

Winter 2006

ISSUE 37

L *Victorian* **Landcare** & CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT

Aussie Landcarers
in Sri Lanka

Tree growing tips

Celebrating 20 years of Landcare

Complete our Reader Survey and win a great prize!

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Ararat view by Andrew Chapman.

Back issues of the *Victorian Landcare & Catchment Management* magazine are available at www.dse.vic.gov.au/victorianlandcaremagazine

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Victorian Landcare and Catchment Management is published for the Victorian Landcare community by the Department of Sustainability and Environment in partnership with the Victorian Farmers Federation and the Victorian Catchment Management Council.



Message from the Minister

20 years of Landcare in Victoria – a significant milestone.

Congratulations to all those who have dedicated their time to Landcare in Victoria over the past 20 years. Without doubt the success of Landcare can be attributed to the many volunteers of all ages who give their time and resources to improving and maintaining the health of the land.

Landcare community groups are often the linchpin for local councils, CMAs, industry and Government all working together to achieve a common goal. Twenty years on, the Landcare model has been adopted worldwide by communities and land managers dedicated to sustainable land management.

The Victorian Government remains committed to Landcare through the Victorian Landcare Program co-ordinated by DSE. Evaluation of the work undertaken to date through the *Victorian Action Plan for Second Generation Landcare* (2002) has been positive.

The employment of ten regional Landcare co-ordinators, based at the CMAs, has leveraged \$5 million to support local Landcare facilitator positions in 2004-05 alone. These local facilitators in turn assisted in securing grants to community groups for on-ground works, amounting to over \$7 million.

I am also very pleased that the Victorian Government is convening the International Landcare Conference to be



Minister Thwaites catches up with one of the many Landcare projects undertaken by Conservation Volunteers Australia.

held in Melbourne from 8-11 October 2006. This will be an opportunity to reflect on 20 years of Landcare, to exchange ideas and to look to the future role of Landcare.

I encourage all Landcare members and land managers to attend the conference. Your participation will ensure that Landcare continues to meet the challenges for sustainable land use.

John Thwaites
Minister for the Environment

From the editors

Landcare was launched on Terry Simpson's property at Winjallock in the Wimmera on a warm November day in 1986.

It is difficult to believe, but Landcare is now celebrating its 20th birthday. In this issue Terry Simpson reflects on two decades of Landcare action and thinks about where we are headed for the future.

We also feature Allan Curtis's hard-hitting report on the state of Landcare in Victoria. The report is based on a survey of all 709 Victorian Landcare groups operating at the end of 2004. Previous surveys were conducted in 1993, 1995 and 1998.

Allan Curtis, who has been researching Landcare for the past 15 years, says that nowhere else in Australia, or the developed world, has this trend data for local watershed or catchment groups been collected.

We also follow up on a story in the last issue about a team of Landcarers who have just returned from working on an international Landcare project in a remote community in southern Sri Lanka. Their achievements are inspirational.

Send us your memories

In the next issue of the magazine we would like to publish some stories and photographs reflecting on 20 years of Landcare action in Victoria. If you have any old photographs from the early days of your Landcare group or project we'd love to see them. Stories about how your group got up and running and what it has achieved would also be much appreciated.

Please send or email your contributions to Carrie Tiffany at the address on page 2 by 21 July 2006. All prints will be returned.



Terry Simpson (right) pictured on the farm at Winjallock with son Greg and grandson Ben.

Reader Survey

We would also like you to take a minute to complete the Reader Survey on pages 21 and 22. Your comments on the magazine are important and will help us to keep refining it so it meets the needs of our readers.

And there's space for you to let us know what issues you'd like to see covered in upcoming issues. Cut out the Reader Survey page and return it to the postage paid address by 28 July 2006 to be in the draw to win one of three great prizes.

We hope you enjoy this anniversary issue of *Victorian Landcare & Catchment Management*.

Teresa Oppy and Carrie Tiffany

Victorian Landcare Gateway upgrade

By **Tom Croft**



The upgrade of the Victorian Landcare Gateway website is now complete at the new address of www.landcarevic.net.au. The Gateway includes the State site and 10 Regional Gateway sites which will contain information on Landcare groups in that region.

The Gateway also contains a broad range of resource information generated for Landcare in Victoria, including information on insurance, employment, sponsorship, health and safety, plus much more.

Get the latest information by email

A new system allows users to subscribe to a range of email notices to have new information sent to them. This can include the latest news and events as before, but also searches of topics, or a particular section of a website, such as a group area. This feature means that any new information loaded into an area will trigger an email to subscribers.

Landcare Online, or the Gateway?

The launch of the new Landcare Australia website, Landcare Online, now means that there are two websites for people to look at for Landcare in Victoria.

We are exploring options to ensure that people searching for a Landcare group in Victoria on the Landcare Online site will be able to find information held on the Victorian Gateway sites. The choice is up to groups, but our recommendation is that groups use the Victorian Gateway, as there are resources for training and assistance in the use of these sites.

Tom Croft is the Regional Landcare Co-ordinator at the North East CMA and the Landcare Gateway Project Manager. For further information call (02) 6043 7600.

A living memorial for native pines



By Don Anderson

Of the thousands of White Cypress Pine trees (Murray Pine) that populated the sandy rises and ridges in the Western Goulburn Valley, few remain. So few in fact, that many people of recent generations have not seen one.

Proof that these stately trees were once common in the early days can be found in place names and the usage to which some of the logs were put. A small village named Pine Grove, only a short distance from Kyabram, was developed in the 1870s. Fischer Street in Kyabram was once called Pine Rise. Many of the log buildings in the district are built from native pine.

So why have so few of these important trees survived? The quality of the timber may have been one of the factors. Cypress Pine is rot and white-ant resistant, making it ideal for many on-farm purposes. Log buildings required straight and uniform timbers for easy construction so the pine trees were preferred to the abundant box trees that were rarely straight enough for the purpose.

Then we come to the land type on which the pine trees grew. Light, sandy, easy to cultivate land that could quickly grow crops after the easy removal of trees. Box trees growing on heavier soils were much more difficult to remove and the land harder to cultivate for cropping, so it is easy to understand why the pine trees were the first to go.

However, by nature of our local forest trees, when some are removed, young trees appear very quickly, often becoming a thicket of saplings of a new generation to replace the old. So it would be reasonable to believe that pine trees would also regenerate quickly.

I considered all of these things and could not understand why there are



White Cypress Pines are growing well on a system of lakes and islands on this 150-head dairy farm.

not hundreds of pines remaining and spreading along our roadsides. The answer came unexpectedly and with a great deal of disappointment at the time.

In two plantations on our farm at Gillieston some Cypress Pines were mixed in with wattles and yellow and grey box trees. The trees grew well with a 100% success rate and were about one metre tall when cattle accidentally broke through the fence. Fortunately the stock were amongst the trees for only a few hours and did no damage at all to wattles or box trees. The pine trees were a different story. Not one leaf or twig was left, only the stem or trunk remained as a bare stick. The message was clear: In the early days of settlement, the pine trees did try to grow back but sheep and cattle would have destroyed them completely.

With careful watering, the damaged trees on our farm have survived throughout the drought and are now growing well. The lesson has been

invaluable. At the present time, more Cypress Pines are being planted in the local area and the Kyabram Landcare Group is also planting them in Kyabram's Box Tree Reserve.

It is hoped that this is only the start of replacing some of our heritage.

Don Anderson is a farmer from Kyabram.

Recovered White Cypress Pines growing in between other trees on Don Anderson's property at Kyabram.



Landcare still on fire in the Wimmera

By Max Skeen

Our 20-year Landcare celebration kicked off in the Wimmera during April with a week of Landcare activities to celebrate and acknowledge the 20-year anniversary of Victorian Landcare.

The launch of Landcare at Winjallock in 1986 by Heather Mitchell and Joan Kirner is generally accepted as the start of this successful community, volunteer and Government partnership.

Thanks to those and other Landcare visionaries at the time, we can now look back with pride, a sense of satisfaction and maybe a hint of surprise at the scale of participation, change and achievement resulting from Landcare.

The number of players in the 2006 version of Landcare continues to increase and now captures the imagination of the community at national and international levels.

This was as good a reason as any for Wimmera Landcare to celebrate the achievements, recognise the people and acknowledge the success of the past 20 years.

Wimmera Landcare Week kicked off in Horsham and Stawell on 1 April with a community promotion in Horsham Plaza and Stawell's main street and went on to include displays, giveaways and celebration activities throughout the region.

The aim of the week was to provide something for everyone. Landcare groups had breakfast meetings, tours, field trips, BBQs and walks, while the Landcare team arranged indigenous and cultural tours, Landcare and natural environment photography. Guest speakers included 2001 Australian of the Year Arron Wood and marathon swimmer Tammy Van Wisse.

The week closed with the much anticipated 20-year Landcare Dinner and the announcement and presentation of the Wimmera Landcare Team of the Century.

While there may have been a few doubts in the lead-up to the hectic week of Landcare action, there was no need for concern. More than 820 Landcarers, volunteers, project partners and supporters joined in, making it something to remember and inspiring all those who took part.

After 20 years the fire and passion is still there, as is the need to bring new faces and ideas into the Landcare and

environment debate. Farmers are more aware than ever before of their responsibilities, urban communities are beginning to understand their impact on the environment and the business community is slowly coming on board, yet there remains no shortage of challenges out there for Landcare.

No doubt there will be other Landcare celebrations around Victoria over the coming months and we wish all of those involved in recognising the 20-year milestone every success for the future.

Max Skeen is the Wimmera Regional Landcare Co-ordinator.



2001 Australian of the Year Arron Wood warms up the breakfast crowd with his inspiring environmental success stories.

Regional



Wimmera locals enjoy a bird watching walk during Landcare week.

Corangamite

Ongoing and developing relationships between the CMA and each of the region's nine Landcare networks are to be formalised through partnership agreements currently under development. Agreements are expected to be in place by the end of June 2006.

The first annual catchment achievement awards for the region will be held on 2 June 2006 in Torquay. The awards will recognise the individuals, groups and businesses that have made a positive contribution to catchment health in the region.

The awards are an opportunity for the Corangamite CMA to raise the profile of the excellent work done by members of the community in providing an environmentally sound region for future generations.

For further information contact Polly Hall on 5232 9100.

East Gippsland

Friday 8 September 2006 will be the culmination of Landcare Week in East Gippsland and a celebration of 20 years of Landcare in Victoria.

The evening will give Landcare people in the region a chance to share stories, celebrate success, strengthen relationships and look to the future. Guests will dine on a variety of locally produced and sustainable foods and view a human interest

documentary to highlight individual and community Landcare stories.

The evening will also recognise individuals and groups with the nominations for regional entries to the 2007 Victorian Landcare Awards.

There will also be a display of Landcare snapshots. Each Landcare group will be given a disposable camera to capture a day in the life of Landcare and the images will be developed into signboards for community display.

For further information contact Darren Williams on 5150 3575.

Goulburn Broken

Landcare in the Goulburn Broken is celebrating two successful National Landcare Program applications for 2005/06. The innovative On Your Marc; Ready, Set, Mulch project involves recycling of grape marcs, a winery waste product, as bedding in deep litter piggeries.

Once through the piggery, the organic-rich mulch produced is already showing noticeable enhancement of soil microbial activity and pasture growth in trials, when it is applied instead of fertiliser.

The three-year dung beetle project was also successful. This project will help promote and demonstrate dung beetles as a way of minimising nutrient run-off from farms and the degradation of our river ecosystems.

For further information contact Katie Brown on 5736 0103.

North Central

The North Central CMA is assisting with the first significant statewide review of listed noxious weeds in 30 years. The community has been nominating plants for consideration to be declared noxious under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act*.

The Second Generation Landcare Grants Program has seen funds distributed to over 70 community and Landcare groups in North Central Victoria. The grants will foster partnerships between Government and the community so that we can work together to manage and improve the natural assets of the region.

Our Indigenous Facilitator, Darren Perry, has been run off his feet lately after contacting Landcare groups and offering to come and speak to them about conserving indigenous cultural heritage. Darren is delighted with the interest and goodwill generally shown by landholders.

For further information contact Hinalei Johnston on 5440 1816.

West Gippsland

The Landcare team is working on a publication highlighting Landcare stories of success. The publication will be launched at the September Regional Landcare Forum to celebrate 20 years of Landcare in Victoria.

Landcare in West Gippsland is embarking on its annual reflection and revisit of our Landcare Support Strategy. A community workshop was held in the Bass Coast Landcare Network area of our region on 4 May 2006. A region-wide Landcare group survey will follow and the findings compiled from the workshop and survey will be tabled at the December Regional Landcare Forum.

For further information contact Phillip McGarry on 5662 4555.

Roundup

Wimmera

From April 1-7 2006 the region hosted Wimmera Landcare Week. Field trips, tours, breakfasts, BBQs, picnics, dinners, presentations and a host of other activities were held to celebrate 20 years of Landcare in Victoria. Feedback so far has been fantastic so it looks like there's growing enthusiasm for something similar next year.

Landcare Development Grants are now open to groups looking to promote their success or implement small-scale projects aimed at encouraging community interaction and participation. The grants, up to \$2500, are easily accessed with minimal paperwork.

The Wimmera Landcare Community Support Strategy was launched during Wimmera Landcare Week. The Landcare team identified a number of actions for immediate implementation aimed at strengthening Landcare and further promoting the contribution to healthy communities and landscapes.

We welcome Rebecca Farran as the new Landcare Co-ordinator at Edenhope.

For more information contact Max Skeen on 5382 1544.

North East

Twelve projects from North East Landcare group networks and industry groups gained \$945,000 in funding from the National Landcare Program (NLP) in this round.

These projects will continue to expand the range of sustainable agriculture programs delivered by Landcare in the region, building on the success of current projects.

The Ovens Landcare Network held a very successful Soil Health Forum in March, with over 150 landholders attending. Speakers included Dr Stuart Hill, Dr Maarten Stapper and Dr Tim Clune, who presented a range of issues relating to soil health.

The North East CMA is calling for nominations for the regional Landcare Awards. Over 880 years of active service to Landcare has been recognised over the last three years. The awards will culminate in events to celebrate 20 years of Landcare achievements in the region.

For further information contact Tom Croft on (02) 6043 7600.

Port Phillip and Westernport

Evaluation of the existing Port Phillip and Westernport Landcare support strategy is underway with the findings to inform the development of a renewed program logic for the new strategy.

The CMA recognises the importance of place-based, landscape-scale, multiple-outcome projects for engaging a diversity of stakeholders in achieving large-scale natural resource management outcomes. As a consequence it is facilitating the development of a small number of such projects around the region. Two of these now have dedicated project officers, with a third on the way.

Landcare groups and networks are seen as key components of these projects. NLP funding has been secured for a co-ordinator to help nine groups in the Yarra Valley establish a new network and integrate their activities into one of these developing major projects.

For further information contact Doug Evans on 9296 4662.

Glenelg Hopkins

The team has been busy working on applications for Round 8 of the Australian Government's Envirofund. Landcare and community groups are seeking funds for a range of activities including corridor linkages, monitoring of threatened species, increasing habitat values and other revegetation works.

The Dunrobin Landcare Group, in conjunction with neighbouring forestry



companies, is heavily involved in the DPI Foxoff program. Twelve landholders have developed a plan to reduce fox numbers in preparation for the upcoming lambing season. With the forestry companies onboard a large area of land can be controlled.

The Elingamite/Cobrico Landcare Group celebrated their 15-year anniversary in April. The celebration included a bus tour of the Landcare area including a ceremonial tree planting at Lake Elingamite. A dinner followed with guest speaker Denise Burrell discussing farming in Indonesia.

For more information contact Shelley Lipscombe on 5571 2526.

EBMP builds on Landcare

in the

"We've got to be accountable for our actions. If we are not identifying the issues how do we know where we are?" – John Fyfe, landholder.

The decade of Landcare saw a huge shift towards natural resource management on both a local and catchment scale across south-west Victoria. In recent years many Landcare groups and individuals began to struggle with declining numbers and enthusiasm. This created a need for a new and invigorating process to work towards achieving sustainable landscapes.

In 2000 the Glenelg-Hopkins and Corangamite regions in partnership with

DPI and DSE developed Environmental Best Management Practices on Farms (EBMP). The project has seen over 700 landholders benchmark their farming practices against current sustainable land management processes in the south-west region of Victoria. A further 800 self-assessment and action planning workbooks have also been sold to groups in other parts of Victoria and across Australia.

EBMP introduces and links farmers to the plan, do, check, review process used in the Environmental Management System (EMS) cycle. An EMS includes several

other steps such as a risk assessment.

The EBMP process takes farmers through a self-assessment and action-planning phase using two workbooks, covering a variety of topics such as water management, soil management and vegetation management. Participants are asked to rank each topic and its related issues in order of priority (high, medium or low) and benchmark themselves on a scale as to where they are now and where they would like to be in the future.

High priority actions identified in phase one are then addressed in the action planning process during phase two.



Dairy clean-up saves money and soil

Martin and Andrea Van de Wouw run a 580-head dairy farm near Curdievale in south-west Victoria. They are enthusiastic farmers who have been actively involved in Curdievale Landcare, West Vic Dairy, VFF and the Corangamite CMA.

One of the issues raised through their involvement in the EBMP process was the amount of detergent going into their effluent system and then on to pastures. This raised concern about the impact detergent was having on their soils.

Martin and Andrea decided to act as they were using approximately 1400 litres of detergent a year. Whilst undertaking a teat cup upgrade they also embarked on an upgrade to the washdown system.

Today, they save about \$2800 a year on detergent, which has helped fund the changes along with savings on energy used to heat hot water.

Martin says that the reduction of detergents into the soil will be positive for the long-term health of the property.

Andrea Van de Wouw says that the EBMP process helped the family to address an issue that had been in the back of their minds for some time.

"As farmers we've got so much on our minds sometimes it seems like we are working in a fog," she said.

"It's not until we go through a process like EBMP that we start to set priorities."

This year the Van de Wouws intend to address a vegetation management issue and get involved in agroforestry.



top: Dairyfarmer Andrea Van de Wouw is an enthusiastic supporter of EBMP.

left: Andrea Van de Wouw (left) discusses EBMP with students from Marcus Oldham College in Geelong.

Individual farm action plans identify key management issues, works to be undertaken and information needs. Collectively, this information assists DPI, DSE and CMAs with planning and resourcing within sub-catchment areas.

One of the key assets the model brings is its ability to deliver behavioural change. The EBMP Project Evaluation found that 77% of the participants interviewed have changed their approach to farm management practices since being involved in the EBMP pilot program.

Participants are encouraged to build on-ground works into their day-to-day schedule and to observe the impact of their management changes, ensuring that new practices are having the desired

outcome. To maintain momentum, the self-assessments and action plans are reviewed annually.

A number of regions across Victoria are now beginning to use the EBMP process as a simple way of identifying natural resource management issues at the individual farm, the catchment area and the entire region. The process is useful for all stakeholders, enabling landholders, Landcare/NRM facilitators, community groups, CMAs, etc., to address high priority issues through an action planning phase and allocate resources accordingly. Collectively EBMP offers multiple benefits at all levels, working towards achieving healthy and more sustainable productive landscapes.

EBMP is now being used as one of the tools in the VFF and Victorian Government collaboration to involve a larger number of farmers in EMS. The program aims to support 4000 farmers to participate in training over the next 12 months.

Andrea Van de Wouw (far left) discusses issues identified through the self-assessment and action planning phases of the EBMP process with two other EBMP participants in the Curdievale catchment.

For further information on the EBMP process, please contact Geoff McFarlane or Mandy Coulson at DPI Geelong on 5226 4667.

For further information on the VFF-Victorian Government Program contact Greg Smith on 0427 352 383.

McColls find new focus

Rob McColl owns and manages 800 hectares in the Meredith/Banggamie area where he grazes sheep. He has been actively involved in whole farm planning and a member of the local Landcare group since it began over 15 years ago.

After going through the EBMP self-assessment and action plan phases, Rob and his daughter, Bridget, sat down together and devised 45 actions that needed attention.

Rob says that the EBMP process has enabled the family to refocus and re-evaluate current farming practices to better achieve sustainable production on the property.

Financial support through a National Landcare Program grant has helped



Rob McColl (left) and Mandy Coulson inspecting farm water supply.

Rob get started on implementing some of the priority actions he identified in the EBMP process.

This year Rob intends to stabilise hillside soils by sowing permanent pasture.

Without these works the soils are likely to move into the creek systems, eventually being deposited into the Leigh River. Rob also plans to improve the productivity of lighter sandy soils by sowing a paddock down to lucerne.

Aussie-



During the two-week visit team members provided local tourism operators with a chance to interact with Western eco-tourists and receive constructive feedback in a non-threatening environment. Accommodation hosts, caterers, school students and tour guiding operators benefited from the experience.

The volunteers worked alongside local operators to develop promotional material to attract more eco-tourists to the area. They built picnic tables for visitor use at sites within the lagoon reserves and worked at the local schools.

Lizzie Bickmore, a volunteer from Victoria, says she gained invaluable skills in multi-tasking, teamwork, construction and community engagement on the Sri Lanka trip.

Emma Bennett works alongside a school neighbour digging holes in hard soil with poor tools.



Twelve Landcarers from across Australia have recently returned from a two-week visit to Sri Lanka where they participated in an innovative pilot program for international Landcare.

The program was designed by Victorian Landcare Network (VLN) volunteers to provide professional development opportunities for Landcarers while working to support a rural community overseas.

The Australian volunteers built timber facilities, conducted environmental education programs and assisted new ecotourism operators in the Rekewa-Ussangoda-Kalmetiya (RUK) district of southern Sri Lanka.

The pilot project provided assistance to a United Nations Development Program project aiming to provide the local community with an alternative income source to environmentally destructive activities such as shell mining. The lagoons of the RUK area are recognised as significant wetlands of South-East Asia and are world class for bird watching.



Photographs from top:

A new playground gets its first workout from Pingama School students.

Pingama school students are introduced to the concept of Waterwatch.

The Australian Landcare team with eco-tourism operators at Kalmetiya Campsite.

Did someone say debrief? Team members recover from a hard morning's work in hot, humid weather.



style Landcare in Sri Lanka



By Emma Bennett

“The construction work was the most immediately tangible part of the project. It pulled at the heartstrings to see the children swarming over the newly installed playground equipment and enjoying the simple pleasure of a picnic table that we might take for granted in Australia.”

Glenn Merrick, also from Victoria, says he has brought many new skills back to his local Landcare community.

“The trip has given me experience in team leading, delegating and organising fundraising activities. And it has increased my confidence in talking to a video camera and on local radio.”

Glenn said it was an invaluable opportunity to come to an understanding of a different culture.

The VLN hopes to build on the pilot program model to provide ongoing linkages with the Sri Lankan community

as well as extending opportunities for Landcare programs across the globe.

The project would not have been possible without the dedication of team members and the support of sponsors. Major sponsors include The Myer Foundation, the Loch Village Community in Gippsland, The Rossi Group, Swann Insurance and the Bell family. Thanks also to project partners, Landcare Australia Limited and Australian Volunteers International.

David's big adventure

David Tepper, a wheat farmer from Horsham, was in charge of one of the construction teams in Sri Lanka and also taught at the school.

“It was an immensely rewarding experience. Being a farmer I spend a lot of time working on my own and suddenly here I was working with a team of very different people. We got on so well and learned a lot from each other,” David says.

“The conditions were often hard going. The heat was constant and made the physical side of things very trying. We generally took a break in the middle of the day to re-group and conserve our energy.”

The team slept in tents at one of the ecotourism sites and lived without power for their stay.

David says he was struck by the simple lives of the Sri Lankan people and how friendly and happy they were. He spent time at the local kindergarten where he helped the children make dolls and play games and gave English lessons at the senior school.



Victorian farmers David Tepper (left) and Glenn Merrick work together a long way from home.

“The classrooms are very basic. No windows, just wire mesh and a concrete floor. I wasn't sure what to teach, but one day I wrote the words to the song, *Kookaburra Sits on the Old Gum Tree*, on the board. The children were shy at first but then they just wouldn't stop singing. It was amazing. I'll never forget the sound of them singing. They would have gone on forever if I hadn't lost my voice.”

David's visit was mainly self-funded with some assistance from the Wimmera CMA. He's keen to visit the area again and to do everything possible to promote ecotourism in the region and build links between the two countries.

“It was the experience of a lifetime. After a couple of weeks back at home I'm still feeling a bit flat. I hadn't realised how much I would miss the place and the people.”

Twenty years of



Terry, Greg and Ben feeding sheep on an area rehabilitated by diversion banks, a gully plug dam and generous amounts of superphosphate on phalaris and sub-clover pastures.

Landcare was officially launched 20 years ago on Terry Simpson's property at Winjallock. Terry, a wool grower and one of the key originators of Landcare, reflects on the beginning of Landcare and how it has evolved.

I started working on the Landcare program with Heather Mitchell and Joan Kirner in the mid 1980s when I was a member of the Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) Salinity Committee and the State Land Protection Council. Heather Mitchell (now deceased) was President of the VFF and Joan Kirner was the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands.

Around that time, I was also Chairman of a Conservation Committee with the St Arnaud VFF that won Victorian State Branch of the Year and I had been actively involved for many years in a local soil conservation group program.

Through my involvement on the Landcare Steering Committee, and practical involvement in land management and restoration with my son, Greg, I became known as an advocate for practical, farm-based Landcare.

Landcare was officially launched by Joan Kirner at Stricta Hill and on our farm at Winjallock in November 1986. Stricta Hill and the surrounding country suffered from severe gully erosion caused by high run-off rates, lack of perennial vegetation, rabbits and poor pastures. Located in the catchment of the Avon and Richardson Rivers, it is considered a recharge area for salty groundwater surfacing further north around Lake Buloke.

Stricta Hill was a soil conservation project consisting of rabbit eradication, restoration of native vegetation, pasture improvement, fencing and stock management with ongoing community



Terry Simpson (right) on the farm with son Greg and grandson Ben.

input. This program was given very strong support from the St Arnaud Field Naturalists, Project Branchout and the wider Avon-Richardson community.

This initiative taken by local landholders with Government input through the Department of Conservation Forests and Lands became a statewide model and an example of what Landcare is about.

Landcare



By Terry Simpson

Broadacre solutions essential

From my earliest involvement, Landcare always had to take into account broadacre solutions. I've never altered from that. It continues to amaze me that people wish to believe that there is any other major solution.

We must get the perspective right. What do people think is going on with the vast area that is used for agricultural production? Who do they think is maintaining families and communities in these areas? Who do they think is paying for Landcare in these areas?

Yet 90% of Landcare publicity is about trees, birds and butterflies. This seems unfair to the silent achievers out there. At best, tree planting is only going to cover 10% of the landscape – but what about the other 90%? The fact is that trees aren't the solution, they are only one part of it.

There is a lot of really great work going on that is not part of the broadacre solutions to Landcare, including community tree plantings, remnant vegetation protection, wetland establishment and some weed programs. It is most important that all these activities are encouraged to continue.

However, Landcare publicity leaves most people with the impression that these are the main things occurring. This is simply untrue and gives the impression that farming businesses need to turn their properties into botanical parkland.

Drive in any direction you like from any city or town and you'll drive through farming land. The undeniable fact is that farmers own the majority of private land.

Landcare must be about farming

Let's stop and analyse what Landcare actually means. If caring for the land is



Sheep feeding on land that formerly suffered from severe gully erosion, rabbits, low production and supported only one sheep to the hectare.

Landcare, then aren't cropping farmers who mulch stubbles, use crop rotations and precise fertiliser applications using Landcare principles? This same example can be used for any other farming enterprise. Farming is a business and unless farmers make money out of the farm to re-invest back, they can't look after their land.

Greg and I run a self-replacing flock of 13,000 eighteen to twenty micron Merinos on marginal country that originally ran only one sheep to the hectare on some of the poorer paddocks. We have been building the farm over the past 40 years by buying degraded ground and improving it with perennial pastures, subterranean clover, deeper and more secure farm dams, rabbit eradication and substantial productivity improvement.

Since 1986, annual wool production on our farm has gone from 180 bales to 320, with annual sheep sales growing from 1400 to 3500. As these figures have

improved, we have been able to purchase and restore other areas of farmland.

The flow-on effect

Strong agricultural enterprises make strong, viable communities. It also has a wider flow-on effect, not just for the local community. For example, the local dozer driver requires a highly skilled mechanic to service his machine. So, he takes it along to a business servicing large machinery in a large regional centre. This example can be repeated many times over when employing cartage contractors, purchasing fertiliser, fencing materials, grain...

Many farmers are carrying out Landcare on their broadacre farms and contributing substantially to the economic and social well-being of the communities they are part of. But there are not necessarily any signs to tell you that, there's no hoopla and no fanfare. Farmers are busy looking after their livelihood, the environment and their future viability.

Tips for successful farm tree growing



By *Philippa Noble*

Weed control, weed control and weed control are the first three most important aspects of successful tree planting. Then comes planning, browsing control and ground preparation. Correct timing of these operations is almost as important as the actual works.

Summer and autumn are the times of the year for planning, browsing control and ground preparation. Failure to undertake these jobs during this time will mean that the success of your planting project will be compromised.

Planning

Planning involves deciding where to put your revegetation project and what you want the plantation to do for you, as this will determine the layout and species required.

Gary Leonard inspects his newly planted firewood plantation which is an excellent example of careful weed control.



Inclusion of understorey in tree plantations will attract birds, beneficial insects, native animals and reptiles to the area, as well as improving soil health.

Ideally, local species planted on as large an area as possible is best for timber production and biodiversity and salinity benefits.

Shade and shelter is often established in belts. A single tree can be adequate for providing shade but gives no other benefits and can be relatively expensive to protect from browsing. Belts of trees for wind protection should be at least four rows wide, preferably 6-10 rows of native species. They then provide other benefits to the farm and the environment, as well as shelter.



Mary Anderson from Parkland Nursery, Wangaratta, loosening seedlings for planting.

Trees should be spaced 3-5 metres apart to allow room to grow. Shrubs can be planted closer depending on their final size.

Ordering trees early is important to ensure the nursery can provide the plants you want.

Browsing control

Browsing control entails fencing the site from farm stock, but also preventing rabbits and hares from eating new plants. This must be done well prior to planting, with rabbits and hares best controlled in summer/autumn, when pasture feed is scarce.

Rabbit control programs should include a mix of baiting with poisoned oats, fumigating and/or ripping burrows, clearing warren sites where possible and spotlighting and shooting – mainly to monitor rabbit numbers. Guarding and netting plantations can be expensive and time consuming but may be necessary if rabbits are not under control at planting time. Hares are controlled by spotlight shooting, as they cannot be poisoned.



North-east ripping contractor Jack Frewin adjusts his three tined ripper.

Ground preparation

Ground preparation in the form of ripping is highly recommended to allow for quick plant root penetration of the soil. Ripping should be done in autumn, while the subsoil is still dry enough to shatter. It should be deep enough to break up any hard layer that could impede root growth. If left until too late and the soil becomes too wet, ripping can cause a glazed trench, which collects water and drowns plants. Mounding can improve survival on waterlogged sites and tree growth rates in other areas.

Weed control

Weed control is essential for any planting project and undertaken later in the year. Controlling seed set and perennial plants during the spring of the year before planting is ideal but removal of weeds in the winter just before planting is essential. Seedlings or seeds must be planted into a weed-free bed.

Spraying with a knockdown herbicide and a pre-emergent to give longer-term weed control can mean the difference between life and death of most planting projects.

If the spraying is undertaken correctly, watering of plants during and after planting should not be necessary. Weed control should be at least a metre around the seedling and can be spot, strip or total area weed control, depending on the weeds and other plants present on the site.

Philippa Noble is a Private Forestry Officer with DPI at Wangaratta. For further information she can be contacted on 5723 8686.

Curtis report calls for more

By Margrit Beemster

Curtis report calls for more co-ordinators

Landcare groups have a vital role to play in the management of Victoria's natural and cultural assets but more Government investment in the professional management of groups is needed.

"The best investment Government can make with Landcare is to employ more co-ordinators," says Professor Allan Curtis, the Director of Charles Sturt University's Institute for Land, Water and Society.

Professor Curtis's recommendations come from his report, *Landcare in Victoria: after twenty years*, which is based on a survey of all 709 Victorian Landcare groups operating at the end of 2004.

With previous surveys conducted in 1993, 1995 and 1998, there was the opportunity to identify trends over time.

Co-ordinators like football coaches

Professor Curtis recommends that Government underwrites Landcare by making a long-term commitment to fund a co-ordinator for every five to ten groups.

"Most groups have already formed into networks, with a common leadership. Each network should be able to apply for a full-time professional co-ordinator," he says.

"That person would almost be like a football coach, there to motivate people and provide the expertise for effective planning, monitoring and evaluation. In turn, co-ordinators would be part of a regional and statewide professional network with a defined career and pay structure."

Professor Curtis suggests an investment of \$10 million per year to employ and resource 70 full-time co-ordinator positions across Victoria. He would also like to see more emphasis on reflection


and the identification of lessons learnt through on-ground work.

"Groups should still do the on-ground work. But experience tells us that we are still a long way off knowing exactly what to do. Groups are probably the most effective places we have for landholders to share ideas, reflect on their actions and plan future work on the basis of local experience and expert knowledge."

Investment essential

Professor Curtis believes we are at a tipping point where insufficient investment in the fabric of Landcare is undermining the capacity of Landcare to contribute to more sustainable natural resource management.

"We now have clear evidence of the 'declining health' of Landcare. We are running down the social and human capital that we have established through



*A Landcare group gets to work
in the Tallangatta Valley.*

co-ordinators

our previous investments in Landcare. We have fewer landholders in Landcare; we've got fewer groups – almost 150 fewer groups than in 1998; where groups operate we have a smaller proportion of local people in them; we've got fewer outsiders assisting or studying the work of groups; and we have very high attrition rates. Many groups are not going to be viable for long. Overall there is a net loss of 15 to 20% of members each year.”

Professor Curtis says governments will continue to rely heavily on the efforts and investments of private landholders.

Landcare out of fashion

“As I see it, part of the problem is we tend to move from one policy option to the next. To some extent, Landcare is out of fashion. My response is that we will always need a mix of approaches. We need to retain those things that work as we explore additional tools. We still don't know what sustainable farming involves for most of Australia.

“Landcare groups undertake considerable on-groundwork in a very cost-effective manner, but more importantly, they play a critical role in facilitating the dialogue and learning needed to work out how to manage our great land.

“Members of Landcare groups continue to be involved in field days and trialling of recommended practices and these activities are an important part of the dialogue and learning that occurs through groups. The groups are also still doing large amounts of on-ground works with a smaller number of on-ground projects (but at a larger scale) than in the past.”

Professor Curtis says that's another reason we need these groups.

“If they're not going to do this work, who is? CMAs aren't going to do it; it still



Professor Allan Curtis says Landcare co-ordinators can motivate people and provide key expertise for planning, monitoring and evaluation.

comes down to individual property owners and Landcare groups are one of the best ways of mobilising their resources.”

High levels of satisfaction

Survey data showed substantially higher levels of group satisfaction with Government support across a range of measures including money for on-ground work and support for administration.

There were also very positive perceptions of outcomes from group activity over a longer period of time, in terms of groups increasing awareness of land and water degradation issues; the links between on-farm actions and catchment impacts, and sustainable farming practices; and members completing important on-ground work.

“There are still some issues around the CMAs for some groups as some feel the CMAs are ignoring them,” Professor Curtis says.

However, the level of concern with these issues was not as high as had commonly been thought.

Industry still resistant

Landcare continues to struggle to engage industry or business.

“Only 11% of groups reported assistance from industry/business in 2004 and the total value of that assistance was only 8% of the value of all resources received by groups,” says Professor Curtis.

As we celebrate 20 years of Landcare in Victoria, Professor Curtis recognises the success of Landcare but also wants a more coherent and determined approach to supporting Landcare.

“Things have been going backwards. The number of groups employing a co-ordinator has decreased from 38% in 1998 to 29% in 2004. And 71% of these work part-time and across a number of groups.

Added to this Landcare groups reported contact rates of 73% with CMAs and 48% with local government. There is further opportunity for CMAs to provide co-ordinated professional support these groups need.

Professor Curtis says the Country Fire Authority is a good model of what is needed for Landcare.

The report was part of the Federal Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries NLP Monitoring and Evaluation Project.

The full report, Landcare in Victoria; after twenty years, is on the Charles Sturt University website at: <http://athene.riv.csu.edu.au/#pubs>

Margrit Beemster is Communications Co-ordinator at the Charles Sturt University Institute for Land, Water and Society.

Landcare support on with action plan

By Dr Jess Dart and David Lucas

The Victorian Action Plan for Second Generation Landcare (VAPSGL) is a 10-year plan launched in 2002 after extensive community discussion.

The plan aims to strengthen the Victorian Landcare community's relationships with Government departments, non-Government organisations and industry, provide additional support for the volunteer Landcare movement and assist land managers to develop their natural resource management skills.

The co-ordination and implementation of the plan is led by the State Landcare Support Team which is made up of the DSE Victorian Landcare Program team and the 10 regional Landcare co-ordinators (RLCs) employed by

the CMAs and funded by the Victorian Government. This central team provides strategic leadership and support for Landcare in Victoria. They aim to increase the capacity of communities to participate in the Landcare program to protect and improve on our natural resources.

The achievements of the first four years of the plan have recently been reviewed.

The information and recommendations gained from this review will be used to inform the next implementation phase of the plan from 2006-2010.

Fifty two people were consulted by independent reviewers in either group or individual interviews. Participants came

from all regions and included regional Landcare co-ordinators, local Landcare facilitators and co-ordinators, Landcare community representatives and representatives from CMAs, DSE and DPI.

VAPSGL success

The review found that the plan has been highly successful. As well as providing more than 140 training opportunities (2003-05) and raising over \$5 million to support local Landcare co-ordinators and facilitators (2004-05), numerous strategy documents and support materials have been produced for Landcare groups.

The Regional Landcare Support Strategies, various monitoring and evaluation plans and the Being Investor Ready Toolkit have been key achievements. The Victorian Landcare Gateway website acts as an important communication tool and is now receiving just under 50,000 hits a month. (<http://www.landcarevic.net.au>)

Co-ordinators are crucial

The regional Landcare co-ordinators are leading and supporting teams that include the majority of local Landcare co-ordinators and facilitators in Victoria, who in turn support the volunteers. This has contributed to an increase in the amount of support provided to Landcare volunteers.

Investment in these Landcare support roles is based on the assumption that healthy, empowered and knowledgeable Landcare groups will lead to more sustainable natural resource management outcomes.

A survey conducted by Curtis and Cooke in 2004 shows that Landcare members feel

Regional Landcare co-ordinators Shelley Lipscombe, Doug Evans and Brendon Thomas (seated) discuss priorities for the action plan.



Get ready for the International Landcare Conference

By **Alex Arbuthnot**

they are provided with more support now than in 1998. The survey provides clear evidence that the health of a Landcare group (internal leadership, management approaches and prevailing cultures) influences the extent of natural resource management outcomes achieved.

The RLCs are described as the glue in the Landcare network, connecting community, the CMAs and the Victorian Government. The Curtis and Cooke survey shows that the CMAs and the community now have a better relationship and VAPSGL review participants consider that the RLCs have helped to achieve this.

The RLCs are also credited with providing ongoing links and co-ordination with other partners including the VFF, Greening Australia and industry based farmer groups.

Overall the results of the review were extremely positive. Landcare was identified as a core element in enhancing the health of rural communities. The main recommendation from participants was to continue the VAPSGL program and evolve it to further strengthen communities to meet current natural resource management circumstances.

The full report, 2002-2006 VAPSGL Evaluation: Building on success and planning the future of Landcare support in Victoria, is on the Victorian Landcare Gateway at: <http://www.landcarevic.net.au>

For further information contact David Lucas, State Landcare Co-ordinator at DSE on 9637 8033. Dr Jess Dart is a Director of Clear Horizon, the consultants who undertook the review of the VAPSGL.

The 2nd International and National Landcare Conference will be held at the Melbourne Conference Centre from 8-11 October 2006 and it is an event not to be missed.

The conference theme is Landscapes, Lifestyles and Livelihoods. It will build on the themes of previous conferences but will look to the future and the aim of wealth and health in our country.

Keynote speakers include Bobbie Brazil, Jack Whelan and Maude Barlow. Maude Barlow is the National Chairperson of The Council of Canadians and co-founder of the Blue Planet Project, which works to stop commodification of the world's water.

Conference organisers are planning for around 1000 delegates with an increased overseas audience as Landcare becomes more and more popular around the world.

Although Landcare is about rolling up your sleeves and doing the work it is also important that we share our success stories and learn from others. Conferences are about the exchange of information and generating debate. Not only will we learn from the many key speakers and Landcare presentations but from others as we chat over coffees and lunches.

The conference committee is encouraging catchment regions and Landcare networks or groups to arrange partnerships or sponsorships with local businesses to assist in funding community Landcarers to attend the conference.



Maude Barlow, one of Canada's leading community advocates, is a keynote speaker at the 2006 National and International Landcare Conference.

The 2006 National Landcare Awards winners will be announced at a gala dinner during the conference. For Victorians it will also be an opportunity to celebrate 20 years of Landcare.

Please start planning to participate in this important event – an opportunity to learn and make new Landcare friends.

For registration forms and further information visit the conference website at www.internationallandcareconference2006.com.au or contact Waldron Smith Management on 9645 6311.

Alex Arbuthnot is a member of the conference organising committee.

international landcare conference



Reclaiming Lake Tyrrell

By *Brendon Thomas*



Farmers are working to reclaim land from Lake Tyrrell in the Mallee.

A group of Mallee farmers are working with their local Landcare groups to reclaim unproductive areas of farmland around Lake Tyrrell.

According to Manangatang Landcare Co-ordinator Jamie Pook the Manangatang, Waitchie and Sea Lake Landcare groups have secured National Landcare Program funding of \$102,000 for the coming year.

“This is a three-year project with the aim of turning 200 hectares a year into more profitable and sustainable landscapes by adopting perennial grazing and forestry systems and enhancing the environmental values of the surrounding Tyrrell Basin lakes complex,” Jamie Pook said.

The project, which will start this month, will see unproductive areas planted out with Old Man Saltbush, pasture, native trees and shrubs. Five farmers have already committed large areas of their land to the first year of the project.

The funding proposal had been instigated by local farmers who were keen to see large areas of salt-affected land returned to productivity and local biodiversity protected.

Jamie Pook said the Landcare funding came about because of the phenomenal support of farmers.

“One farmer offered a 4000-hectare area and others have offered varying amounts of land in the Tyrrell, Wahpool and Timboram areas.

“The end result should be fairly productive land within 18 months to two years and we’re also linking remnant vegetation areas around the three lakes to create large wildlife corridors.

“This will particularly benefit birds like the Orange Chat by providing a protective corridor for them to move between the lakes,” he explained.

Landcare co-ordinators, employed by Mallee CMA, would effectively be following on from the hugely successful environmental mapping project funded by the CMA in the Lake Tyrrell area recently.

“This involved about 40 farmers developing action plans for their properties to address environmental issues such as salinity and remnant vegetation.

A number of the mapping graduates will now be involved in the Landcare project to implement some of the actions they’ve identified for their properties.”

Jamie said the partnership with land managers would be invaluable in terms of using farmers’ expertise to learn more about large-scale restructure.

“We are really excited about the scale of this project and the level of local enthusiasm. Basically we will be reclaiming about 600 hectares through planting and direct seeding of unprofitable croplands to perennial fodder, forestry and protected biodiversity systems.

“It’s the type of landscape change that can only occur with land managers’ support and it’s a great indicator of the level of knowledge and community support that exists in the Mallee about sustainable land management,” he said.

Brendon Thomas is the Regional Landcare Co-ordinator for the Mallee CMA. For further information call 5051 4385.

Reader Survey

Dear Readers,

After ten years and 36 issues of the *Victorian Landcare & Catchment Management* magazine it's time to reflect on what we have achieved and to find out how we can make the magazine even better for the future.

Please complete the survey and return it to us in the postage paid envelope enclosed by 28 July 2006.

We'll print the results from the survey in the next issue.

1. Which of the following best describes you? (Tick as many boxes as required)

- Dryland farmer
- Irrigation farmer
- Lifestyle or hobby farmer
- Other

Where do you live?

- Resident in a country town
- City dweller
- Resident on the urban/rural fringe
- Other

What is your interest in Landcare?

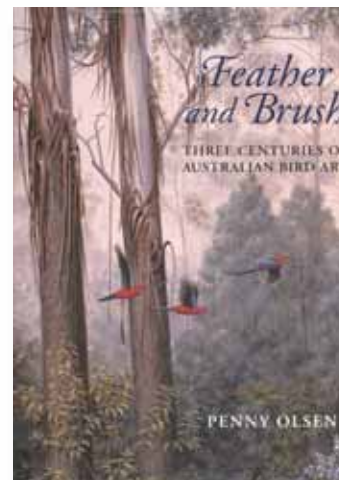
- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Member of a Landcare or similar group | <input type="checkbox"/> Landcare sponsor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Landcare co-ordinator/facilitator | <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher/educator |
| <input type="checkbox"/> VFF member | <input type="checkbox"/> Researcher |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local government employee or councillor | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Government officer | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Catchment Management Authority (CMA) representative | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agribusiness person | |

Book prize

By returning your Reader Survey form you'll have the chance to win one of three copies of *Feather and Brush. Three Centuries of Australian Bird Art*, by Penny Olsen.

This beautiful book traces the 300-year history of bird art in Australia, from the crudely illustrated records of the earliest European voyages of discovery to the diversity of artwork available today.

Feather and Brush contains over 250 stunning images representing 94 artists. Published by CSIRO, the book retails from \$69.95.



Additional copies of the survey are available at www.dse.vic.gov.au/victorianlandcaremagazine

Reader Survey cont...

2. On a personal interest basis, rate the different types of stories in *Victorian Landcare & Catchment Management*

	Very interested	Quite interested	Not very interested	Not at all interested
News from Landcare groups and networks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Individual farmer case studies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New research findings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional Roundup	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
News from DSE/DPI the VFF and the CMAs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practical stories on how to do something	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information about grants and incentives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reviews of websites and publications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Letters to the editor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Do other people read your copy of the magazine?

Yes Approximately how many? _____

No

4. In what ways do you think this magazine could best serve and support Landcare in Victoria?

5. What do you think the current challenges are for Landcare in Victoria?

6. Are there any ways the magazine can be improved for you?

7. Are there any issues or stories you would like to see covered in upcoming issues?

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Your name and address are optional but please include them if you would like to be in the prize draw.

Landcare and the VFF – a 20-year marriage

By Ian Linley & Beverley Wallace

The history of Landcare in Victoria is uniquely attached to the Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF). During the 1970s the VFF (then the VFGA) identified the negative aspects of farm tree decline, and in conjunction with the Victorian Government appointed a farm trees officer to encourage the establishment of farm tree groups throughout Victoria.

In the early 1980s the VFF observed that many farmers were becoming more aware of salinity and were undertaking actions on their farms to mitigate salinity problems. A VFF salinity officer was appointed to support the farming community to establish co-ordinated actions to reduce the incidence and threat of salinity.

In 1986 VFF were undertaking initiatives in farm trees, salinity, soil conservation and supporting local group input into resolving land management issues. The former President of the VFF, Heather Mitchell, and Joan Kirner, the then

Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands, established the Victorian Landcare program.

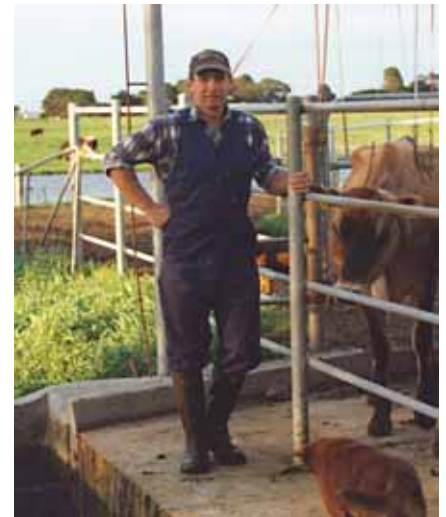
The official launch of Landcare was with the Winjallock Landcare Group at Stricta Hill, the site of a land management project undertaken by farmers affiliated with the St Arnaud branch of the VFF.

The VFF further committed to encouraging sustainable farming practices amongst its members in the 1990s by appointing a Landcare liaison officer to support farmers in conjunction with the farm trees and salinity officers.

Today there are over 500 Victorian Landcare related groups supported by the VFF Farm Tree & Landcare Association which provides insurance and incorporation.

The VFF also houses the National Landcare Program's State Industry Landcare Co-ordinator, whose role is to support farmers with the sustainable and profitable farming aspects of Landcare.

VFF and Landcare stalwart John McCracken examining soil structure on his Burnt Creek Landcare demonstration site.



Macarthur farmer John Pye is involved in an innovative nutrient management project.

In Western Victoria the Macarthur VFF/UDV and Eumeralla Landcare Group members have engaged Glenelg Hopkins CMA, DPI, the EPA, Warrnambool Cheese and Butter, Murray Goulburn and WestVic Dairy in an innovative nutrient management project.

The project will reuse dairy farm nutrients, prevent waterway pollution and increase productivity on dairy farms by developing treatment wetlands, integrated waste management systems and nutrient scheduling.

Farmers are supported by a specialist team of agronomists, tradespeople, water quality officers and dairy consultants in this NLP-supported project.

Macarthur farmer John Pye said the co-ordinated effort from Macarthur and Bessiebelle dairy farmers would enhance a common link through the Eumeralla River.

For further information contact Victorian Industry Landcare Co-ordinator Ian Linley on 0428 330 122. Beverley Wallace is Executive Officer of the VFF Landcare, Pig Group & Egg Group.



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