

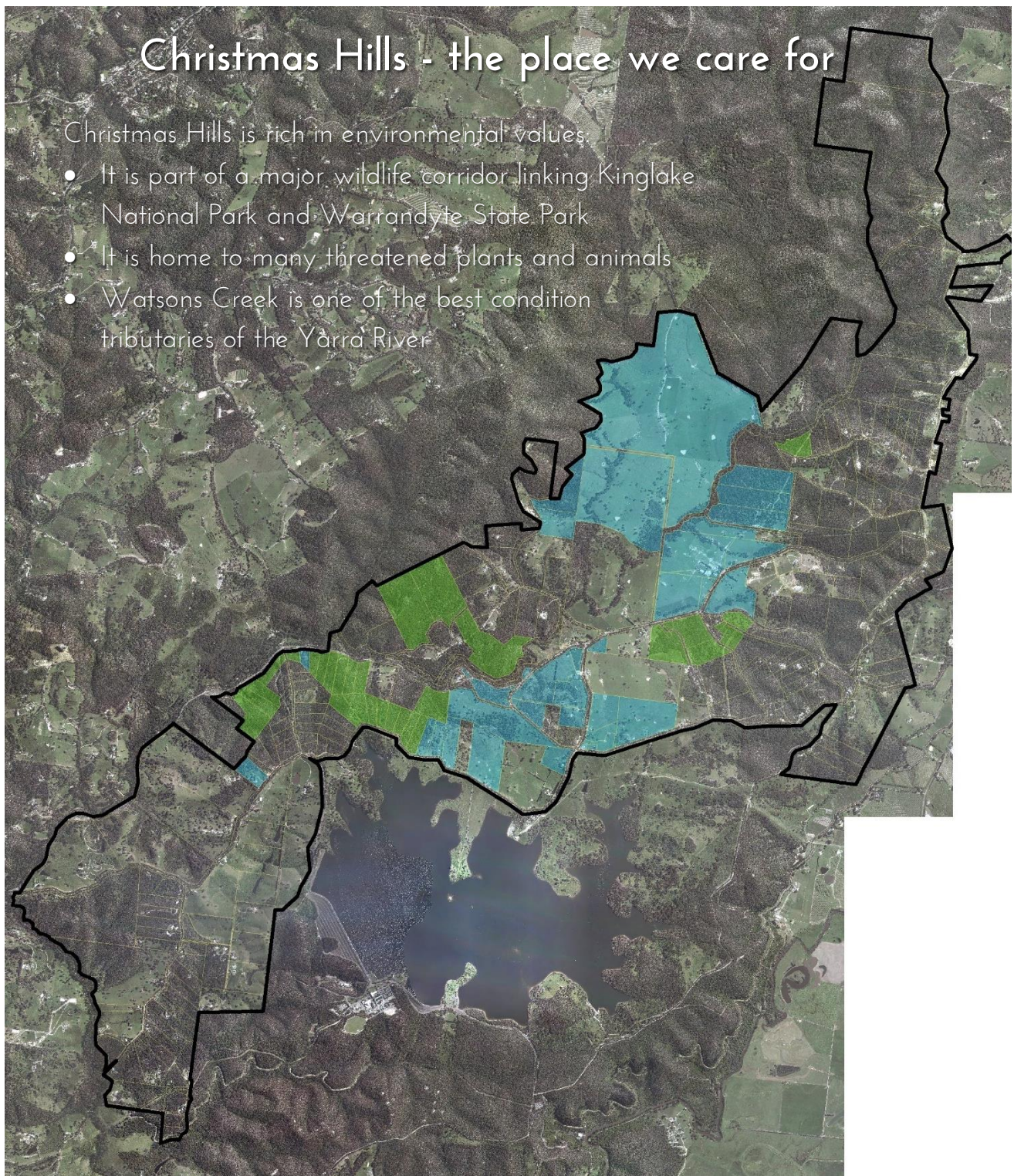
Annual Report 2018



Christmas Hills
Landcare Group

Christmas Hills
Landcare Group

Background



- The group boundary encompasses an area of 2550 hectares comprised of 248 land parcels, but with probably no more than 180 land owners
- Melbourne Water owns 56 land parcels within the Christmas Hills Landcare Group area - some are leased (blue), the rest are managed for conservation (green) (also see page 6)
- Christmas Hills is traditional country of the Wurundjeri people

Formation of the Christmas Hills Landcare Group

The Christmas Hills Landcare Group in its current form came into being following a community gathering in October 2005 designed to assess the level of interest in forming a group.

The good turnout and a couple of trial 'property visit' based events late in 2005 made it clear that the level of interest was strong and at the CHLG event in March 2006, several people put their hand up to help run the group. Other than a Treasurer, specific 'office bearer' roles were not defined and an informal committee of Rob Shackleton (Treasurer), Mark Gardner, Wayne O'Donovan, Margo Heeley, Phil Styles, Bridget Bainbridge and Doug Evans was formed.

Probably as a consequence of the informality of this committee, they rarely met, yet over time the Landcare group continued to grow in profile and membership, projects became increasingly ambitious in scale and complexity, and multiple projects were on the go at once.

In December 2010 the group held its first official AGM to elect a management committee for the group, with Doug Evans, Rob Shackleton, Nicole Noy, Ross Coupar, Mark Gardner, Kylie Moppert and Tina Keene duly elected onto the inaugural committee for 2011.

Each year the CHLG seeks to deliver a series of events and projects that aim to engage landholders in Christmas Hills, connect them to our local natural environmental values, develop their understanding and skills to manage these values, remove obstacles to action, and connect them to each other socially.

Through partnerships of various types, the CHLG is also developing its relationships with other Landcare groups, the shire and other agencies to extend its influence and leverage.

We do all this to help Christmas Hills landholders protect and enhance the rich diversity of natural environmental values we are custodians of here in Christmas Hills.



Vision

All Christmas Hills landholders working together in a coordinated and collaborative way to care for and sustain the environmental assets we value in Christmas Hills

Mission

To engage with Christmas Hills landholders and establish relationships with and between them, leading to them taking coordinated action on their respective properties that protect and sustain the environmental assets of Christmas Hills



Strategic pathways

To fulfil our mission effectively we need to:

1. Understand what our environmental assets are, why we value them, what threatens them, and what needs to be done where to protect and sustain them. How?

- Access existing information on environmental assets of Christmas Hills
- Access existing expertise on environmental assets of Christmas Hills
- Conduct community-based research to fill information gaps as required
- Document in a map-based plan

2. Engage all the landholders that have a role to play in protecting and sustaining these assets. How?

- Build the profile, respect and trust of the group in the community
- Regular promotion and communications with clear and consistent messages
- Recruit new and retain existing members
- Establish and strengthen personal connections through social activities
- Be inclusive - hold events that appeal to members and non-members alike

3. Help each landholder understand what needs to be done and work out how they can integrate this with their own aspirations for their property. How?

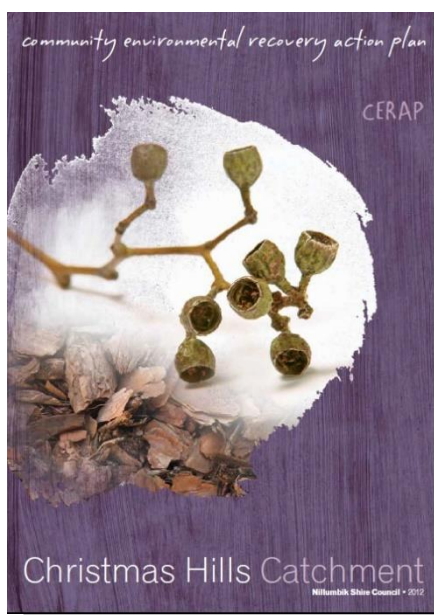
- Communicate the map-based plan of Christmas Hills environmental assets, threats and required action to landholders
- Translate and interpret the group's objectives and action priorities from the plan to property scale

4. Coordinate and support landholders to take action on their property. How?

- Develop landholder knowledge and skills through guest speakers, demonstrations, training, etc.
- Develop and deliver projects to remove obstacles that prevent landholders taking action (such as insufficient time, skills, funds, etc.)

5. Integrate our efforts and collaborate with others who have a shared interest in the environmental assets of Christmas Hills. How?

- Communicate the map-based plan of Christmas Hills environmental assets, threats and required action to potential partners (eg Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water, Nillumbik Shire, Yarra Ranges Shire, Wurundjeri, university researchers, prospective sponsors)
- Establish mutually beneficial partnerships with those that can help us



The Christmas Hills Community Environmental Action Plan consolidates information on the environmental assets of Christmas Hills and also guides landholder action in a map-based format.



Chair's report 2018

This year brought a few unplanned challenges, but throughout it all the 2018 committee remained focussed and dedicated to the cause. Special thanks go to Nev, Nicole and Tina who each hosted one or more meetings during the year which included feeding the committee prior to the start of each meeting.

2018 threw up several distractions that interrupted planning and delivery of our program of events, the most significant of which was the consultation process around the sale of Melbourne Water owned properties in Christmas Hills that started in 2017.

This saga rolled on for another twelve months and it still remains unclear as to what will happen with this land. It started with community consultation sessions promised for February eventually being held in May. A Summary of Options document was circulated only 4 days prior, and repeated requests for copies of the more detailed report remain unsuccessful to this day. The consultation sessions were contrived, divisive and disorganised such that the 100 or so people that attended across the 6 sessions had almost no opportunity to hear what each other had to say, and views with high levels of support were treated as equal to those held by an individual.

Of course, it didn't help that the options presented for feedback were very narrow (one option really) in scope, and an option identified earlier that had strong similarities to the CHLG position did not get an airing. As a result, much of our time was spent helping the Christmas Hills community make their dissatisfaction known through meetings with, and emails to, Melbourne Water, Nillumbik councillors and state politicians.

Then Nillumbik released their position, which reinforced much of what we had been saying, but in town planning speak. In September, MW said they were digesting Nillumbik's submission, but we haven't heard a lot since! The local press even started to get interested with articles in the Warrandyte Diary and Mountain Views Mail.



Adding to this, other distractions during the year were Nillumbik Council commencing their review of the Green Wedge Management Plan, the weather was not cooperative with respect to undertaking our planned traditional burns, and some of the bits on our new Rodenator were faulty!

However, I was reminded of the importance of what we do and why we do it, when I received an email from one of our newest members, Jo Mogilewska, after her and her family attended the end of year "Bats of Christmas Hills" event: *"Cate, Dave and I could not get over how wonderful a night it was. I cannot thank you enough for organising it and for your continued commitment to the group. I'm feeling a lot more part of the area and the community"*

Let's make 2019 another year as rewarding for all our members!

Doug Evans

Events run in 2018

Making things the Wurundjeri way (AGM)

As the contemporary owners of Christmas Hills, we in the Landcare Group started the year with another event aimed at building a relationship with the Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri people.

For this event we were in the hands of Wurundjeri woman, Judy Nicholson, and Wurundjeri men, Uncle Bill Nicholson, Uncle Dave Wandin and Darren Wandin, and Judy's partner, Jamie McFadyen.



Judy led a group of 19 local women through the steps of traditional basket weaving using locally sourced cumbungi leaves. Uncle Bill, Uncle Dave, Darren and Jamie led a group of 11 local men through the steps of traditional spear making using locally sourced wattle stems.



Judy had prepared a number of 'started' baskets to help with the tricky first steps of weaving, but some also tried from scratch. Uncle Dave and Darren also came prepared with a selection of stems they had collected from near Healesville. The men then scraped the stems of their bark, some using traditional stone blades, before "straightening" them in the fire. After fashioning a spear head of sorts, the big test came when they had to use a "murri wan" (throwing stick) to launch their spear into the hay bale target some 20 metres away.

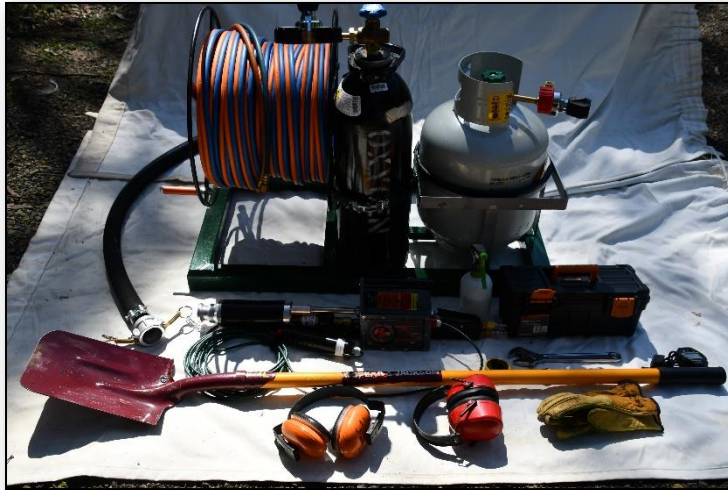
Jamie and Darren then demonstrated how to make fire the traditional way using a stem of native elderberry as firestick drill on a split stem of grass tree flower spike. Once a coal was generated, it was tipped into a tinder of fine shreds of stringybark, and then fanned into a flame.

We then moved inside the hall for the CHLG AGM where we briefly reflected on our 2017 achievements, did our annual group 'health check' and elected the management committee for 2018



Rodenator R3 training

Following a successful demonstration in 2017 of an upgraded version of the Rodenator, a device that delivers a mix of oxygen and LPG into the warren and then ignites it, the CHLG decided to purchase a unit. We want to then make the unit available to landholders to aid with collapsing warrens for rabbit control on their properties, with support from trained volunteers to ensure its safe use.



The new unit was delivered, oxygen and LPG gas bottles purchased, and members Nev Ragg and John Robertson donated their time and welding skills to make a steel frame to help with transporting the unit.

In July, Phil Sansom from Jansen Farm Services, stepped five CHLG members through the use of the Rodenator R3, on warrens around the Christmas Hills Hall. Attempts to use our new unit for the training were thwarted when it was discovered that the hose reel on our unit had been fitted with the

incorrect couplings meaning we couldn't connect the gas bottles to the Rodenator unit. We also discovered that one of our unit's gas regulators had a number of pinhole leaks.

So we resorted to learning on Jim's unit that fortunately he had brought with him. By the end of the day, the five members felt better equipped, maybe even confident, in how to use our new Rodenator R3.

The next steps in making the unit available for local landholders will see the development of a detailed instruction guide, and for those now trained in its use to meet and determine how best to make the unit and their guidance available.

Footnote: The incorrect hose fittings were replaced, as was the leaky regulator, in time for the rabbit control event in October.



Helping a neighbour with weed control

Every year we endeavour to hold an event where members volunteer their time to help a neighbour with controlling weeds on their property, and in the process improve their skills in weed identification and control methods.

This year proved a challenge in locking down a property to host the event! Our original planning had us going to one of the Mellings' properties on Skyline Road where we had engaged the contractor Indigenous Design to do woody weed control work, as well as treat a large patch of agapanthus. The idea was to do follow up control on the agapanthus, but when it became evident that the initial treatment hadn't been successful, we had to ask the contractor to retreat the agapanthus in summer, and also find an alternative property for our event.

A call for someone interested in hosting the event was put out through the membership and was answered by Jo Mogilewska and Dave Holder in Ridge Road. Plans were made, a date was set in September, and the event was promoted to our membership. Then private matters intervened, and reluctantly Jo advised that they were no longer able to host the event on that date.

With the advertised date fast approaching, and after noticing a few pittosporums on their property, a call was made to Jan Cranwell and Phil Styles to see if they would be willing to host the event. The response was "Love to!", so the word went out that the date was the same, but the place had changed.

Ten members then scoured the bushland section of Phil and Jan's property and removed a few larger pittosporum and blackberries, and any seedlings of these they were able to find. At the top of the hill it transformed into a litter removal task with rubbish easier to find than weeds! Then it was back to the house for afternoon tea and a good chat!



Footnote: Indigenous Design returned in December to treat the agapanthus, this time with great success!

Best practice rabbit control

With our recent purchase of a Rodenator R3 unit to help with the critical element of collapsing of warrens as part of rabbit control, we decided it was time to have a refresher on just what is required to effectively control rabbits.

So, in October at Veronica's place we brought in the big guns - Tim Bloomfield and Brad Spear, pest animal management mentors for the Victorian Rabbit Action Network.

Tim has sustained a 41-year career in pest management working across Victoria and interstate. Tim's expertise is in the behaviours and management of foxes, rabbits, feral pigs, goats and deer, and is the author and contributing author of publications on the control and management of rabbits, foxes and wild dogs.



Brad is a professional contractor advising and implementing on-ground pest management of rabbits, foxes, and feral pigs for over 20 years. Brad is a fully licensed pest controller with authorisation to bait, fumigate and also to carry out implosion of warren systems.

First Tim explained to the 16 people who attended, the principles that need to be applied to be effective in your rabbit control and presented some of the evidence that backs these principles up. Then we headed outside where Brad gave practical demonstrations of laying baits, fumigation, and the use of explosives to collapse warrens.

Nev Ragg also helped to demonstrate the use of the group's Rodenator to collapse a warren, and we were able to compare the results with that of the explosives. The observation was that Rodenator doesn't have the same impact on a warren as the explosives, especially the floor of the burrows, meaning return visits to retreat warren systems may be needed.

Then it was back inside for socialising around a delicious afternoon tea.



Bats of Christmas Hills

To wind up the year, members were invited to Doug and Pip's place to learn about bats. But before any talk of bats started the 29 people who attended chowed down on pizzas provided by the group.



Doug then gave his annual presentation of what the cameras saw during the year. The presentation comprised a selection of short videos that summarised what the CHLG motion-sensing cameras had captured on private properties during 2018. A record 74 different fauna species were recorded - 16 mammals, 51 birds, 6 reptiles and 1 amphibian.

Doug then handed over to Dr Lindy Lumsden, a renowned bat expert from the Arthur Rylah Institute.

Lindy gave a fascinating presentation and fielded numerous questions before we all headed outside to see (hear) what could be picked up on the acoustic detector. Several species were detected, before we headed out to check the three harp traps that had been set up earlier. After coming up empty-handed after the first two, the gathered throng were delighted when Lindy showed us a Lesser Long-eared Bat caught in the third.



Lindy told us there are 12 species of bats in Christmas Hills - 7 of these were detected on the night.

Footnote: when Lindy and Doug were packing up the harp nets, they found three more bats!

Projects run in 2018

Projects



Wedge-tailed Eagle



Tree Goannas fighting



Young Powerful Owl



Male and female Superb Lyrebirds



'Touching' moment between Swamp Wallaby and Ring-tailed Possum

Community fauna monitoring

Helping landholders connect with their local flora and fauna continues to be a core objective for the Christmas Hills Landcare Group. The group sees these positive experiences and insights as a key step in engaging landholders to take action on their own properties to care for their local environment.

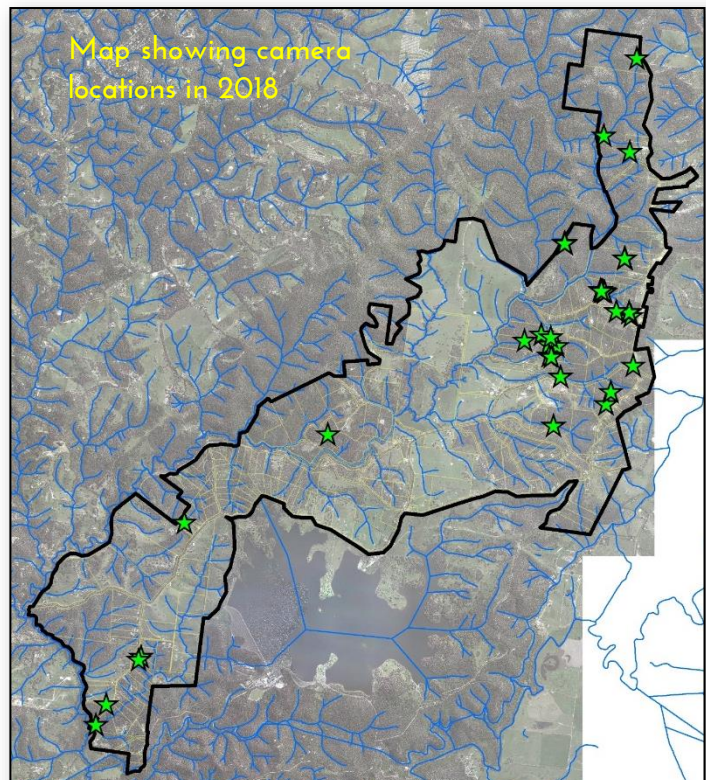
By providing landholders with access to the group's motion-sensing infrared trail cameras and help with setting them up along with a scent lure to attract fauna, the CHLG's ongoing Community Fauna Monitoring helps them find out more about the fauna that occurs on their properties and create these connections.

In 2018 the use of the group's cameras was locally coordinated by Nev Ragg, Peter Laver, and Doug Evans, with cameras used on 18 different properties in over 30 different locations (with many repeat set ups at three 'productive' locations featuring a dam surrounded by bush).

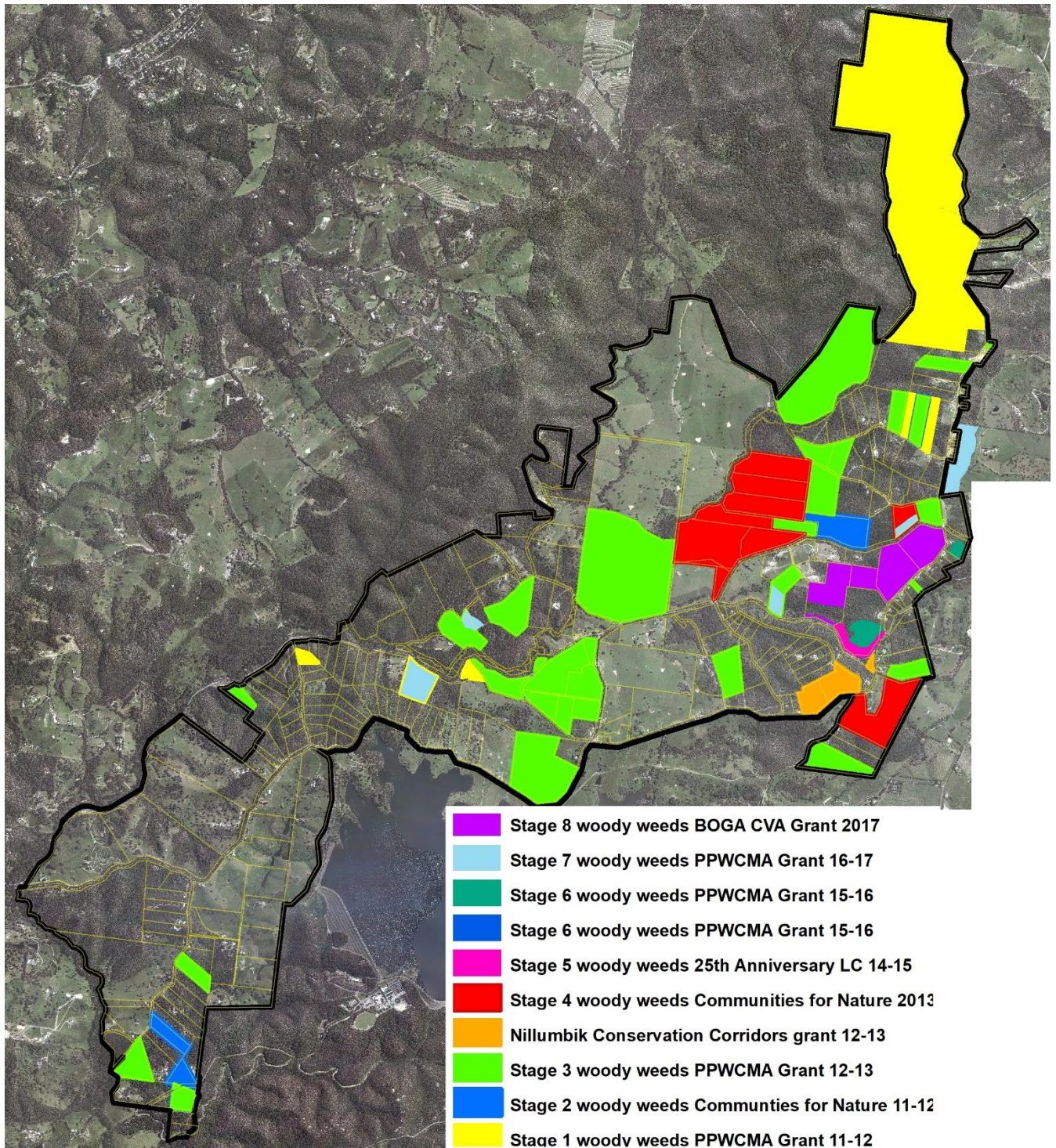
This year we detected a new annual record of 74 different fauna species - 16 mammals (6 introduced), 51 birds (1 introduced), 6 reptiles and 1 amphibian.

Notable 'captures' include:

- Bush Rat (*Rattus fuscipes*)
- Lowland Copperhead (*Austrelaps superbus*),
- Powerful Owl (*Ninox strenua*),
- Lace Monitor (*Varanus varius*),
- Superb Lyrebird (*Menura novaehollandiae*),
- Brown Quail (*Coturnix ypsilophora*)
- Wedge-tailed Eagle (*Aquila audax*)



Projects



Stage 1 - \$19,836 (11/12 PPWCMA)	17.5 properties, 340 Ha
Stage 2 - \$9,218 (11/12 C4N)	5 properties, 27 Ha
Stage 2.5 - \$12,808 (NCC project)	2.5 properties, 10 Ha
Stage 3 - \$19,988 (12/13 PPWCMA)	11 new properties, 158 Ha and 11 previous properties, 60 Ha
Stage 4 - \$9,185 (2013 C4N)	6 properties, 69 Ha
Stage 5 - \$18,500 (14/15 25th ALG)	1 property, 4 Ha
Stage 6 - \$22,596 (15-16 PPWCMA)	1 new property, 2 Ha and 1 previous property, 5 Ha
Stage 7 - \$3,301 (16-17 PPWCMA)	2 new properties, 13 Ha and 3 previous properties, 12 Ha
Stage 8 - \$26,400 (2017 BOGA)	4 new properties, 41 Ha

Woody weed control

The invasion of native vegetation by woody weeds is one of the major threats to the quality of native forest and woodland habitat in Christmas Hills. Species such as Blackberry, Boneseed, Sweet Pittosporum, Cootamundra Wattle, Sallow Wattle and Radiata Pine can form dense infestations that alter the vegetation structure and restrict natural regeneration of native species thereby reducing its suitability as habitat for native fauna.

The Christmas Hills Landcare Group helps landholders tackle these weeds in several ways – seeking funds to engage a skilled contractor to do larger scale weed control works, holding weeding working bees with the Christmas Hills Tool Trailer to help neighbours, and developing landholder skills in weed identification and simple control methods.



Contractor controlling Sweet Pittosporum on the Mellings property

The CHLG woody weed program has been going since 2011 and leading into 2018 had undertaken weed control work on 46 properties covering 628 hectares. During 2018 Indigenous Design Environmental Services were engaged to do weed control work on 4 additional properties treating another 41 hectares. This was funded through a grant secured through the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning's Biodiversity On-Ground Action - Community and Volunteer Action grants. The totals to date are \$131,732 secured to treat woody weeds on 50 properties covering 669 hectares.

The involvement of additional properties to help fill the gaps is typically sought through an expression of interest process.

Projects



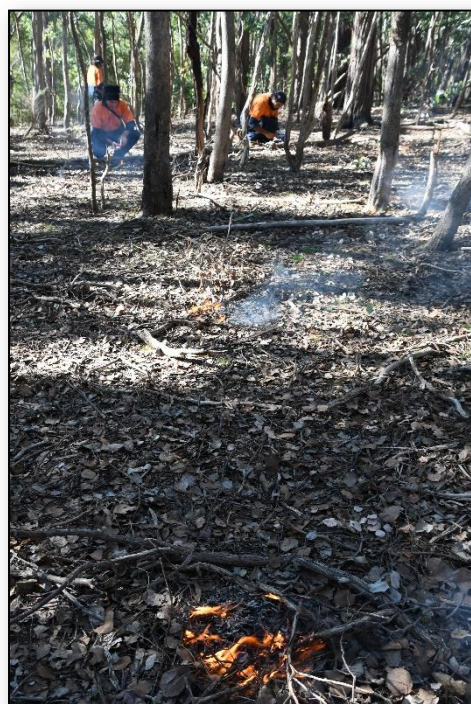
Wyendabool - 'hills of fire'

Building off our early work with the CFA's Firescape program with the Christmas Hills Fire Brigade and the Bend of Islands Conservation Association, we have shifted our focus to working with the Traditional Owners of Christmas Hills, the Wurundjeri people, on traditional burning practices.

The Wurundjeri people are interested in restoring their capacity for traditional practices, including traditional burning to keep Country healthy and ensure food and other resources continue to be available. The CHLG is also interested in keeping Country healthy and have been successful in securing a Port Phillip and Westernport CMA Community Grant to work with Wurundjeri to establish four traditional burn demonstration sites on three private properties in Christmas Hills.

Traditional burning relies on being able to recognise the signs that indicate Country is 'sick' and needs to be burnt, as well as knowledge of the signs that indicate that Country is ready to be burnt safely. The latter is primarily about ensuring there is sufficient moisture in the soil to protect the plants and other living things and keep the burn cool. It means waiting until after enough rain has fallen in autumn and early winter to build the soil moisture levels, and then finding a window of dry weather that allows the leaf litter to dry out enough to carry a flame.

2018 wasn't very kind to us in this regard, with only one of the four planned burns being attempted. This was a site at Gad's place, and with Wurundjeri Elder Uncle Dave Wandin, accompanied by the Wurundjeri's Narrap Team (land management team), all attempts to get a substantial burn started were restricted to small isolated spot burns. Despite a couple of relatively good drying days, the leaf litter was still a bit too damp.



Optimistically we kept holding out that a suitable period of drying weather would still eventuate but come August we reluctantly decided to postpone any further attempts until 2019.

Note: 'Wyendabool' is a Woiwurrung (language of the Wurundjeri people) term for the Christmas Hills and Bend of Islands area that means 'hills of fire'.

Management committee

At the AGM held on the 18th February 2018, the 22 members in attendance voted in six of the seven incumbents to the Management Committee for 2018. Judith Ellerton, advised she was unable to stand for the committee in 2018 for personal reasons. The elected committee was:

Doug Evans – Chair
Nicole Noy – Treasurer
Sally Corrigan – Secretary
Mark Gardner – Vice Chair
Tina Keene – Membership Officer
Nev Ragg – ordinary Committee Member

The committee met five times during the year and its decisions are guided by the group's vision, mission and strategic pathways established in August 2011 (see pages 4 & 5). In 2018 the committee focussed on:

- organising the 2018 program of events
- assessing funding opportunities and determining projects to pursue funding for
- financial management
- strategies for recruiting new members
- ideas for 'freshening up' the camera program
- Encouraging and supporting members to voice their views on Melbourne Water's planned land disposal and Nillumbik's Green Wedge Management Plan review



Membership

Membership numbers have remained steady compared to 2017 numbers (note: due to a few late renewals, the 2017 figure in the graph below has been revised upwards from the version in the 2017 Annual Report). We had four new members join in 2018, but several 2017 members had not renewed by the time of printing this report. The following were the financial members for 2018:

Bridget Bainbridge
Bronwyn Woods
Carole & Paul Faulkner
Chris & Tina Keene
Colin & Denise Berry
Darren & Narelle Trippett
Darren Bennet & Vanessa Reid
Doug Evans & Pip Charlton
Greg and Angie MacMillan
Helen Richards
Jackie Hamlet
Jan Cranwell & Phil Styles

Jane & Peter Russ
Jo Mogilewska & Dave Holder
John & Moira Robertson
Judith Ellerton
Kay & Rod Armstrong
Kevin & Margo Heeley
Liz & Peter Laver
Liz Clarkson
Lucy Canavan & Danny Macminn
Mark Gardner
Michael Shead & Nicole Vallack
Mick & Suzanne Craine

Nev Ragg & Janet Meade
Nicole Noy & Ross Coupar
Paul & Jenny Mitchell
Paul Danelutti
Peter Benda & Sonja Pedell
Phil Ingelmo
Sally Corrigan
Tony & Anna Gleeson
Tim Lang & Tina McCarthy
Viv Murphy
Warwick & Carol Leeson
Veronica Holland

Joining the Christmas Hills Landcare Group means meeting neighbours, building relationships, gaining knowledge and skills, accessing projects designed to assist you, helping each other, working together, and showing your support for what we do.

If you own or manage land in Christmas Hills, we would love you to join us! It only costs \$20 for your first year - you get a member's gate sign, a community benefit card for the Yarra Glen IGA, and are added to the email list to get you in the communication loop - then it is only a \$10 annual renewal fee.



Please encourage your neighbours to join, and don't forget to renew your membership!

Group Health

Each year the Christmas Hills Landcare Group undertakes a group 'health check'. This is a self-assessment based on feedback from members, typically conducted at the AGM.

Group health element	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	10/11	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
1. Vision / direction – How clear is your group about where it is going and what it is trying to achieve in the longer term?	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	4
2. Purpose / role – How clear is your group about its purpose and the role it plays in achieving its goals?	4	4	5	5	4	4	5	5	5	5	4
3. Action Planning – How good is your group at planning, designing and delivering activities that help it achieve its goals?	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
4. Leadership – How good is your group at attracting, inducting and changing over people in leadership roles?	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	3	4	4	3
5. Management structure and systems – How effective is your group's management structure and its internal systems? (such as decision-making, managing finances, communicating to the rest of the group)	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5
6. External profile – How well known and respected is your group and its goals by your local landholders and wider community?	2	2	3	3	4	3	4	4	4	3	3
7. Financial resources – How strong is your group's financial base and how good is your group at attracting financial support when required?	3	3	3	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
8. People resources – How good is your group at attracting and retaining members?	4	3	4	4	3	5	5	4	4	4	4
9. Information resources – How good is your group at accessing the information it needs, either its own knowledge base or finding it out from external sources?	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
10. Networks – How well-connected (eg partnerships, regular contact, etc.) is your group to other groups and organisations that can help it to achieve its goals?	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	4	5
11. Confidence – How confident is your group to try new approaches or methods, and/or tackle new issues?	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
12. Human capital – How good is your group at using and developing the skills and experience of its members?	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	4
13. Social capital – How strong are the social relationships between members of your group, and how good is your group at building and maintaining these relationships?	3	3	4	5	4	4	5	5	5	5	4
14. External support – How easy is it for your group to access external support when it needs it?	3	3	4	3	4	5	5	5	5	5	5

(Rating scores are based on a 5-point scale where 1 = "Very poor", 3 = "OK", and 5 = "Excellent")

Partnerships

The CHLG aims to form mutually-beneficial partnerships with others who share our objectives.

Nillumbik Landcare Network

CHLG is one of eleven Landcare groups that form the Nillumbik Landcare Network (NLN), which is supported by a part-time Landcare Facilitator, Colin Broughton, employed by Nillumbik Shire Council. After doing some strategic conservation planning in 2014, the NLN identified a need for a simple and cost-effective way of measuring the ongoing, long-term health of the remnant forest and woodlands that are prevalent in Nillumbik.

With support from Museums Victoria, the NLN is using six pairs of motion-sensing cameras and sound recorders at 30 fixed monitoring sites across the shire to collect data on some of the fauna present. Forest health indices such as 'Species richness' that will provide us with a measure of forest condition are expected to be generated from the data. The CHLG has supported the continuation of this project for another three years by successfully applying for a Helen McPherson Smith Trust philanthropic grant on behalf of the NLN as they were not eligible to apply. This will enable them to engage a person for three more years to deploy and retrieve the equipment and coordinate data analysis.



Doug, alongside representatives from Strathewen and St Andrews Landcare Groups, has been helping the NLN articulate their strategic Conservation Action Plan in 'plain English' that is easier for a wider audience to digest and understand. We hope to use this as the basis for an updated strategic plan for the CHLG.

The NLN also met again with the three rural councillors during the year to hear what progress had been made against the opportunities identified by the NLN for council to assist. Fair to say, not a lot of progress was reported.

Nillumbik Shire Council

The Nillumbik Shire Council (NSC) hosts the Victorian Government-funded 'Nillumbik Conservation Futures' project, which in 2018 funded the burn at one of the demonstration traditional burn sites. The NSC also hosts the Forest Health Monitoring project officer, Jess Lawton, on behalf of the NLN, and CHLG entered into a MoU with NSC to transfer the grant funds we received for continuing this project. NSC also led the preparation of a funding proposal as part of DELWP's Biodiversity Response Planning. The 'Sugarloaf project' was successful and has potential to fund fox and deer control in parts of Christmas Hills, mainly around Sugarloaf Dam.

Christmas Hills Fire Brigade

During 2018 CHLG liaised with Peter Mildenhall from the brigade to keep him updated on our plans for demonstrating traditional burning.

Wurundjeri people

CHLG continued to strengthen its relationship with the Wurundjeri people, Traditional Owners of Christmas Hills, with the "Making things the Wurundjeri way" event and the securing of funding to establish traditional burn demonstration sites on four properties.

Promotion

The Christmas Hills Landcare Group maintains its profile through five main means:

Website - where we post newsletters and project and event details:

<http://portphillipwesternport.landcarevic.org.au/Christmashills>

Our website is hosted on the Victorian Landcare Gateway which underwent a major overhaul in 2016. We have endeavoured to update the new version and details of projects, and copies of previous annual reports, are now available.

Facebook - where we post items of interest and reach out to a new audience. At the end of 2018 we had 109 people who like our page:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Friends-of-Christmas-Hills-Landcare/151667101570175?sfrm>

Newsletters - occasional emails to all members to keep them informed of upcoming events, project opportunities and other news of relevance.

Gate signs - for each member to illustrate their support and to show the extent of our membership in the community.

Sandwich board - to show passers-by that an event is on and demonstrating we are an active group.



Finances

	Opening balance 1 st January 2018	Plus receipts	Less expenses	Transfers*	Closing balance 31 st December 2018
Group funds					
Memberships and donations	1,601.10	638.65	-351.00 ¹	-497.52 ⁴	1,391.23
Admin	2,252.11	1,000.00	-442.70 ²	36.05 ⁶	2,845.46
Events	5,292.66	6,200.00	-5,472.16 ³	-1,178.00 ⁵	4,842.50
Group funds total	9,145.87	7,838.65	-6,265.86	-1,639.47	9,079.19
Project grant funds					
Fauna Monitoring	5,461.43	0.00	-4,835.39	1,178.00 ⁵	1,804.04
Nest Boxes	878.34	0.00	-711.65	0.00	166.69
Pest Animal Control	0.00	0.00	-497.52	497.52 ⁴	0.00
Orchid Project	4,676.00	0.00	-4,624.95	-51.05 ⁶	0.00
Firescape	734.34	0.00	0.00-	0.00	734.34
Traditional Burning	0.00	44,286.00	-12,522.41	0.00	31,763.59
Nillumbik-wide Monitoring	909.00	29,472.00	-29,168.13	15.00 ⁶	1,227.87
Woody Weeds	29,766.98	0.00	-26,923.91	0.00	2,843.07
Grant funds total	42,426.09	73,758.00	-79,283.96	1,639.47	38,539.60
TOTAL	51,571.96	81,596.65	-85,549.82	0.00	47,618.79
Cash book balance 31 st December 2018					47,618.79
Bank balance 31 st December 2018					47,618.79

* Transfers represent minor over/underspend on projects transferred between similar projects or Group funds.

Group funds expenses include:

- ¹ Cat cage-traps
- ² Insurance and membership of Landcare Victoria Incorporated (LVI)
- ³ Catering, Welcome to Country, Djirri Djirri dancers and presenter costs for 2017 AGM and Birds of the Night events

⁴ Membership funds were transferred to enable purchase of parts/materials for Rodenator

⁵ Unspent funds from 'Night Birds' event was transferred to 'Fauna Monitoring' to purchase 4 additional new cameras

⁶ Project complete - remaining funds transferred to 'Group Admin' and Nillumbik-wide Monitoring



Neighbours caring for our place.....

<http://portphillipwesternport.landcarevic.org.au/Christmashills>

*(Cover photo: Yellow Robin by Nev Ragg,
Back page photo: Golden Orb-weaver Spider by Nev Ragg)*