

Winter 2000

ISSUE 16

# *Victorian* **Landcare** & CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT



New platypus research

The story of Deen Maar



International Landcare 2000 Conference  
**FEATURE ISSUE**



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# CONTENTS

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The best in flood  
management  
◀ 8-9



The platypus  
◀ 12-13



International  
Landcare 2000  
Conference feature  
◀ 14-20



Junior Landcare in  
South Gippsland  
◀ 22

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# From the editors

The International Landcare 2000 Conference was one of the most exciting Landcare events since the inception of the movement just 14 years ago. We've published a round-up of the Conference and a few of the many fascinating papers that were presented. More papers will be featured in future issues.

Our heartiest congratulations to David Beckingsale and his team at NRE for organising a very successful event that has introduced Landcare 'Australian-style' to the world.

The International Landcare 2000 Conference papers are a fascinating read. They provide local, regional and global perspectives on the many facets of Landcare and are available on the NRE website at [www.nre.vic.gov.au/conf/landcare2000](http://www.nre.vic.gov.au/conf/landcare2000)

Delegates and others can continue to debate issues raised at the Conference by visiting the chat line at [www.landcareaustralia.com.au](http://www.landcareaustralia.com.au)

## Coming up

Salinity will be our feature topic in the next issue. We'll be revisiting some of Victoria's major salinity projects and looking at the latest research.

If you'd like to submit a story or a suggestion about salinity, catchment management, or any other Landcare issue, feel free to contact us. We are always keen to hear from our readers.

Please note the new contact details on the contents page.

Paul Crock, Joanne Safstrom,  
Gabrielle Sheehan, Carrie Tiffany

# OUR COVER

Our striking cover photograph of a young Eritrean man collecting fuel with his camel was taken by Patricia Geraghty from NRE. Patricia spent two years in war-torn Eritrea as an Australian Volunteer Abroad. She worked with the Water Resources Department in the Eritrean capital of Asmara.

Patricia spoke on natural resource management in Eritrea at the recent International Landcare 2000 Conference. Eritrea has no permanent rivers, limited groundwater resources and a harsh arid climate. According to Patricia tree cover is now less than 1%.

"The Eritrean government has put together a National Environment Management Plan which embraces the principle of community ownership. So the Landcare ethic, in all its wonderful diversity and flexibility is alive and well in Eritrea," she said.

## Albert River farewells Landcare pioneer

**By Jenny Davies, Albert River Landcare Group**

John Crew died on 23 December 1999 after a long battle with illness. He was 48. John was an inaugural member of the Albert River Farm Trees Group – later the Albert River Landcare Group. He was a tireless worker, inspiring others with his enthusiasm.

John and his wife Gayle ran a 180 hectare property on the South Gippsland Highway at Gelliondale, about 20 kilometres west of Yarram. John loved farming and was well-known for his sustainable farming practices.



He had been a top vealer producer since illness forced him to stop milking 10 years ago.

John was one of the first farmers in the district to fence off areas of remnant vegetation, establish plantations with direct seeding and successfully manage saline areas. He campaigned hard for the return of five kilometres of railway easement to crown land status and worked with the group to fence and revegetate it.

John loved the native bush, birds and other animals and took great pleasure in seeing an increase in wildlife in these revegetated areas.

John gave most generously of his time and energy for the community benefit and has left many treasured memories with all who came in contact with him. His inspiring spirit will live on.

He is survived by his wife Gayle and their children Emma, Paul and Andrew. The Albert River Landcare Group will be dedicating a memorial project to his memory.



*Above: Traditional village houses or tukuls, on the road from Asmara to Keren.*

*Below: Terracing around a micro dam. Eucalypts are planted to control erosion but seed banks and nurseries of native species are increasing.*





**Dear Editors,**

*As a farmer, parliamentary researcher and environmentalist, I am an avid reader of Victorian Landcare and Catchment Management and look forward to it coming across my desk.*

*The articles I most enjoy are the inspiring ones and the practical 'how to' stuff. Imagine, then, my disappointment with the story on propagating in the last issue.*

*Trays? Pricking Out? What? I don't know anybody who does it like this any more! This technology is ten years old.*

*We farm in a dry and difficult environment near Swan Hill. We grow 4000 trees a year for our farm. We collect local seed. We direct sow into hyco pots and we have success.*

*We no longer have the unaccountable (and heart-breaking) deaths/failures-to-thrive 12 months after planting out in the paddock. Learning about J roots changed our whole technique.*

*Unfortunately, you dismissed direct sowing in a couple of lines of postscript.*

*It's so important that you use the brightest and best ideas when you are advising farmers. Most of us are flat out surviving and any tree planting we do must use time and resources in the best possible way. I know from having tried most methods that this is the most efficient and successful way to go.*

*Every good wish.*

**Janet Field**

## Heather Mitchell Memorial Fellowship goes to East Gippsland

Coral Love, Landcare Facilitator for the East Gippsland Landcare Network, has been awarded the inaugural Heather Mitchell Memorial Fellowship.

The fellowship was established last year to recognise the contribution of the late Heather Mitchell to the development of Landcare.

Heather Mitchell was one of the founders of Landcare in Victoria. She was a past President of the Victorian Farmers Federation and a tireless worker in the areas of nursing, education and the environment. Heather was a woman of vision and leadership. The fellowship aims to help develop the next generation of Landcare leaders.

Coral Love said she was thrilled and honoured to be the first recipient of the fellowship.

Coral, her husband Don, and two of their four children live on a small sheep property in the farming community of Meerlieu. Her present position as a Landcare Facilitator has come about after many years of voluntary community work, further education and diverse workplace experience in rural and urban areas.

In her acceptance speech Coral paid tribute to the East Gippsland Landcare Network and the 18 Landcare groups that she has worked with for the past three years.

"Many groups in our area have had a very tough time with the worst drought on record and the worst recorded flood, not to mention general rural decline. We have all learned and achieved a great deal together."

Coral will use the fellowship to assist her in completing a Masters of Human Resource Development at the University of Canberra and in undertaking an Australian Landcare study tour. She will also assist members of the East Gippsland Landcare Network to tour other networks and exchange information and ideas.

"The masters will assist me in gaining a deeper understanding of how people engage in learning and managing change, while the study tour will provide some first hand, practical experience," she said.

The fellowship is awarded to a person who has made a substantial contribution to Landcare. It will help develop the next generation of Landcare leaders – a task Heather would have thought very worthwhile.



**Coral Love was thrilled to receive the inaugural Heather Mitchell Memorial Fellowship.**



# IN BRIEF

## *Meet Mike Gooley – new State Landcare Co-ordinator*

The Department of Natural Resources and Environment has appointed Mike Gooley as the new State Landcare Co-ordinator. Mike started the job in April. His primary role is to work with Government and the community to develop Landcare for the future.

Mike has worked with both the NSW and Victorian governments in a variety of positions. His experience ranges across agricultural extension to managing the NSW State Salinity Program.

Most recently Mike was the Executive Officer for the Snowy Genoa Catchment Management Committee based in Cooma, NSW.

The job involved Snowy River advocacy and facilitating community participation in local natural resource management issues.

Mike says he is very excited to be working for Landcare in Victoria.

“There are certainly many issues to be dealt with regarding the future of Landcare. Local communities are grappling with how to deal with change. Landcare provides a framework for addressing change – there are plenty of examples of Landcare providing a focus for communities to work together.”

Mike says at the end of the Decade of Landcare it is important to assess what Landcare has achieved in ten years and determine what communities want Landcare to be in the future.

Mike is looking forward to meeting with Landcare groups and networks across the State. He can be contacted on (03) 9637 8374.

## *River Health video*

The Young People's River Health Conference was one of the highlights of 1999. The conference brought together scientists, land managers and young people from all over Australia to plan for a future of healthy rivers.

A video of the conference is now available. Aaron Wood from the Mallee Catchment Management Authority says the video is a great resource for schools and is especially useful for groups planning to run a similar event.

The video is available from Aaron Wood on (03) 5022 4373 for \$20 plus \$3.50 postage and handling.

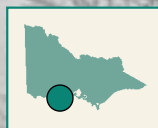
## *The Landcare Month change*

This year has been huge for Landcare and we are only half way through. To give groups more time to prepare their activities, Landcare Month, which normally runs throughout March, has been rescheduled.

Landcare Month 2000 has been replaced by Landcare Week – scheduled for a week in August.



# A Landcare Action Plan for Barongarook



*(L-R) Ilona Jung, Simone Gunn and Jan Healey on the banks of the Barongarook Creek.*

The Barongarook Landcare Group has been successful in obtaining funding for the development of a Landcare Action Plan under the Corangamite CMA's Waterway Management Incentive Program. The plan will look at the current condition of the Barongarook catchment and the Upper Boundary Creek catchment and make recommendations for future Landcare action.

Deakin University honours student, Ilona Jung, is developing the plan with direction and assistance from the Barongarook Landcare Group. Ilona will undertake water quality analysis and vegetation surveys along the waterways throughout the catchment. This data will be used to gain an understanding of significant issues that affect the health of waterways. In consultation with Landcare and other community members, Ilona will formulate future Landcare actions that will address these issues.

The development of the Barongarook plan was kicked off with a priority-setting night facilitated by Bronte Payne from NRE. Landcare members were invited to formulate priority programs for their groups to target.

As the plan develops Landcare and community members can have continual input through regular meetings at the Barongarook Hall and by contacting Ilona or the Barongarook Landcare Group executive.

The plan will be looking at the whole of the Barongarook Creek catchment. Participation from Colac and Elliminyt residents is encouraged to ensure issues relevant to the more urban section of the catchment like stormwater pollution, weed control and erosion are addressed.

In the recent round of CMA Waterway Management Incentive Grants seven catchment plans were funded.

Catchment Management Plans will also be formulated for the Spring Creek catchment (Torquay), Erskine River and Stony Creek, Curdies River, Tirrengower drain catchment, Barrabool to Batesford Area and Upper Barwon catchment.

Corangamite Catchment Management Authority Chief Executive Officer, Don Forsyth, said the development of Catchment Plans will continue to help the CMA direct funding towards priority areas and issues.

"The Barongarook Landcare Action Plan developed by the Landcare group will also help to create widespread ownership of the plan by both Landcare and other community members. This will lead to improvements in waterway health across the region."

The Waterway Management Incentive Grants will be available again this year. For further information contact the CMA on (03) 5232 9100. For information on the Barongarook Landcare Group contact Jan Healey on (03) 5233 8240 AH.

# The best in flood manag

By Margrit Beemster

As you look across an area where red gums and wattles have regenerated to a flourishing tobacco crop, it is reassuring to know that the environment, with a helping hand, can heal itself.

This particular location, just south of Myrtleford, was one of many places in the north-east where the Ovens River wreaked havoc in the floods of October 1993.

"When I saw what had happened after the floods I thought: 'My God, where's our paddock gone?'" recalls tobacco grower Graeme Piazza, who, with his brother Michael, grows 12 hectares of tobacco on their Ovens River flat country each year.

The floodwaters were at such a velocity they tore a huge L-shaped gouge into the recently cultivated paddock, washing away tonnes of precious topsoil.

The Piazzas and the North East Catchment Management Authority have worked together to repair the damage and stabilise the land.

The riverbank was stabilised, the huge hole in the paddock filled in and covered with topsoil and the area was revegetated.

"I didn't expect everything to recover as quickly as it did," says Graeme, who now plants his tobacco crop well back from the area that has been restored.

"By the next year there were wattles and gums everywhere. There was an amazing amount of regeneration."

The area has stabilised to such a degree that further floods in 1998 caused no damage.

## *Best management practice*

The Ovens Basin Water Quality Strategy recommends allowing a buffer strip of vegetation between a river or stream and cultivated paddocks as best management practice. The Piazzas have followed this recommendation and are keen to see others do so as it helps prevent erosion and stabilises streambanks.

Graeme says the little bit of land he has had to give up to production in favour of buffer strips of vegetation is well worth it.

"No paddock, no tobacco," says Graeme simply.

This message is being promoted across the north-east to the intensive horticulture industries such as tobacco and viticulture. Terry McCormack from NECMA says there are hundreds of similar sites in the region.

"These are flood plains and from time to time they get flooded," he said.

The NECMA is working with landholders to encourage sustainable landuse throughout the region.

Martin Revrenna from NRE says providing a vegetated buffer zone creates natural habitat for flora and fauna, keeps nutrients in the paddocks, helps improve water quality and aquatic habitat and adds to the value of the land.

"Flood damage is less and there are benefits downstream," he said.

It is recommended buffer strips between waterways and cultivation be a minimum of 20 metres wide, though this may vary according to particular situations. Existing native vegetation should be retained.

*After the flood in October 1993.*



*The same area this year.*





Native tree and understorey species may need to be reintroduced but regeneration, once the land is no longer being cultivated, is often very successful.

“From an economic point of view, it’s far cheaper to have buffer strips than it is to have to come in and do extensive river repair works,” Martin said.

Allowing for a buffer strip along waterways is one of a number of best management practices recommended in the Ovens Basin Water Quality Strategy. For more information on other best management practices contact Martin Revrenna at the Ovens Research Station on (03) 5731 1222.

*Graeme Piazza has been staggered by the speed of regeneration.*



# The story of Deen

*By Neil Martin, Community Development Officer, Framlingham Aboriginal Trust and Natalie Moxham, Indigenous Land Management Facilitator for Victoria.*

Deen Maar is situated on the coast near Yambuk in south-west Victoria. The property is 1100 acres of rolling sand dunes and limestone ridges, including a river, lake and wetlands, and is the traditional home of the Peek Whurrong speakers of the Dhauwurdwurung (Gundidjmarra) Nation.

In 1993 the property was purchased by the Framlingham Aboriginal Trust, with the aim of giving the local community the chance to rehabilitate and manage a piece of country of great cultural significance.

Lionel Harradine, Chairperson of the Framlingham Aboriginal Trust, said that as caretakers of the land it was their duty to bring it back to its original state.

“Prior to European settlement, the local Dhauwurdwurung people lived well off the land, eating abalone, eels, wild ducks, kangaroos and using the plants and trees for food, medicine and housing material – sustainably.”

Reflecting on the condition of the property at the time of purchase, Lionel explained that the wetlands were drained, vegetation cleared, new varieties of pastures established and, after decades of being run down, Deen Maar was a haven for rabbits and weeds.

## *Cultural significance*

“The land was purchased because of the cultural connections that the community have with this land as well as its outstanding conservation values and potential for development as an eco-tourism destination,” Lionel said.

“There is spiritual connection with Deen Maar Island (Lady Julia Percy Island) where Bunjil, the Creation Spirit, left this world,” he said.

Lionel also explained that Deen Maar is the site of the Eumerella Wars.

“This deadly conflict between Aboriginal people and squatters raged for ten years in the early 1840s and 1850s and claimed hundreds of lives. The remains of many of the Aboriginal people involved in this conflict are at Deen Maar,” he said.

## *Realising the vision*

In 1995 a New Work Opportunity Employment Program started with local long-term unemployed people undertaking fencing and weed removal work on the property. With this initiative, the Aboriginal community started to realise their vision for Deen Maar.

In August 1997, the Framlingham Trust prepared an Environmental Management Plan for the property. It was initially determined that the majority of the land would be set aside for conservation-based activities, with about one-third being used for primary production.

The management of Deen Maar combines Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal land management techniques.

*Frank the fireman – using fire to stimulate regeneration at Deen Maar.*



*Emus wandering the beach at Deen Maar.*

# Maar



Lionel said that it was exciting that, through Landcare, the Aboriginal community is seeking the best current technology but using it alongside their own uncountable generations of wisdom as custodians of the land.

He reflected on the work the young people of the Aboriginal community are putting into the property and how they feel a sense of belonging. No longer are they managing the land for someone else, but for themselves and for their children.

## **Funding**

The Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) funding started with the preparation of the management plan and some habitat restoration works in 1996. Revegetation activities included planting indigenous trees and shrub species, pest plant and animal control works and the construction and maintenance of walking tracks.

Lionel said that the activities have really helped cultural exchange with the wider community and that many non-Aboriginal people have been involved in field days and planting excursions.

"For a week to ten days each winter about 50 people from Melbourne are invited by the Aboriginal elders to come and help plant trees. We find that much cultural exchange takes place and fun is had by all," he said.

The event is becoming an annual celebration with about 10,000 trees being planted each year.

In 1998-99 Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) provided support to the Framlingham Aboriginal Trust for capital and other costs for the management of Deen Maar.

## **Community skills training**

The South Australian Aboriginal Lands Trust, which holds and manages some Aboriginal lands in South Australia, has sent staff and community members to Deen Maar to teach skills in rabbit warren implosion.

The Framlingham community uses this method because of the low impact on the land and its effectiveness in controlling the spread of rabbits.

Local farmers, aware of the problems associated with managing pest plants and animals, keenly follow progress at Deen Maar, often attending field days, sharing learning and offering their knowledge and assistance.

## **Indigenous Protected Area Pilot**

In 1996 Framlingham received funding under the NHT Indigenous Protected Area Program to undertake a pilot project to investigate the feasibility of Deen Maar for Indigenous Protected Area status.

This project facilitated discussions in the Aboriginal community about making Deen Maar a protected area and assessing the appropriateness of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's guidelines.

On 8 November 1999, Dr Sharman Stone, Commonwealth Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, declared Deen Maar an Indigenous Protected Area.

"The Aboriginal custodians of this property, which has enormous environmental significance, are voluntarily declaring it a protected area and have agreed to manage it to international standards to conserve the area's natural biodiversity and cultural values. It is just one instance demonstrating that indigenous peoples' care and knowledge of this country and the native plants and animals is of benefit to people nationally and internationally," Dr Stone said.

## **The future**

Lionel Harradine said the return of Deen Maar country to his people was a great step forward.



*Members of the Aboriginal community at the entrance to Deen Maar.*

"We will restore this land to its former beauty and bountifulness so that our people can once again be a part of this land Deen Maar. We welcome the opportunity to show the broader community how it is being managed by the local Aboriginal community for the benefit of all Australians," he said.

Lionel encouraged the whole community to participate in the project and invited everyone interested to share in Deen Maar's cultural and environmental richness and future.

For more information contact Neil Martin, Framlingham Aboriginal Trust, on (03) 5567 1003 or Natalie Moxham, Indigenous Land Management Facilitator for Victoria; on (03) 9326 3900.



*The rolling sand dunes, limestone ridges, river, lake and wetlands is the traditional home of the Dhawurdwurung (Gundidjmarra) Nation.*



# Platypus need



*A male platypus.*

The platypus is a predator which can eat up to one-fourth of its own weight each day in the form of aquatic insects, freshwater shrimp, yabbies and worms. Because the platypus can only thrive as part of a productive aquatic community, it also serves as an excellent indicator of waterway health.

To learn more about how the platypus is faring in a farming area mainly devoted to producing wool and prime lambs, in 1997 the Australian Platypus Conservancy (APC) began surveys in the Wimmera River catchment. The project – including about 120 kilometres of waterways from Glenorchy upstream to the foothills of the Pyrenees Range – was designed to complement the practical on-ground activities of Rio Tinto Project Platypus, a coalition of 11 Landcare groups.

It quickly became apparent that platypus are distributed very unevenly along the Wimmera River and its tributary streams, with more than 90% of platypus recorded in less than 25% of the survey area. In turn, this raised an interesting question – how do habitats which currently support platypus differ from those where few or no platypus are found?

## ***More plants – more platypus***

Based on a detailed study of bank and channel characteristics, APC researchers found that platypus clearly prefer to inhabit waterways where gum trees and smaller plants provide a lot of cover along the banks.



*Fallen logs create a more diverse aquatic habitat.*



# streamside vegetation



*By Marianne Worley and Melody Serena, Australian Platypus Conservancy*

Along the Wimmera, sites supporting platypus had on average more than four times as many medium-to-large River Red Gums growing near the water, 50% more shrub cover along the banks and 20% more vegetation overhanging the channel than sites with few or no platypus. On the other hand, sites with few or no platypus had much more bare soil on the banks.

The strong positive relationship between bankside vegetation and platypus is not surprising, given that dead leaves and fallen bark and twigs are an important food source for many of the small aquatic creatures which in turn are eaten by platypus.

By controlling erosion along the bank, plants reduce unstable sediment which can smother the channel bottom and create unsuitable conditions for most aquatic insects and other invertebrates. The shade provided by trees and shrubs is also beneficial in helping to keep the water cool in summer, thereby maintaining adequate levels of dissolved oxygen (particularly important during times of low flow).

## **Woody debris assists feeding and breeding**

Plants growing on the banks also boost a waterway's productivity by creating a greater range of habitats along the channel.

As compared to sites with no platypus, places where platypus are found in the Wimmera had nearly three times more logs and sizeable branches in the water. Large pieces of woody debris provide ideal feeding and breeding sites for many types of aquatic creatures. During high flows, sites with a lot of woody debris and overhanging vegetation are much more likely to retain good numbers of freshwater insects and small fish, which otherwise tend to get swept downstream.

As any fisherman who has walked along a forest stream will know, large logs also have a vital ecological role to play in maintaining natural sequences of pools and shallower stretches of water.

The fact that bankside vegetation is so strongly linked to the presence of platypus in the upper Wimmera catchment highlights the importance of good land management to waterway conservation. By working together to ensure that stream and river margins are managed sustainably, farmers can make a very real difference to river health and platypus survival.

For more information about the Australian Platypus Conservancy contact Melody Serena or Marianne Worley on (03) 9716 1626.



*Bare eroding banks are bad news for the platypus.*

*Good quality platypus habitat on a wool growing property along the upper Wimmera River.*



# International Landcare 2000 Conference

Landcare took centre stage in Melbourne during March when 1200 landcarers from 20 different countries met for the inaugural International Landcare 2000 Conference at the Melbourne Convention Centre.

The Wurundjeri people opened the Conference with a moving ceremony called 'Welcome to the Lands'.

Renowned Canadian bioethicist and leader in sustainable ecology, Dr David Suzuki, gave the keynote address.

David Suzuki graphically described the detrimental impacts humans have had on Earth, particularly over the last 100 years. He suggested people ask their elders about the land and environment earlier this century, in order to understand the great changes that have taken place.

"If we continue as we are today, what will we be leaving for our children and grandchildren?"

David Suzuki said we have to deliberately put the brakes on our activities – to put nature above our own interests.

Conference delegates chose between 25 concurrent sessions that addressed five themes: sustainable agriculture and greenhouse; community participation; structures, partnerships and planning; managing for biodiversity; and scientific, technical and educational approaches to natural resource management.

They heard a range of speakers sharing local, regional, catchment and global perspectives.

The Conference dinner was an Aussie barbecue – a lively night with great food and music and some foot-stomping Celtic dancing.

## ***Social and human capital***

Two key ideas to emerge from the Conference were the concepts of social and human capital.

Professor Jules Pretty, Director of the Centre for Environment and Society at the University of Essex, explored these concepts to show how Landcare has an increasing importance in community development.

Jules Pretty says social capital facilitates the co-operation between people and is a prerequisite for long-term natural capital improvements.

"Social capital revolves around relations of trust; reciprocity and exchanges amongst people; common rules, norms and sanctions; and connectivity between networks and groups. Also needed are participatory processes that can actually help people to understand their systems and to find ways to improve them."

Eva Cox, co-founder of the Women's Economic Think Tank, described social capital as a kind of human care.

"It is about creating the types of communities that can deal with change, that become tolerant, that are outward bridging – not introverted," she said.

"We should use Landcare to create the sort of social mix we want – it's about creating an environment in which we want to live."

Both speakers concluded that the human aspect of Landcare must be nurtured as it has great potential for building stronger communities.

Other key plenary speakers included Michael Baltzell, President, Alcoa World Alumina Australia; Dr Peter Bridgewater, Director of UNESCO's Division of Ecological Science; and Ian Johnson from the World Bank.

Presentations on Landcare issues faced by Iceland, Eritrea, Scotland, Uganda and the Philippines gave the Conference a truly international flavour and provided a valuable perspective for Australian Landcarers.

## ***Applause for local pioneers***

John and Cicely Fenton from Branhholme in Western Victoria gave one of the most memorable presentations of the Conference.

When the Fentons took over their wool-producing farm in 1956 it was treeless, windswept and waterless. Now after 40 years of hard work, foresight and dedication, it is an oasis for birds and wildlife.





## – the biggest show in Landcare!

By Carolyn Munckton



Vegetation corridors and wetlands combine with sustainable agriculture, farm forestry and grazing.

All of the environmental benefits on the farm have been achieved without loss of productivity. Dramatic before and after photographs evoked spontaneous applause from the auditorium.

### **Addressing the interior landscape**

One the final day, Director of the South Australian Museum and author of *Future Eaters*, Dr Tim Flannery, gave a thought-provoking presentation.

Tim Flannery attempted to show that we are newcomers to our continent and have little knowledge and understanding of it. He urged us to learn and to see Landcare as addressing the interior landscape – the one of the mind and the heart.

"I'd like to think that Landcare will become more than just looking after the environment and looking after catchments," he said.

Conference delegates exchanged thoughts and ideas with great enthusiasm – often while viewing the extensive display of Conference posters and the exhibitions from government, industry, research and non-profit organisations.

An Intranet chat room with an e-mail and bulletin board service further promoted communication and linkages between delegates and speakers.

The International Landcare 2000 Conference gave people from across the world an opportunity to gather and learn from each other about changing landscapes and shaping futures.

Congratulations to NRE's Catchment and Water Division team ably led by David Beckingsale, who made the Conference a reality.

Conference papers and presentations are available on [www.nre.vic.gov.au/conf/landcare2000/](http://www.nre.vic.gov.au/conf/landcare2000/)

Post-conference chat sessions are being held on [www.landcareaustralia.com.au](http://www.landcareaustralia.com.au)

*"For me, it is a great opportunity to learn about Australia, sustainable agriculture and nature conservation and to bring back the social side of Landcare."*

**Sara Friberg, Swedish University of Agriculture and Science**

*"I found it, in short, to be very informative and well-organised, particularly the parallel sessions, with time for one-to-one discussion and the chat room. Landcare in Australia seems to have united the whole nation: farmers, industry, government, schools – the whole nation."*

**Bashir Jama, Kenya**

*"It would have been good to have more international invitees. A program so successful has a lot to offer around the world. Despite what walk of life – (Landcare has) united with common vision and common good."*

**Tom Anyonge, Swedish International Development Corporation Agency**



(L-R) Tom Anyonge from Sweden with Bashir Jama from Kenya and Sara Friberg also from Sweden.

### **photographs:**

1. Gertrude Kenyangi from Uganda spoke on women, Landcare and sustainable development.
2. David Lean and Jenny Pendlebury from NRE enjoyed the poster presentations.
3. Dr David Suzuki gave a stirring keynote address.
4. Wurundjeri dancers welcomed the delegates.
5. John de Satge (L) from Queensland and John Chester from South Australia swapped ideas about indigenous Landcare.
6. The fantastic Fratellini Bros provided some local colour and humour.
7. Darraweit Guim Primary School's impressive poster.
8. (L-R) Jenny Sedgwick and Andrea Mason from the Leigh Catchment Group with Dr Jules Pretty from the UK and Diana Patterson from Surf Coast Shire.
9. Former Premier Joan Kirner talks Landcare with Colleen Archibald from WA.
10. Camille Hughes and Luke McKennie from Darraweit Guim Primary School spoke at a session on educational approaches to natural resource management.



# MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER – future directions for Landcare

*The Minister for Environment and Conservation, Sherryl Garbutt, addressed the 1200 delegates of the International Landcare 2000 Conference and foreshadowed the Government's plans for Second Generation Landcare.*

"The evolution of the Landcare movement since its establishment in 1986 has been a remarkable process. It demonstrates the value of community participation in natural resource management and the suitability of the Government's role in encouraging this.

However, despite the great achievements, we all face continued challenges.

Review of our current use of the resource base is needed. I believe that the community and Landcare needs to participate in this review, particularly in determining the nature of Government support required, to ensure that Government continues to play a significant role.

We will consult with Landcare group members, as well as all levels of government, industry and a range of other groups and individuals concerned with natural resource management. I will establish a Second Generation Landcare Taskforce to oversee this process and report back to me on the policy, needs and major directions that are required for Landcare.

The Victorian Government will provide additional funding for Second Generation Landcare in the next financial year and we will be asking for community input on how to ensure that future funding can generate maximum impact.

Government needs to review its range of policies and programs and we need to look across a range of disciplines and ensure perspectives are shared and programs and policies are co-ordinated to maximum effect.

Innovative options need consideration. It may be that hard decisions need to be made to change landuse and restore the land in our most marginal areas.

We will also re-examine the role of regulation in some areas where there are critical off-site issues and consider the range of options based on the best available scientific evidence and information as to what should be done.

Finally, we will work to ensure that there is an effective consultation process over the coming months to draw out the best ideas about the way forward.

I urge you to participate in the forthcoming review process to ensure, as you are rightly requesting, input into the policy development process.

We need to ensure that Second Generation Landcare has the capacity to change and to meet the challenges ahead."

## Taskforce to drive Second Generation Landcare forward

The Second Generation Landcare Taskforce announced by the Minister at the Conference will evaluate the environmental, social and economic impacts of Landcare in Victoria and identify priority areas for maximising the impact of Landcare in the future.

A set of specific goals have been set for the Taskforce who will undertake widespread consultation with Victorian Landcare groups and all relevant stakeholders, including holding workshops and a regional statewide forum.

Members will work together to recommend strategic policy directions and future requirements to ensure Landcare continues to grow and contribute to natural resource management in this State.

The Taskforce has been requested to report back to the Minister in November of this year with a Second Generation Landcare Action Plan.

*Minister for Environment and Conservation, Sherryl Garbutt, announces plans for Second Generation Landcare at the Conference.*



"It was good to see the recognition of women players – caretakers – and of human relationships. I was particularly pleased to hear about the indigenous initiative, so let's see how land management could occur through the new ethics and new value system, by new I mean extremely old, but a new recognition from new settlers."

**Susan Moody, University of Arizona**

"Key speakers were interesting and relevant. David Suzuki was great. Pretty and Bridgewater gave a good perspective on things."

**Howard Colvin, Meander Valley Weed Management Group, Tas.**

"Excellent displays."

**Tony Ferrier, Huon Valley Council, Tas.**



# Carbon sequestration and Landcare – *an Icelandic perspective*

*Dr Andrés Arnalds, Deputy Director, Iceland Soil Conservation Service*

Despite their obvious climatic differences, Australia and Iceland share several parallels in natural resource management issues. Human intervention has radically altered the landscapes of both countries, with enormous loss of native vegetation and tree cover.

Since settlement in 874AD the country has been so comprehensively cleared of vegetation that desertification is a major threat to Iceland's natural resources. It is now estimated that 40% of Iceland is experiencing severe soil erosion. Parts of Iceland look like a moonscape.

Dr Andrés Arnalds' paper analysed the role of carbon sequestration in reducing carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions. Carbon, usually in the form of CO<sub>2</sub>, from fossil fuels and land degradation is the main factor in climate change. A solution to reducing emissions is to return the carbon to the soil and store it in long-term permanent reservoirs – carbon sequestration.

In Iceland, carbon sequestration is viewed as an important tool for meeting commitments to the international Kyoto Protocol on reducing greenhouse gases. It is also critical for addressing soil erosion.

Climate change can be mitigated by promoting carbon sinks and reservoirs, but, according to Dr Arnalds, current sink activities within the Kyoto Protocol are too limited. In Iceland, the main native tree seldom meets the height requirements of traditional forest definitions. The low-growing native birch, willows, grasses and legumes are vital for improving Iceland's degraded land, but they are currently not considered.

The Soil and Water Conservation Society of Iceland maintains that although CO<sub>2</sub> can be a dangerous greenhouse gas, it can also be a valuable resource if it is stored in the soil and becomes organic matter – the key to soil fertility and increased food production.

According to Dr Arnalds, carbon sequestration has great potential as a financial incentive, as well as improving land quality and helping to meet the challenge of climate change. He described the extensive 'farmers heal the land' program, which assists landowners to reach reclamation goals by providing up to 85% of fertilizer costs and grass seeds, with farmers using their own machinery. More than 25% of Iceland's sheep farmers are now actively participating in this program.

Dr Arnalds sees three possible options for funding carbon sequestration in Iceland: government funding, green taxes on fuel and links with industry. There are also opportunities for win-win scenarios between developed and developing countries, whereby projects undertaken in developing countries could be counted towards meeting the emission targets of developed countries. The key however is the acceptance of appropriate soil-carbon sinks in the legally binding framework of the Kyoto Protocol.

Iceland is also looking at the Australian Landcare model in an effort to understand how community attitudes can be changed from being production oriented to having an environmental and conservation mindset.

**Steve Murray, President,  
Coorong District Local Action  
Plan Committee**

On the value of the final panel session:

*"I thought it was excellent because of the interaction between the audience and the people up on the stage and the ones who were organising it. It was just fantastic."*





# The good corporate citizen –



## Landcare and the private sector

The pivotal role of the private sector in Landcare was reinforced at the International Landcare 2000 Conference and the National Landcare Awards through the high levels of sponsorship received for both events and the attendance of several CEOs and other senior staff from a range of private companies.

Mike Baltzell, President of Alcoa World Alumina Australia, addressed Conference delegates about the importance of corporate Australia's ongoing contribution to Landcare.

Since 1989 Alcoa has put \$16 million into Landcare in Victoria and WA, and is now the largest corporate supporter of Landcare. Mike Baltzell explained how Alcoa's Landcare partnerships exemplify the difference between philanthropy and sponsorship. He maintained that there needs to be a business link for the corporate sector to become involved in projects.

"The key benefit from Alcoa's involvement in Landcare is public awareness. It shows to the public that we are interested in an issue that is far removed from where we operate," he said.

### *Employees as ambassadors*

"There is a perception that industry is doing something evil and making money, and that has an impact on our employees. It is a real benefit for our employees to feel like they are part of a company that cares about the environment – they can then be our ambassadors.

"Our experience is that our commitment to the Landcare movement has led people, including our own employees, to feel more positive about Alcoa and has allowed us to establish links with influential networks and key decision-makers. These are clearly business outcomes."

Mike Baltzell emphasised the importance of long-term funding security and bipartisan support for resourcing Landcare.



President of Alcoa World Alumina Australia, Mike Baltzell at a voluntary Alcoa Employee Tree Planting Weekend in WA last year.

He advocated community empowerment and decision-making, in partnership with the sponsor and government agencies, as the keys to success.

### *Business operates within community*

Mike Baltzell said that Alcoa's profitability enables the company to redress the environmental impact of their operations, provide a safe workplace for employees and recycle materials to conserve resources. But he made the point that bottom line profits are not enough and the social responsibilities of the corporate sector were high on his agenda. He emphasised the notion of good corporate citizenship and the importance of business recognising that they operate within a community.

Mike Baltzell also emphasised that the corporate sector can provide more than just dollars.

When visiting Landcare sites in WA, he was impressed by the ability of Alcoa people to use their business facilitation and planning skills to bring landowners together and help them to solve problems.

Adequate resourcing involves more than just cash. It should include time, effort and active engagement from all parties. This has proved to be a successful formula for Alcoa's involvement in Landcare.

Mike Baltzell encouraged other corporations to become involved in Landcare.

"There are thousands of opportunities for others to be involved in Landcare. The benefits include improved primary production, enhanced conservation values and lasting and productive partnerships with members of the community and government at all levels. And the biggest benefit of all is that together we will build productive, profitable and sustainable communities for our children."



Martin Fuller (right) with Zahoor Aslam from Pakistan and Srey Heang from Cambodia

### *Martin Fuller, South Gippsland Landcare Coordinator*

On what will you take away from the Conference:

"I think people really are prepared to move forward from here and it's really been handballed back to government, local communities and corporate Australia to ensure that we continue on.

I'm personally feeling a lot more positive about the role of Landcare co-ordinators.

I think I can see good support coming and remaining in the future."

# Rural trends in NRM – *infrastructure is the key*



One of the five central themes of the International Landcare 2000 Conference was community participation in natural resource management – people, patterns and practice.

Professor Geoff Lawrence from the Institute for Sustainable Regional Development at Central Queensland University, Neil Barr from the Centre for Land Protection Research in Bendigo and Mortlake farmer Richard Weatherly discussed the patterns and trends in rural communities at the national, catchment and local level.

The three speakers sent a strong message to government that rural and regional communities need social and economic infrastructure in order to work towards a sustainable future.

## *Globalisation, welfare decline and the greening of society*

Professor Geoff Lawrence said we are in an era where government is looking increasingly towards community groups to manage the environment. He queried how that can happen when rural communities are being socially and economically degraded.

Geoff Lawrence identified three basic trends that are impacting on Australia's agriculture and food systems and hence regional areas: globalisation; decline of the welfare state; and the greening of society.

Globalisation is increasing the polarisation between regional and urban Australia, while the decline of the welfare state has meant that Australian communities are less able to tackle issues of sustainability.

The third trend, the greening of society, has altered society's ideologies and raised the consciousness about environmental issues, which puts increasing pressure on traditional Australian farming systems.

The effects of these three trends discourage voluntary participation and reduce social capital in regional Australia.

Geoff Lawrence said Landcare has a place in the solution.

"Catchment and sub-catchment management is the way of the future. The full empowerment of regional communities is through the devolution of power to the regional level."

## *The timing of rural change*

Neil Barr explored the notion that the enormous change in landuse (the move away from beef and wool production) that Australia is attempting to achieve in the interests of sustainability is perhaps ill-timed. He suggested that long-term success of this strategy would be more

likely if change were encouraged at a later date to coincide with a significant inter-generational shift on farms.

"Perhaps we shouldn't be considering dramatic landuse change now, when people don't want to know.

"We need a debate about the structures and the ecological problems and to deal with social justice problems, rather than having them solved by a market mechanism that doesn't care."

## *Biolink to unify community*

Richard Weatherly from Watershed 2000 gave an account of how these issues are being addressed at a local level.

Watershed 2000 is based around the western district town of Mortlake – an area largely dependent on the grazing industries that have been hard hit in recent years.

Watershed 2000 is developing a biolink – an 800,000 hectare band of managed habitat that will bring 903 farming families, five local governments and two Catchment Management Authorities together to plant five million trees, fence hundreds of kilometres of riparian frontage and connect two major areas of remnant vegetation – the Otway forests and the Grampians.

"If our project is to succeed it needs to involve and interest all of the community, all of the catchment, all of the family, all of the farm. It must give equal opportunity to young and old, rich and poor, sick and healthy, black and white, town and country, all unified and with excellent inter-group communications," said Richard Weatherly.

"We must create a system where we develop vibrant, well-informed, educated communities with the monetary resources and enthusiasm to control their own future."

Richard Weatherly reiterated the call for the creation of infrastructure that invites the investment of capital into the regions. But he says this will not happen if regional services, such as hospitals, schools, banks and telecommunications, continue to be reduced.



Mortlake farmer Richard Weatherly described the Watershed 2000 project – a biolink that involves the whole community.

# The way forward for Landcare

*Chairman of the Organising Committee, John Claringbould, closed the Conference and thanked the speakers and delegates for their participation.*

In closing the inaugural International Landcare 2000 Conference, Chair John Claringbould reflected on some of the key issues that were raised during the event and outlined the way forward for Landcare.

He reinforced the observations of Alcoa's Mike Baltzell that private sector sponsorship of Landcare is a partnership with benefits for both sides, not simply corporate philanthropy.

"Those involved with sponsors know how constructive these partnerships can become. Particularly over the long-term when goals are clearly defined and there is an understanding between the partners as to what needs to be achieved."

The nature of the partnership with government also emerged as a key element in the future success of Landcare with a strong call for long-term government support for the program coming from speakers and delegates. In particular, administrative and technical support were seen to be critical to the survival of the movement. A need to redefine the partnership between government and Landcare was identified.

The critical role of researchers and facilitators to the success of the Landcare movement was also underlined during the Conference.

## **Building community capacity**

Perhaps the idea that will remain with many Conference participants was the significance of the value of the social capital, which is inherent in the Landcare movement, and its potential for community capacity building. John Claringbould urged Landcarers to see social capital as being about "confidence and trust and reaching out – we need to reach out from this room and go forward".

In supporting the call for an indigenous forum on Landcare, John Claringbould acknowledged how important it is for Landcare to work more closely with indigenous leaders and communities.

"Together we share the future. We are not separate communities, we are all part of the same community."

## **Build on the momentum**

John Claringbould was very optimistic about the future of Landcare but stressed the need to build on the momentum of the Conference.

"We have the opportunity to look at how we want to go forward and we need to seize it with all the thinking power and intelligence that has been assembled and is represented here. We need to make sure that we carve out clear views of where we stand and clear views of where we wish to go. If we can get the thinking right, we will all be absolutely amazed at the power this movement will have."

**John Berger,**  
**winner of Cotton Australia**  
**Landcare Primary Producer Award**  
In response to where we go from here:  
*"We've all got a responsibility to look at the natural resources that we have within our care and control so if I can go home and do that a little bit better and inspire a few other people about it, we can have a lot better outcome than just relying on a few people, like the Fentons."*

## National Landcare Award winners

An incredible range of projects all aimed at improving Australia's land and water resources have won prestigious National Landcare Awards for their efforts.

Amongst the projects is a tiny school of 30 students that built an environmental education centre; a group of eight people who have restored a sub-tropical rainforest on a neglected island that is home to 70,000 flying foxes; and a research team examining the most efficient way to rid Australia of feral rabbits.

The awards – recognised as Australia's biggest environmental awards – were announced in Melbourne on 2 March 2000 during the International Landcare 2000 Conference. Hundreds of people from Australia and overseas cheered as project leaders received their awards.

Deputy Prime Minister John Anderson helped present this year's awards. Victoria's Minister for Environment and Conservation, Sherryl Garbutt, was also present.

**Cotton Australia Primary Producer Award**  
John and Jan Berger Mindarie Downs (SA)

**Alcoa Community Group Award**  
Holbrook Landcare Group (NSW)

**Bushcare Nature Conservation**  
Bellingen Island Landcare Group (NSW)

**National Landcare Program Individual Award**  
Kim Diamond (WA)

**Telstra Local Government Award**  
Yugul Mangi Council (NT)

**North Limited Education Award**  
Burumbuttock Public School (NSW)

**Natural Heritage Trust Rivercare Award**  
Colin and Margaret Tonkin (WA)

**BHP Research Award**  
Centralian Land Management Association (NT)

**BP Catchment Award**  
Coorong and Districts Local Action Planning Committee (SA)

**Ford Media Award**  
Ten Capital (ACT)

**Fuji Xerox Business Award**  
Couran Cove Resort (Qld)





# ON THE SHELF



## ***You are the Earth***

By David Suzuki and Kathy Vanderlinden

David Suzuki impressed delegates at the recent International Landcare 2000 Conference with his stirring keynote address. Suzuki is one of the world's foremost environmentalists. He has written a clutch of thoughtful and passionate books about the dilemmas facing the planet, *You are the Earth* is his first work for young people.

The book is a mix of science and story. Hard facts about the 'essentials' – soil, water and air – sit alongside moving traditional stories from first nation peoples around the world.

Suzuki and his co-writer, Kathy Vanderlinden, use hip cartoons, funky graphics and emotive language to get their message across.

*You are the Earth* has an extensive glossary, a list of eco-activities and a quiz in the back to make sure you've been paying attention. A worthwhile addition to the home and school library, *You are the Earth* is an important environmental reference for the next generation of Landcarers.

*You are the Earth* is available for \$18.95 from the NRE Information Centre on (03) 9637 8325 and from other good bookshops.

## ***Healthy Sheep Naturally***

By Pat Coleby

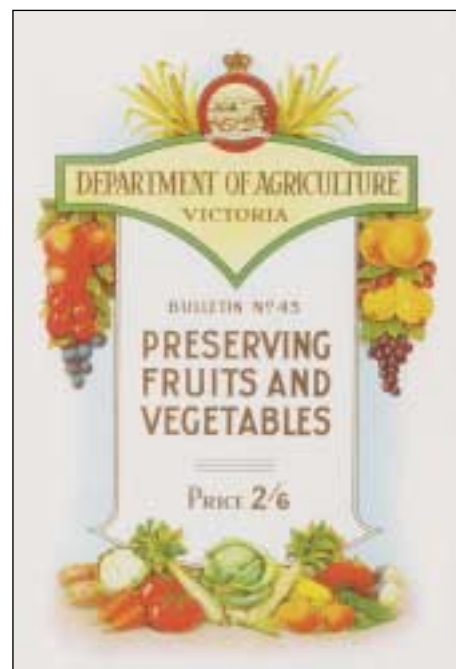
This book is a comprehensive guide for breeders producing wool, meat or milk. There is useful information for both the organic and conventional farmer.

Agricultural consultant Pat Coleby has over 30 years of first-hand experience in animal husbandry. Pat has expanded significantly on the successful first edition of this book to include information on breeding for finer wool and meat, land management, sheep management and the treatment of health problems.

*Healthy Sheep Naturally* has just the right mix of fact and anecdote. Pat says the book aims to help all those who struggle on, despite the recessions and the droughts.

The book is well laid out and has a detailed appendix of contact details for products, suppliers and services. *Healthy Sheep Naturally* is available for \$34.95 from the NRE Information Centre on (03) 9637 8325.

(Pat Coleby's 1995 book *Healthy Land for Healthy Cattle* is also available from the NRE Information Centre.)



## ***Preserving Fruits and Vegetables***

Department of Agriculture, 1944

Some things just don't get better with progress – this is certainly the case with this charming guide to the gentle art of preserving. *Preserving Fruits and Vegetables* was first published in 1944. It has been re-issued as a facsimile edition complete with advertisements and advice for the 1940s housewife.

The book is a delightful read and the recipes, advice and help in problem solving are just as relevant today for those who enjoy preserving. There is an extensive selection of fruit recipes from 'Hot Day Dessert' through to 'Passionfruit Snow' and 'Orange Dainty.'

*Preserving Fruits and Vegetables* would make a delightful and inexpensive gift. It is available for \$9.95 from the NRE Information Centre.



# Junior Landcare

## Networking South Gippsland

New links are being forged between 12 schools in South Gippsland with the creation of the South Gippsland Junior Landcare Network.

The network has come out of a partnership between the South Gippsland Landcare Network and the South Gippsland Environment Education Centre. The Environment Education Centre is providing support by seeking funds, equipment and resources while the Landcare network helps with hands-on practical skills.

The West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority, Waterwatch Victoria, South Gippsland Water, NRE and Murray Goulburn Water are also assisting with the network and the many projects being carried out by schools and communities across the area.

With assistance from the NRE Victorian Junior Landcare Initiative, the schools have completed the following projects:

**1. Fish Creek Primary School students hard at work. 2. Students from the Leongatha Christian School doing some Landcare fencing. 3. Proud members of the South Gippsland Junior Landcare Network.**

- Fish Creek Primary School: Planting-out along the Great Southern Rail Trail and an annual tree planting corridor for koala habitat.
- Leongatha Primary School: Planting-out with the Nerrena Landcare Group and the building of a new hothouse and igloo.
- Poowong Consolidated Primary School: Developed compostor and wormery to promote efficient growing systems.
- Loch Primary School: Revegetating degraded areas of the Bass River catchment which will improve the habitat of the Giant Gippsland Earthworm.
- Leongatha Christian School and Tarwin Valley Primary School: Linking the townships of Meeniyah and Dumbalk through a wildlife corridor.
- Arawata Junior Landcare Group: Beautified a local scenic lookout.
- Bena Primary School: Started a fauna revegetation program to encourage wildlife into the school grounds.
- Korumburra Primary School: Planting-out of 400 local tree species.
- Leongatha Secondary College: Built a hothouse.
- St. Joseph's Primary School: Produced a play about Landcare.

- Tarwin Lower Primary School: Ran a Junior Landcare Week with basket weaving, flower and vegetable gardening, tree planting and water monitoring.
- Wonthaggi Secondary College: Built a hothouse and participated in local revegetation projects.

While some of the schools had already been participating in Landcare before the network started, they had been unable to communicate with each other about their projects and share their results.

Bringing the schools together is great for Landcare, the environment and for the sense of belonging to a collective movement.

The network has brought young and old together and stimulated a great deal of interest in Landcare. The South Gippsland Landcare Network is committed to the ongoing development of the Junior Landcare Network and has formed a sub-committee to help co-ordinate the project.

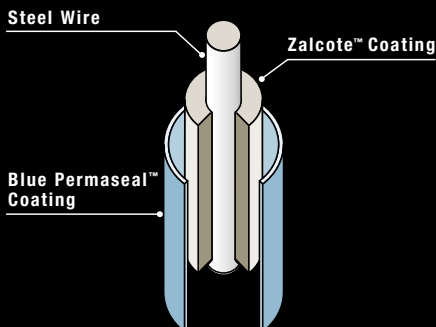
For further information please phone Emma Bennett, Co-ordinator, South Gippsland Landcare Network, on (03) 5662 9212.





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