinator at Somerville Secondary College. For further information email Catherine at carnold@somerville.vic.gov.au

Melton community works with youth –

Thousands of motorists drive past Toolern Creek along the Western Highway at Melton every day. The creek is virtually the only part of Melton visible from the highway. For many years the creek frontage was a neglected stretch of land in the shadow of the highway overpass; a focus for anti-social activity and vandalism and a site for dumping rubbish.

Melton local Lyn Holdsworth became so incensed that the highly visible site was giving such a poor impression of Melton that she decided to do something about it. Lyn began by removing rubbish herself. She was joined by friends who helped her clean-up campaign and by the Melton Council who removed the increasing number of bags filled with rubbish. When Lyn decided to form a Friends group community members flocked to join her.

Neglected site transformed

The Friends of Toolern Creek have transformed the site. The ancient red gums leaning over the creek create an atmosphere of tranquillity. The park is a haven for native wildlife and also creates more liveable surroundings for the neighbourhood. Families use the site with pride and a shared bicycle path along the creek is popular with both walkers and cyclists.

Intensive revegetation work has been done over the last few years by the Friends group. Local indigenous plants have been established to restore the biodiversity of the site and to provide habitat for native wildlife. A diverse group of volunteers helps the Friends in their efforts to transform Toolern Creek.

Local scouts and guides are heavily involved. During one six-month period the scouts planted more than 1000 plants and grasses as well as cleaning up the waterways with rubbish collection while earning their Landcare badges.

One scout leader observed:

“We dug what seemed to be one hole after another, some in really easy soil, others that took huge efforts just to dig a little hole! We had heaps of fun during our time with you in all weather conditions and would like to say thanks very much once again.”

Local schools also send students to help. As well as restoring the environment it gives the children a connection with the creek; giving them a sense of ownership.

Youths complete community work

Environmental restoration at the site has been greatly assisted by people engaged in community work through the Department of Justice. In 2013, a total of 852 hours of community work was completed at Friends of Toolern Creek.

The project helps young people undertake work and achieve a sense of self-worth as well as helping to restore the local natural environment. Friends of Toolern Creek also feature in a short film by the Department of Justice describing work done by people through community work.

The Friends group also takes a special interest in working with people with disabilities. The group works with a variety



Youths completing community work bagging box thorn and prickly pear along Toolern Creek. Melbourne Water collected 34 bags that this group had removed.

to transform a local creek

By Daryl Akers

of community groups including specialist schools, C.A.L.M – Controlling Anger and Learning to Manage it Program for young people with problems, Amaroo Men with Disabilities and Mambourin Men and Women with Disabilities.

According to Lyn Holdsworth working with disabled people requires a thoughtful approach.

“When allocating jobs it’s important to suit an individual’s level of ability, rather than focusing on their disability.

“Our disabled members perform really important tasks such as registering people on Clean Up Australia Day, car direction at the Platypus Festival, helping with new members at Melton’s Djerrivarrh Festival, promoting the platypus puppet with children and adults and dressing up in the platypus outfit.”

The Friends of Toolern Creek’s annual Platypus Festival is the largest and most successful environmental festival in the region. The group was also recognised when Melton was awarded the inaugural Australian Sustainability Cities Award in November 2008. The award is an example of the cooperative work involving Friends of Toolern Creek supported by the City of Melton and Melbourne Water.

Melton is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Victoria. In a few years, as Melton develops eastwards, Toolern Creek will flow through the middle of a fast growing town. The creek is already becoming an important haven and corridor along which native wildlife, especially birds, can migrate.



Lyn Holdsworth gets some help from local youngster Orion Meeson on Clean Up Australia Day.

Daryl Akers is the President of the Melton Environment Group. For further information about the Friends of Toolern Creek email Lyn Holdsworth at lynholdsworth@hotmail.com



Scouts working on their Landcare badge worked every second Sunday along Toolern Creek.

FTLA update

By Susi Johnson

Secrets to Successful Groups training

The FTLA has run five Secrets to Successful Groups training programs in 2014. Funded by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, the training covers issues of recruitment and succession as well as many procedural questions. More than 50 Landcarers have volunteered over 360 hours to improving the capacity and health of their groups and networks after attending the training program.

Renewal reminder

FTLA renewals were due on 30 June 2014. If you are unsure whether your group has renewed please call the FTLA on 9207 5527 or email ftla@vff.org.au. In the past some groups have assumed they were covered by the FTLA insurance and subsequently discovered they were non-financial when there was an incident.

Insurance and young Landcarers

Involving young people in Landcare activities is a core activity for many Landcare groups and networks. Often these activities are run in partnership with local schools so groups should be aware that involving young children in on-ground projects has implications for insurance and safety which should be considered when planning suitable activities.

Most voluntary workers/personal accident insurance policies have age limits of 15–75 years. Groups should check with their insurer and parents should be informed of the limits of coverage.

The FTLA has successfully negotiated increased insurance coverage for our member groups with the insurance covering people aged from 10–90. If groups regularly have younger children along to events then they should consider partnering with schools or other organisations such as scouts that have specifically tailored arrangements. Check with your partner organisation as to the conditions of their insurance whenever an activity is being planned.

Children should always be under the supervision of a parent, guardian or teacher. If you are aware that students may be attending an activity consider having a group member with a Working with Children check as a back up, if a teacher is called away. For more information see www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au or call 1300 652 879.

This article is for general information only. It’s important to seek specific advice for your situation. Good sources for further information are Justice Connect and the Department of Justice. Alternatively, call the FTLA on 9207 5527 or email ftla@vff.org.au



Tomomi Maekawa is impressed by the way that the Landcare network creates a structure linking different sectors of local communities including farmers and other residents, researchers, government employees and businesses.



Tomomi Maekawa and Kaz Kagohashi with staff at the Glenelg Hopkins CMA and their families.

Japanese researchers inspired by

Young people leaving rural areas and moving to the city is not just a problem in Australia. Two Japanese researchers who recently visited Victoria to take a closer look at Landcare have confirmed that the most important reason for the decline of traditional farming communities in Japan is the loss of young people to the cities.

Kazuki (Kaz) Kagohashi is a Research Fellow at the Institute for Social Ethics at Nanzan University. Tomomi Maekawa's home is in Tokyo, but in 2013–14 she was studying Australian Landcare at the Institute for Land, Water and Society at Charles Sturt University.

Kaz is interested in how farming communities adapt to changing conditions, and how researchers, government departments and rural communities can work together more effectively.

With assistance from Rob Youl and Horrie Poussard from Australian Landcare International, Kaz and Tomomi toured Victoria to meet with representatives from the CMAs and Landcare coordinators.

Young people leaving farms

Kaz is involved with a traditional village in Japan where people have been farming

for thousands of years. The most important reason for the decline of traditional farming communities, he says, is that children go to the cities and do not come back.

Another problem for local farmers is that after the Second World War, the Japanese government encouraged farmers to plant cedars and Japanese cypress for timber production. Later the policy was changed and timber was imported from tropical countries. Farmers no longer receive income from the trees they planted, but monkeys, deer and wild pigs which once lived in the forest now come into the farmers' fields and eat their crops. The farmers do not have enough money to build fences around their two- or three-hectare holdings.

Kaz was impressed by the cooperative atmosphere among Landcare communities in Australia.

"I have a feeling that in rural Australia there is a different relationship between people. I have found that Australian people like talking, and are open and welcoming. Everybody in Landcare says the same thing: that Landcare provides opportunities for people to get together. The rural areas in Japan are more conservative – if I am

an outsider, people might not talk to me. It is more difficult to become part of a community – there is a cultural difference that we have to keep in mind when we introduce Landcare in Japan. People are more reserved. They don't express what they think in such a straightforward way. That is the norm, although it is gradually changing."

Kaz gave an example of a Japanese woman interested in organic farming who spoke at a village meeting about problems that she felt the community should tackle. No one openly disagreed with her, but after the meeting people spoke badly about her. They felt that women should not talk at the meeting. According to Kaz this conservative attitude is common.

"In Australia, I have spoken to many women who are regional coordinators and they are so intellectual and open-minded! They have the talent to get people together and in Australian Landcare the role of women is very important."

Collaborative approach impresses

Tomomi Maekawa is one of the founding members of the inaugural steering committee for Japanese Landcare.



Visiting the Yatmarone wetlands at Penshurst. From left, Tomomi Maekawa, Dave Munroe, Ewan McGregor from the New Zealand Landcare Trust, Rob Youl, Lynn Munro, Kazuki Kagohashi and Mick Seigal.

Landcare

By Wendy Poussard

Her ambition is to establish a Landcare network among Japanese farmers and rural communities.

Tomomi became interested in Landcare because she has happy memories of staying with her grandparents on their rice farm in the north of Japan when she was a child.

"I want to help my grandparents and their neighbours. I know how hard farmers work, and how they are facing a lot of problems. The farms are very small, and the farming communities are ageing. There are many concerns and disputes about land use and environmental issues."

As an undergraduate student Tomomi studied environmental law, but soon came to feel that litigation is not the best way to deal with disputes at the local level, or to resolve environmental problems.

Professor Mick Seigal, an Australian teaching at Nanzan University, told her about Landcare in Australia, and its success in bringing rural people together to address common problems and issues.

Tomomi met with and interviewed Landcare members, local and regional facilitators and coordinators. She also

attended many Landcare events and activities. Her first public speech in English was at the launch of the Overseas Landcare Fund in Melbourne last year. When she told people about the problems in Japanese communities, including the decline in the number of farmers, and the ageing rural population, she was surprised to find that communities in Australia are experiencing similar problems.

Tomomi is impressed by the way that the Landcare network creates a structure linking different sectors of local communities including farmers and other residents, researchers, government employees and businesses. She also likes the way that Landcare is managed collaboratively by local people.

She is determined to work with the Japanese steering committee to establish a Landcare network linking local individuals and communities, government, businesses, researchers and other organisations in Japan.

Tomomi is missing the Australian birds now she has returned home.

"We don't have such colourful parrots, or kookaburras. Australia has a wonderful variety of species and landscapes, wonderful



Japanese Landcare researcher Tomomi Maekawa with her friends from Charles Sturt University, Vijay Kuttappan and Mei Mei Meilani.

biodiversity. Just recently I saw a beautiful sky, purple and pink – just beautiful. I cannot see such a sky in Tokyo."

Wendy Poussard is a member of Australian Landcare International. For further information contact Wendy by email at wendyp@iinet.net.au

Landcare puppet show wins young hearts and minds

By Jacqui Salter

“That was the best puppet show I’ve ever seen in my life!” This was the response of an excited five-year-old boy, exiting our Landcare marquee during Enviro Week at the Briars historic homestead and park at Mt Martha on the Mornington Peninsula.

My assistant puppeteer turned to me and we both grinned. We’d achieved the delicate balance between providing an educational experience and maintaining engagement of our young audience.

Being asked to deliver an interactive 10-minute session with an environmental focus to primary-school-aged children was a fun challenge. As a parent of two young boys, I knew children enjoy being entertained and that they love animals. I decided to base the show on the importance of providing habitat for our native animals. I wanted it to make children laugh, but also to convey an important ecological message they would take away with them.

I bought and borrowed a series of native (possum, koala, wombat and owl) and feral (dog, cat and fox) puppets. I acquired a large cardboard fridge box and, with the help of my four-year-old, painted it

to look like an old-fashioned Punch and Judy show. Working with the Mornington Peninsula Landcare Network secretary, Bernie Schedvin, and my puppeteers, we developed a script.

I recruited four marvellous women to help, including one I discovered who had a childhood phobia about puppet shows. We put together a soundtrack for the show with some lovely songs and allowed the children lots of opportunities to participate.

The responses from children during and after the show were fascinating. While nearly all of the children knew koalas and wombats were native, some of them thought foxes were native too. A number of children were able to describe the concepts of habitat and indigenous vegetation better than most adults. By the end of the show, most children knew that planting indigenous vegetation, keeping old trees and logs and installing nest boxes are helping to provide habitat.

The puppet show has since been performed for children at a school, a kinder and a district show. At each performance I’ve been impressed by the children’s strong connection with nature and their inherent sense of right and wrong. It gave me a deep sense of satisfaction to hear them giggling and interacting with the puppets, knowing that they will go home with a deeper understanding of the importance of protecting our natural areas and the animals that live within them.

The puppet script is available for download from the Mornington Peninsula Landcare Network website at www.portphillipwesternport.landcarevic.net.au/mornpen-network

Jacqui Salter is the Shire of Mornington Peninsula Landcare Facilitator. Her position is funded through the Victorian Local Landcare Facilitator Initiative.

For more information email Jacqui at Jacqueline.Salter@mornpen.vic.gov.au



Local Landcare facilitator Jacqui Salter in her fridge box puppet theatre.

Moorabool youngsters

Children in the Moorabool Landcare Network love getting their hands dirty, especially if it’s going to help the environment. Many schools in the area have not formally embraced junior Landcare but they are still actively involved in environmental projects such as gardening, planting trees and helping adults at their working bees.

Myrning Primary School was commended in the 2012 regional Landcare awards for its energy efficiency and water conservation projects, school gardens supported by a student garden club, vegetable growing, a nest box project and helping at the annual community tree planting day.

Grade 6 student Blake Strangecliffe said, “We went to the planting day last year. It was nice to be part of a really large group of people all planting trees. I think our school planted about a hectare. It looked great with the area all filled with trees. I am going to enjoy watching them grow. I don’t mind getting my hands dirty.”

Annabel Muir also in grade 6 has been to three or four planting days with her mum and dad.

“The food at the community planting day was awesome. We tried planting vegetable boxes last year but it was a bit of a disaster as our soil was no good. We have better soil this year. We are also going to plant some fruit trees but I’m not sure what types we are going to get,” Annabel said.

Jett and Finn Hehir from Bacchus Marsh have a strong Landcare mentor as their mother, Mel, secretary of the Friends of the Werribee River (through Bacchus Marsh) group formed at the end of 2012. Jett and Finn love riding their bikes along the river bank trails and seeing the trees they planted get bigger each time they go to look.

Jett said, “We’ve been to all of the six working bees. The first time we got some type of tongs for picking up waste paper and planted some grasses. Since then we have wheelbarrowed mulch and spread it, pulled weeds, and fixed up tree guards when they were knocked over.”

According to Finn it's mostly fun at the working bees.

"We're helping nature and protecting the environment."

Students from Warrenheip Primary School have been planting trees to help koalas in the area. Local resident and organiser of a tree planting day on a local farm Eve Hay said the students planted around 600 trees.

"The kids were great. They got stuck in once they were shown what to do and seemed to love getting their hands dirty. We had a talk about identifying individual koalas recently and the students at the school are helping record sightings on a national database. There was great excitement in the room as the children drew the faces of koalas, noting the changes in pigmentation across their noses around the nostrils."

Max Coster is the Landcare Facilitator for the Moorabool Landcare Network. His position is funded through the Victorian Local Landcare Facilitator Initiative. For further information contact Max by email at max_coster@live.com.au



Finn, Mel and Jett Hehir monitor their revegetation work on the Werribee River. Students from Warrenheip Primary School have planted 600 trees to help koalas in their local area.



Ingrid Hulsman from Cardigan-Windermere Landcare Group presents Yuille Park Community College principal Clete Paige and students (left to right) Chloe, Jayden, Joel and Alex with the first of 300 silver banksia to be planted at the proposed environmental education centre.

Landcare group partners with community college to create environment centre

By Emma Bennett

The Upper Mount Emu Creek Landcare Network is fostering an exciting project that is seeing Cardigan-Windermere Landcare Group teaming up with the Yuille Park Community College to lay the foundations for an environmental education campus.

The college is an award winning state school catering for children from the age of 5–17 who have become disengaged from mainstream schooling or have been nominated through the court system. Children at Yuille Park face many challenges in life, but the school offers them opportunities to become engaged and passionate about their areas of interest.

The curriculum at Yuille Park is holistic and tailored for each individual. The students are given opportunities to learn meaningful skills to equip them for a future in the workforce. The school even boasts a café staffed by students that's open to the public. The plan to include environmental education into the curriculum has been welcomed by students, the local Landcare group and the broader community.

The school is hoping to acquire the vacant Windermere Primary School site, just 15 minutes up the road from Yuille Park, as an environmental education centre and to bring the heritage listed buildings back to life. Land adjoining the school is being leased from a local farmer and Cardigan-Windermere Landcare Group is assisting students to establish a silver banksia seed orchard on the site with the first trees to be planted this winter.

Silver banksia is in decline in western Victoria and is indigenous to the Windermere area. The seed orchard at the school will become a valuable asset for silver banksia restoration programs and will allow students to collect seed, establish seedlings and have them available for revegetation projects and for sale to the public.

The environmental education centre will be managed by Yuille Park Community College and will be a registered junior Landcare site set up like a camp and available for public schools to visit and utilise. The site adjoins the Burrumbeet Creek, which is currently undergoing a clean up by the Glenelg Hopkins CMA to remove weeds. The creek forms channels through wide flood plains at the site and provides an ideal location for water monitoring, restoration works and expansion of the seed orchard.

In addition to learning these essential Landcare revegetation skills, students will also be able to experience animal husbandry with plans to produce eggs and milk to service the school café, as well as a range of practical environmental programs.

There is still much work to be done to make the project happen, but there's a great deal of community support and enthusiasm for it to succeed.

Emma Bennett is the Upper Mount Emu Creek Landcare Facilitator. Her position is funded through the Victorian Local Landcare Facilitator Initiative. For further information email Emma at Landcare.emma@gmail.com

Around the State – News from the

Mallee

The Red Cliffs and Community Landcare Group held a very successful Trees for Mum event on Mother's Day, with over 120 people

The regional Landcare team banded together to promote volunteer groups in the region with a marquee at the Mildura Field Days. There were 18 stands promoting the 'let's get involved' message.

Landcare will also be a focus at the Mallee Machinery Field Days to be held at Speed on 6–7 August. The event attracts thousands of visitors and the Landcare display is always popular.

For further information contact Kevin Chaplin on 5051 4344.

North East

The CMA launched a new website in June. The need for a single information portal for landholders to find key information on land management has been raised frequently at CMA consultations. The new website is focused on user needs and contains a solutions section with answers to frequently asked questions on land management and Landcare.

Regional Landcare Facilitators Amber Croft and Kelly Behrens have recently launched the first of a series of videos on inspirational farmers in the region, now available on the Landcare Gateway at www.landcarevic.net.au/northeast

Award winning landholders Chips Boucher and Lindsay Humphry feature in the videos along with local Landcare facilitator Belinda Pearce.

The CMA is currently working with local governments and Landcare groups to support and coordinate Green Army projects across the region.

For further information contact Tom Croft on (02) 6043 7648.

Wimmera

More than 300 locals attended our very successful regional Landcare celebration with the internationally renowned sustainable landscape designer Phillip Johnson in Horsham in April. The local Landcare community was delighted and fascinated to hear how the Wimmera landscape inspired Phillip's winning design at the 2013 Chelsea Flower Show.

Project Platypus will celebrate its 20th anniversary later this year. This organisation has had an enormous impact on the community and environment of the upper Wimmera catchment. Project Platypus



A Trees for Mum event organised by the Red Cliffs Landcare Group at Red Cliffs was a great success with more than 120 participants.

and other local networks and groups have worked hard to produce an exciting program of major community planting weekends for 2014.

Significant areas of the Wimmera were affected by fire earlier in the year but good conditions through late autumn have helped set us up for some important planting events. We hope many people will come along and lend a hand. Details are available on the Landcare Gateway.

For further information contact Joel Boyd on 5382 1544.

West Gippsland

Representatives of the region's five Landcare networks and the CMA gathered at Rawson in the upper catchment close to the Thompson reservoir and Mt Baw Baw in June. The two-day session focused on future planning for Landcare and explored the key question of how we can enable Landcare at the group and network level over the next couple of years.

All five networks are members of the GippsLandcare consortium, a partnership that has been going for over 10 years. The gathering was an opportunity to reflect on achievements, maintain friendships, and build on the resilient and innovative partnership that spans the region.

In July the five networks and the CMA partnered with facilitator Viv McWaters to conduct a series of workshops in Sale, Warragul and Foster. The workshops were run as mid-winter social evenings where

Viv worked with participants to explore practical and immediate ways to transform Landcare group meetings.

For further information contact Belinda Brennan on 1300 094 262.

North Central

The Regional Landcare Support Plan 2014–18 was completed earlier this year. The plan provides a support framework for Landcare groups across the region for the next four years. Consistent with the Victorian Landcare Program Strategic Plan (2012), it outlines the five functions of Landcare that the CMA will support.

The plan details specific support actions and will be reviewed annually to ensure the actions and targets are achievable.

The *North Central Waterwatch Waterbirds Field Guide* is a comprehensive, pocket sized reference that contains all the information you need to know about the 74 waterbirds that live in north central Victoria. The field guide is the third in a series of guides to be published. The two previous guides were on frogs and fish.

The *North Central Waterwatch Field Guides* and the Regional Landcare Support Plan 2014–18 are available for download from the CMA website at www.nccma.vic.gov.au

For further information contact Ashley Rogers CMA on 5440 1864.

East Gippsland

The region has had a great start to the planting season with thousands of new seedlings now thriving.

Regional Landcare Coordinators

The Lakes Entrance Landcare Group's women's project – Healthy earth, healthy women, healthy communities – has been very successful at bringing women together to celebrate and restore the environment through bush tucker, singing, dancing, and tree planting activities.

Snowy West Landcare Group is continuing with its restoration of the rail trail at Newmerella. Students from Orbost helped with rainforest gully restoration on a school excursion, while volunteers managed to plant 500 seedlings in record time in May.

To view the Regional Landcare Report Card go to www.egcma.com.au/land

**For further information contact
Amanda Bartkowski on 5150 3581.**

Glenelg Hopkins

The CMA held the third annual South West Landcare Gathering on Craig and Woody Oliver's property south of Dunkeld. Panyyabyr Landcare Group hosted the event on behalf of the CMA Landcare team. The gathering attracted more than 60 Landcare members and support staff from around the catchment.

Four Landcare groups gave short presentations at the event including Panyyabyr Landcare Group discussing the Grampians Arc Fox Program, Upper Mount Emu Creek Network talking about their experience with Junior Landcare, the Soil Health Group explaining their work and the Making a Difference for the Merri Group showed how they deal with their peri-urban demographics.

Keynote speaker Dr Paul Horne gave a talk on integrated pest management. The day finished with a bus tour of more than 40 years of environmental works on Bill and Cee Blackwell's property. There was unanimous positive feedback on the day.

**For further information contact
Tony Lithgow on 5571 2526.**

Port Phillip and Westernport

The Conservation Measures Partnership, a worldwide consortium of conservation organisations, has combined the principles and best practices in adaptive management and results-based management from conservation and other fields to create the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation.

The CMA will support targeted Landcare groups to develop their skills and confidence to use the Open Standards. They will work with willing groups with the aim of helping them to be systematic about planning, implementing and monitoring their conservation initiatives so they can



Snowy West Landcare Group volunteers revegetating the East Gippsland Rail Trail near Newmerella.

learn what works, what does not work, and why – and ultimately adapt and improve their efforts.

Seventeen people in Landcare support roles recently attended a regional peer support gathering. They were able to meet and learn a bit about their peers, as well as do some problem solving to address specific challenges.

**For further information contact
Doug Evans on 8781 7920.**

Corangamite

Landcare networks and the CMA have been working together on key projects across the region. The Extending a Systems Approach to Soil Health and Productivity project, led by the Surf Coast and Inland Plains Network, will bring landholders together to learn about whole system farm planning, developing soil knowledge and rotational cropping demonstration sites.

The CMA has launched *Corangamite Landcare News*. This regionally focused e-news bulletin will keep Landcare volunteers and groups up with the latest news. Email landcare@ccma.vic.gov.au if you'd like to receive the e-news.

Two highly successful Indigenous cultural awareness events were held recently. Landcare staff and volunteers learnt about the history and local cultural stories from both Kuuyang Maar Aboriginal Corporation and Wadawurrung along with processes to help protect cultural heritage sites.

**For further information contact
Tracey McRae on 5232 9100.**

Goulburn Broken

We have been busy coordinating submissions to the latest round of Communities for Nature grants and are keen to get some positive results for the region's groups and networks.

The South West Goulburn Landcare Network is once again faced with helping the community recover from fire in the Kilmore area. They have organised many information sessions and the coordination of volunteers continues to assist bushfire affected land managers.

A recent discussion on the development of a national community-led rabbit management strategy was a good opportunity for local land managers with substantial experience in delivering rabbit management programs to share their knowledge. The region celebrated community natural resource management at an awards evening at the Swanpool Cinema on 27 June.

**For further information contact
Tony Kubeil on 5761 1619.**

“

Project Platypus will celebrate its 20th anniversary later this year. This organisation has had an enormous impact on the community and environment of the upper Wimmera catchment.

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In brief

Mobile Landcare group transports young people to remote projects

By Alan Marks

The Victorian Mobile Landcare Group (VMLCG) was formed in 2008 by responsible four wheel drive users who are passionate about Landcare. The group is affiliated with Landcare Australia Limited. We use the off-road transport, logistics and remote area access capabilities of our members to support Landcare and environmental projects of our own or in partnership with other groups.

One of our activities has been helping to introduce teenagers to Landcare. This typically comes about through contacting and making arrangements directly with schools.

We have been working with girls from Fintona Girls' School to identify and remove sallow willow on the Bogong High Plains for six years. The VMLCG drives the students and teachers along four wheel drive tracks to the weeding site and our members also participate in site activities along with Parks Victoria rangers.

We have worked in conjunction with the Tarrangower Cactus Control Group assisting schools groups in controlling wheel cactus at Maldon. This has also involved transporting school children to and from their school. We have also



Members of the Victorian Mobile Landcare Group enjoy lunch at Tawonga Huts, Falls Creek, with students and staff of Fintona Girls' School.

taken groups to plant outs at Wonthaggi, Ballan, Myrning and Yellingbo. It's encouraging to witness the enthusiasm of the students attending their second or third plant out.

Our members have current Working with Children checks for these events and all of our vehicles are equipped with radio communications. Most VMLG members are also members of four wheel drive clubs and have been trained in four wheel driving proficiency.

The group is always looking to extend our range of activities and we welcome enquiries.

Alan Marks is the President of the VMLG. For further information visit

the website www.vmlcg.org.au or email Allan at ama64891@bigpond.net.au

Next Issue – Landcare and technology

The next issue of the magazine will feature stories on Landcare and technology. From GPS maps to smartphone apps, we are interested in how technology is being used by Landcare groups and networks.

Contributions to the next issue should be sent to the editor by Friday 24 October 2014.

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The Victorian Landcare & Catchment Management magazine is published by the Victorian Government Department of Environment and Primary Industries and distributed in partnership with the Farm Tree & Landcare Association and the Victorian Catchment Management Council. The magazine aims to raise awareness of Landcare and natural resource management among Victorian farmers, landholders, the Victorian Landcare community and the wider community.



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