

VICTORIAN

LANDCARE

Autumn 2015 Issue 63

& CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT



ABORIGINAL LANDCARE AND
COMMUNITY ARTS FEATURE

Sharing stories of the Avon

Reconnecting the song lines of Nillumbik

Sharing ancient fire knowledge



Landcare
Victoria



Victorian Landcare and Catchment Management

AUTUMN 2015 ISSUE 63

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Cover photograph

Kristy Atkinson, a Dja Dja Warrung woman from Shepparton dancing at Federation Square in Melbourne. Photograph by Sandy Scheltema.



From the Minister

Dear Landcarers

In the previous edition of the *Victorian Landcare and Catchment Management* magazine I talked about the need for a new approach to strengthen our network of dedicated local community groups across Victoria.

I think Landcare is a great example of how the best environmental outcomes are achieved through close relationships formed on the ground in our regional and rural communities. Landcare has a long and proud history working at a community level to improve local environments, and it is my role as Minister to ensure the work we do in the Andrews Labor Government supports your valuable work.

Facilitators perform the vital role of building community capacity, assisting communities to deliver local on-ground action, facilitate effective participation in Landcare activities, and enable groups to become self-supporting.

As such, I was delighted to announce that the Andrews Labor Government has committed \$3.2 million to ensure the funding of Victoria's 68 Landcare facilitators for another four years. Over the next 12 months we will work with the

Landcare community and the peak bodies to develop the best possible long-term arrangements for the coming years, and to find opportunities to strengthen the roles and scope of these positions to ensure more groups receive their support.

To make sure we do this effectively, and deliver on community needs, we will soon be asking you to provide your experiences and thoughts on the Facilitator Program and other aspects of the Victorian Government's Landcare Support Program.

I am proud to support a movement such as Landcare that recognises and respects the knowledge Aboriginal people have in managing Australia's land, fresh water and sea, and in conserving biodiversity.

It has been wonderful to see such a strong response to the call for stories about Aboriginal Landcare in Victoria. You will find this issue packed with innovative and inspiring stories, such as the revival of traditional fire knowledge in north east Victoria, where Traditional Owners are working in partnership with the Kiewa Landcare Group to trial the use of fire to reduce fuel loads, rejuvenate native grasses and regenerate ecosystems.

In south west Victoria the Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation has partnered with the Glenelg Hopkins CMA on an information sharing program called Yarns on Farms, which highlights how Landcare can help to break down cultural barriers and facilitate the sharing of knowledge.

Also not to be missed are the stunning photographs captured by one of our passionate Landcare facilitators, Sandy Scheltema.

All of this fantastic work being done by the groups, networks and many thousands of volunteers deserves to be recognised. I encourage anyone involved in Landcare to put in a nomination for the 2015 Victorian Landcare Awards, which is open for entries on the Victorian Landcare Gateway website, www.landcarevic.net.au.

This year promises to be a rewarding year putting the care and protection of our environment back on the agenda. With our renewed focus and through your hard work and commitment the nation's environment will be enjoyed for generations to come.

Hon. Lisa Neville MP
Minister for Environment,
Climate Change and Water

**2015 VICTORIAN
LANDCARE AWARDS**

NOMINATIONS OPEN

[WWW.LANDCAREONLINE.COM.AU/
LANDCAREAWARDS](http://WWW.LANDCAREONLINE.COM.AU/LANDCAREAWARDS)

NOMINATIONS CLOSE ON 21 JUNE 2015

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The partners are using fire as a land management tool to reduce fuel loads and are conducting field trials to rejuvenate native grasses, train young Indigenous men and regenerate healthy ecosystems.

”



Cape York Traditional Owners (left to right) Peta-Marie Standly, Dorothy Pootchemunka, Dawn Koondumbin and in the foreground Joel Ngallametta, inspect native grass species at Bonegilla as part of a traditional fire knowledge exchange program.

New approaches to sharing ancient

Landcare groups in parts of north east Victoria are partnering with Traditional Owners to revive the use of traditional fire knowledge. The partners are using fire as a land management tool to reduce fuel loads and are conducting field trials to rejuvenate native grasses, train young Indigenous men and regenerate healthy ecosystems.

News of this innovative work is spreading through trial burns, public forums and the production of films that capture and share experiences. As a result farmers, natural resource management agencies and the Country Fire Authority (CFA) are now involved.

Responding to the 2006 fires

Traditional Owners became involved in the revival of traditional fire knowledge in the north east following devastating fires in the region in 2006.

Traditional Owners from Cape York in far north Queensland were saddened by the tragic events and offered to share their knowledge with countrymen in the south.

Traditional Fire Revival coordinator Peta-Marie Standley said “It hurt our

hearts up here (Cape York) when you guys had those horrible fires because it doesn't need to happen.”

Over the next four years Cape York Traditional Owners visited the north east, talking at Landcare events, participating in an Indigenous fire forum in 2013 and talking to the local Aboriginal community. As a further sign of support, the group invited local people to attend workshops in the Cape where traditional burning is an annual event.

Over this period, Landcare networks in the north east identified that local landholders were interested in learning how to better manage and preserve threatened Grassy Box Gum Woodlands ecosystems on their properties, particularly

where fuel loads were increasing and creating a potential fire risk.

Previous attempts at fuel reduction burns were considered risky and a promoter of weeds.

In 2013 the Kiewa Catchment Landcare Groups secured Caring for Our Country funding to start undertaking fire trials in the region.

Establishing trial sites

The group selected three trial sites, two in Talgarno and one in Baranduda, and a project ecologist was appointed to set up the trial design. The aims of the trial were to measure the impact of fire on weed and exotic species, provide local guidelines on how traditional fire knowledge can



Native grass regrowth after fire compared to unburnt dry grass (at right).

fire knowledge

By Belinda Pearce

be incorporated into land management practices and provide opportunities for Indigenous people to undertake cultural practices on country.

Two of the trial sites are located on grazing properties (beef and sheep), so a graze/no graze component was included at these sites. Overall, the four treatments were burn/no burn and grazed/ungrazed. The ungrazed plots were fenced out to prevent grazing.

Each treatment plot was 10 metres by 10 metres in size and treatments were replicated three times to add some robustness to our results. This meant a total of 30 plots were assessed in January 2014 for species diversity and abundance. There were 81 plant species across the sites – 40 native and 41 exotic species. The most common native species were weeping grass and slender wallaby grass and the most common exotic species were flat weed, sheep sorrel and soft brome.

The plan was to undertake burns once the autumn break had arrived. The break came very early in 2014, resulting in considerable soil moisture, damp litter and greening of vegetation.

Early break produces cool burn

In May 2014 the group attempted to burn but found that the conditions were too moist. Only one of the trial sites had enough dry matter for the burn to take hold.

Vegetation assessments undertaken in November 2014 showed that the burn plots had an increased number of native grass species and a reduction in the abundance of exotic cover compared to the no burn plots. It was felt that a more marked response could be obtained had the fire been hotter.

The Landcare groups are aiming to learn from the experience and are looking forward to undertaking burns at the three sites this autumn.

One of the real highlights has been the partnership between landholders, Landcare groups, Traditional Owners, CFA volunteers and the North East CMA. Each component partner has been vital to the success of the project.

To view a short film about native grasses and the fire trials go to

www.youtube.com/northeastcma or visit www.burraja.com/films/ to view a film on traditional burning knowledge.

Belinda Pearce is the Landcare Facilitator with the Kiewa Catchment and Upper Ovens Valley Landcare Groups. For further information email Belinda Pearce at belinda.pearce@landcarevic.net.au



A trial fire plot being burnt in May 2014.

Reconnecting the song lines of Nillumbik

By Brad Tadday

Nillumbik Shire's Pantom Hill Bushland Reserves are part of the living landscape of the Wurundjeri people. The reserves provide an opportunity for people to learn from a culture that lived in harmony with nature for tens of thousands of years.

To acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land the Pantom Hill Bushland Reserves have been given Woi Wurrung names. Woi Wurrung is the language of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. Bunjil is the Wedge-tailed Eagle, a threatened species that lives in the area and is the creator spirit of the people of the Kulin Nation. Other names include Bulwidj (Yellow Box), Yanggai (Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo), Wimbi (Swamp Wallaby), Yirrip (Ironbark), Wurran (Sugar Glider), and Gawa (Echidna).

During the past two years Nillumbik Council has been working on a joint project to rejuvenate the Aboriginal cultural landscape of Nillumbik. Stakeholders have included the Wurundjeri Council, Wandoon Estate (Coranderrk), Nillumbik Reconciliation Group, Friends of Pantom Hill Bushland Reserves, Bend of Islands Community Association, Nillumbik Council's Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Group, St Andrews Market Committee and St Andrews Primary School.

The project's objective is to deepen the recognition and understanding of the rich and diverse local Aboriginal culture and connections to the land through developing and strengthening collaborative



Artwork for Bunjil Reserve signage by Judy Nicholson.

partnerships with the Indigenous community. The partnerships offer mutual benefits through cultural exchange, understanding and reviving Indigenous ecological knowledge for conservation outcomes, developing employment opportunities and supporting Indigenous small businesses.

Cultural events in the reserves have included traditional welcome ceremonies, dancing and crafts such as bark shelter building, weaving and string making. A reconciliation event in Yanggai Reserve in September 2013 saw the planting of Murnong (Yam) Daisy, a traditional staple



Uncle Rod Briggs building a traditional bark shelter at Bunjil Reserve in 2013.

food, with the Wurundjeri Narrap (Land Management) Team. A Spirit of Place Indigenous Festival at St Andrews Market was organised by the market committee. The Bend of Islands has established a partnership with the Wurundjeri Tribe and St Andrews Primary School helped to build a bark shelter at St Andrews Market.

At the core of the project is the development of an Indigenous cultural education trail through the Pantom Hill Bushland Reserve System. The trail is being integrated with other Indigenous cultural programs and sites across the Shire to form a comprehensive Indigenous cultural education tool.

Signage on the trails has been renewed using Indigenous artwork. It is hoped the trails and the special sites being developed throughout the reserves will be a place of ongoing creative exchange between artists, ecologists and the local Indigenous and non-Indigenous community.

Brad Tadday is a Senior Environmental Works Officer with Nillumbik Shire Council. For further information contact Brad Tadday by email at Brad.Tadday@nillumbik.vic.gov.au



Uncle Bill Nicholson, Mandy Nicholson and the Djirri Djirri (Willy Wagtail) Dance Troupe at the St Andrews Market 2014 Spirit of Place Indigenous Festival.



Uncle Bryon Powell from Wadawurrung Registered Aboriginal Party talking to cultural heritage forum participants at Winter Swamp, Ballarat.

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The forums provided participants with a better understanding and working knowledge of cultural heritage site identification and protection, and the legislative requirements for cultural heritage management.

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Traditional Owners share heritage knowledge with landholders

By Jane Walker

Over the past twelve months the Glenelg Hopkins CMA has supported Traditional Owners and the Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (OAAV) to deliver two cultural heritage information forums to Landcare members, landholders and other NRM managers in the region.

The forums provided participants with a better understanding and working knowledge of cultural heritage site identification and protection, and the legislative requirements for cultural heritage management. The workshops were specifically designed for Landcare members, as groups had approached the CMA requesting more information on the legal requirements of cultural heritage place protection when undertaking on-ground works.

The first workshop, held in Lake Bolac, was delivered by Tya Lovett from OAAV and Tim Chatfield from Martang Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP). The workshop was presented in two sessions and concluded with a visit to a prominent cultural site, the stone circle arrangement at Lake Bolac. Twenty-seven people attended the day, including farmers, members from

Beyond Bolac Catchment Action Group and Upper Hopkins Land Management Group, teachers, Framlingham works crew members and staff from Glenelg Hopkins and Wimmera CMAs.

After the workshop Una Allender from the Upper Hopkins Land Management Group said the workshop was a positive experience.

“It was great getting the views of Traditional Owners and having access to good information about cultural heritage. I would like to hear more about the culture of the people from this area,” Una said.

The second forum was delivered in Ballarat by Uncle Bryon Powell from Wadawurrung RAP, Suzie Coates from DELWP and Tya Lovett. Forty-five people attended and participated in sessions on the national and state policy context for cultural heritage protection, cultural place identification and a visit to Winter Swamp, a prominent cultural place for Wadawurrung people.

Landcare members, landholders, staff from DELWP, Parks Victoria and Glenelg Hopkins and Corangamite CMAs attended the Ballarat forum. Some of the Landcare

and other groups represented on the day included Upper Mt Emu Creek Landcare, Ballarat Environment Network, Maude and District Landcare Group and Leigh Catchment Group.

Feedback from participants has shown the value and need for more opportunities for cross-cultural knowledge sharing around cultural heritage management. The forums have also been important for building relationships between the community, Aboriginal groups and government agencies.

Funding and support for the delivery of these forums was possible through collaboration between the Glenelg Hopkins CMA's Indigenous Partnerships Program, Glenelg Hopkins CMA's Regional Landcare Coordinator (funded by the Victorian Government) and Regional Landcare Facilitator (funded by the Australian Government), DELWP, Corangamite CMA and the Victorian Aboriginal Landcare Facilitator (funded by the Victorian Government).

Jane Walker is the Partnerships Projects Coordinator with the Glenelg Hopkins CMA. For further information contact Jane by email at j.walker@ghcma.vic.gov.au

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Walks have traversed most of the Hopkins River, Fiery Creek, Salt Creek, Mt Emu Creek and Bushy Creek and the upper reaches of the Wannon River. Indigenous walkers have added a unique perspective to these treks.

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Elder Ted Lovett at a smoking ceremony to see walkers off from Richards Camp, Mt Cole, at the start of the 2013 walk along Fiery Creek to Lake Bolac.

Healing walk promotes reconciliation

By Una Allender

The first Lake Bolac Eel Festival was held in 2005 and the first event of the festival was a healing walk. The 2005 walk followed the Hopkins River and Salt Creek from Warrnambool to Lake Bolac, a route traditionally used as a highway by Indigenous people. The route also follows the migratory path of the Short-finned Eel or Kuyang.

Healing walks have been held every year since with a small group of walkers following the region's waterways or travelling cross-country. Walks have traversed most of the Hopkins River, Fiery Creek, Salt Creek, Mt Emu Creek and Bushy Creek and the upper reaches of the Wannon River. Indigenous walkers have added a unique perspective to these treks. It has given them an opportunity to return to country, which is now mostly farmland, and to meet with the current landholders to share stories and experiences.

In his address to the Eel Festival Forum in 2014, Lake Bolac singer-songwriter Neil Murray said the annual healing walks have been driven by a yearning to be part of country.

"A yearning to return to country, to read it, to listen to it, to know it, to be part of it. We have found that by walking and being in country with an attitude of deep love and respect we have learnt to see and listen. We have entered places seldom visited and have asked the question. What happened here? What can we learn? What can we do? That is the way the land will teach you," Neil said.

The healing walk contributes to the aims of the Eel Festival which are to be a gathering place for people who care for



Walkers assembled at Lake Bolac at the start of the 2014 Healing Walk.



An eel trap woven from hay baling twine by Koori artist Sandra Aitken. The trap was part of the Kuyang exhibition at Warrnambool Gallery held after the 2012 healing walk.

and respect

the environment and respect Aboriginal cultural heritage. The festival is a forum for fostering reconciliation, mutual respect and understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

Walk inspires artists

In 2012 six regional artists joined the healing walk and went on to hold an exhibition at Warrnambool Art Gallery in early 2013. Kuyang was a blend of video and sound, weaving, sculpture, digital imagery, installations, sketches and painting. The exhibition explored aspects of Indigenous culture, European settlement and the Short-finned Eel, all inspired by the country encountered on the walk.

Another feature of the Eel Festival is the twilight celebration. This is an opportunity for Indigenous music and dance combined with community theatre and puppetry. The music, dances and stories are used to tell stories of country. Stories have focused on the migration of eels, birds, animals, plants and people, volcanos, water, the rainbow serpent, brolgas and the native grasslands of the Victorian Volcanic Plain.

In 2014, in keeping with the festival theme of return to country the twilight celebration examined the war service of Indigenous servicemen and women.



Walkers at Chinamans Swamp, a wetland near Westmere, on the 2014 walk.

"It may take a few days for the veneer of urban, motorised existence to subside from our systems but eventually, through the simple act of using one's legs to traverse the ground and the cumulative effect of sleeping outdoors, everyone connects back to the earth in a fundamental way. Participants report a feeling of well being, restorative to mind and body. Each healing walk affirms that just as wildlife needs corridors to roam, so do people. People need to walk in landscape that is meaningful to them. One of the aims of the Healing Walk is to promote overland walking in empathy with traditional Indigenous pathways."

Neil Murray – singer-songwriter and walker

"Grand old River Red Gums housed the artwork of Wedge-tailed Eagles nests above, and revealed scars on the trunks below, where the Indigenous communities had once carved the bark for tools. The warm welcome from landholders and the stories shared were an invaluable record of historic events and of recent projects."

Kate Scanlan – 2012 walker

Una Allender is Facilitator of the Upper Hopkins Land Management Group and Secretary of the Lake Bolac Eel Festival. The next festival will be held from 8-10 April 2016. For more information go to www.eelfestival.org.au or email Una Allender at uallender@bigpond.com

Culture is flowing in the Gunbower Forest

By Robin McKay

The North Central CMA is working with the Barapa Barapa people, the traditional owners of the lower Gunbower Forest, to understand the cultural values of the area to improve water planning and achieve shared benefits from environmental water delivery.

European occupation and regulation of rivers has changed the landscape and impacted on Aboriginal peoples' ability to continue cultural practices. Tribal boundaries, ceremonial sites, culturally important plants and totemic species are all examples of cultural items and values that may rely on a healthy wetland environment, yet there have been limited opportunities for Aboriginal people to be involved in wetland management and planning.

Last year the Barapa Culture team, supported by the CMA, an archaeologist and ecologists, undertook surveys of the forest to identify and map cultural heritage sites such as scar trees, earth mounds, shell middens and the food, fibre and medicine plants used by their ancestors. The team walked different habitats – lagoon edges, sand hills, creeklines and swamps – learning about the plants that grow in these areas and would have been eaten or collected at different times of the year.

Team members developed skills in identifying cultural heritage, such as learning to distinguish between a natural-earth mound and one created from generations of occupancy by Barapa Barapa family groups.

The field work was a positive experience for everyone involved with sharing of knowledge on country between the younger members of the team, Elders and CMA staff building mutual respect and understanding.



Rick Iasello from the Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria and Barapa Culture team members Sharnie Hamilton and Glen Galway record an earth mound.

Uncle Neville Whyman explained the significance of being out on country for handing down knowledge.

"Every animal tells you something different – like the sound a bird makes when a goanna is near its nest – you've got to be watching what's going on in the bush, you have to be out to learn it," Uncle Neville said.

This year, the project is looking at the next phase: writing a framework to guide the development of cultural objectives for water delivery in Gunbower Forest.

The Barapa Cultural Flows project is funded by the Rural Water Program and the Catchments team from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning with support from the Living Murray Program's Indigenous Partnership program, co-ordinated by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority.

To view a film showcasing the mapping work, search for Barapa Barapa Cultural Heritage on YouTube.

For further information contact Robin McKay by email at Robin.McKay@nccma.vic.gov.au

Yarns on Farms

Since early 2013, the Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, Glenelg Hopkins CMA and other partners have been running an extension program called Yarns on Farms across Gunditjmara country in south west Victoria.

Yarns on Farms focuses on farm visits where the project team and farmers undertake farm walks, discuss the landscape, share information on conservation and production activities and talk about history and the future. The program enables the project team and participating farmers to either develop a new relationship or strengthen an existing relationship through having a yarn.

The project team has visited 29 farmers and land management groups across Gunditjmara country, including properties along the Glenelg River and around Lake Condah and Mt Eccles National Park.

Wimmera babies

Celebrating the birth of a new baby is a joyful occasion common across all cultures, races and religions.

Welcome Baby to Country is an event celebrating the birth of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island children born in the Wimmera, along with children of Traditional Owners born off country. The youngsters are welcomed to the country bounded within the Wimmera by members of the Aboriginal community and local Elders.

Welcome Baby to Country was started in 2007 by Nola Illin, the facilitator of the Delkaia Aboriginal Best Start Program, which is funded by the Victorian Department of Education and Training. Delkaia means to be healthy in the local Wergaia language. Nola saw the event as an opportunity to bring families and the community together.

The 2014 Welcome Baby to Country event involved many organisations from across the Wimmera coming together to support the current Delkaia Aboriginal Best Start Program Facilitator, Tracey Rigney, in organising the day.

builds relationships in the south west

By Denis Rose
and Jane Walker

Discussions have explored local settler and family histories, agricultural production and land management concerns. Cultural heritage management and Gunditjmara land management interests and practices are also prominent topics for discussion. Each visit has been a positive experience for both the land manager and project team.

Farmers and landholders who participate in the program are identified through existing regional networks including producer groups, Landcare and field naturalist groups, and through word of mouth and personal contact. This method is deliberate to ensure that those visited are interested in the program and that respect and trust will be present.

A reciprocal visit by farmers and landholders to properties owned and managed by Gunditjmara is part of the program. This visit includes demonstrations and further knowledge

sharing about some of the traditional Gunditjmara practices discussed during farm visits. The visit also includes a tour of significant cultural heritage sites such as the Lake Condah Mission, the traditional fish trap aquaculture systems at Lake Condah and stone houses at Kurtonitj. Feedback from participants after the reciprocal visit has highlighted the benefits of such an activity in sharing knowledge and building understanding.

Yarns on Farms is funded through the Federal Government National Landcare Programme.

Denis Rose is the Knowledge and Learning Program Manager with the Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation. Jane Walker is the Partnerships Projects Coordinator with the Glenelg Hopkins CMA. For further information contact Denis@gunditjmirring.com or j.walker@ghcma.vic.gov.au



Ben Church from Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation with Ryan Jones from Glenelg Hopkins CMA (at left) on a Yarns on Farms visit with fourth generation farmer, Rodger Dunn.

welcomed to country

By Jody Taberner

There was representation from Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Cooperative, Horsham Rural City Council, Barengi Gadjin Land Council, Wimmera CMA, Wimmera Southern Mallee Local Learning and Employment Network, and Wimmera Uniting Care, with funding from the Victorian Government.

More than 30 children were welcomed by Elder Auntie Nancy Harrison. Each child was presented with a certificate and a hand-crafted baby blanket made by a number of aunties from the community. The blankets, made out of fabric with an Indigenous design, represented the coolamon (an Aboriginal carrying vessel) that the Traditional Owners used to carry their babies in on country.

Rae Talbot from the Wimmera CMA presented the children with a local indigenous plant that had traditional uses.

"It was a moving, emotional experience seeing the next generation welcomed to the land by Auntie Nancy. This is a beautiful custom with great significance," Rae said.



Barrie Elvish and Auntie Nancy Harrison welcome Kira Benson's baby, Willow, to country.

Tracey Rigney was impressed by the support from the local Aboriginal community for the event.

"It was heart warming to see so many babies and their parents attend the ceremony. This indicates the importance of such a significant cultural event in the lives of these families.

"This couldn't have happened without all the behind the scenes workers and

services who helped us deliver this event for our community. We can't thank them enough. To sum up the ceremony, three words come to mind: culture, pride and tradition," Tracey said.

Welcome Baby to Country is supported by funding from the State Government.

For further information contact Jody Taberner on 5382 9913.



Through the lens with Sandy Scheltema

Most of Sandy Scheltema's professional life has been spent working as a photojournalist. Her photographs have been published in *The Age*, *Sydney Morning Herald* and many other newspapers across the globe. Sandy was one of the first Australian press photographers to document the genocide in Rwanda. She has photographed child soldiers and AIDS orphans in Uganda, child labour in India, poverty in Africa, refugees on the Thai/Burmese border, illegal logging in Papua New Guinea and sight restoration operations in Vietnam, the Pacific and Africa.



Sandy's work has been widely exhibited and she has won a number of major awards. Along with her passion for photography she also has a passion for the environment, and more recently for the local community of Trentham where she lives.



Last year Sandy was appointed facilitator with the Upper Campaspe Landcare Network. Here are some of the photographs she's taken in her new role, which has brought two important parts of her life together.

Photographs – page 12

Top: Harley Dunolly-Lee, a young DjaDja Warrung man dancing at Federation Square in Melbourne.

Middle: A sticky everlasting flower in the rain.

Bottom: A young eucalyptus leaf covered in frost on a cold spring morning in the Wombat Forest.

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Top: Daryl Kellet, President of The Friends Of Black Hill, assesses the damage done by a fire that tore through the area in early January.

Middle: On an autumn day of soft rain this Golden Whistler flitted around my veranda singing the most exquisite song. He stayed for a day, then was gone. I hope he returns next year.

Bottom: The Thursday Crew, part of the Woodend Landcare Group, look out over Lake Earnshaw near Woodend, which they have painstakingly reclaimed from weeds. Lake Earnshaw was a swimming pool built in 1934 that had become overgrown. Thursday crew coordinator Stewart Olney said "We saw an incredible mass of weeds and didn't think we could get through – we're too old. Then we thought if we could get some money we can get equipment and we can clear it. We're really chuffed about it. It's done so much good for the group and the community."



Robinvale Indigenous Landcare Group shares knowledge and culture

By Corey Badenoch

Sharing and understanding was the focus of a cultural competency workshop hosted by the newly formed Robinvale Indigenous Landcare Group (RILG). The group formed in mid-2014 and is the second Indigenous Landcare group in Victoria.

"This was one of the first events we were involved in and we talked about our culture and how Landcare can be part of the way we care for our country," RILG member Aunty Rose Kirby said.

The cultural competency workshop was held in August 2014. The day was attended by RILG members and Landcare facilitators working in the Mallee region. Funding was provided through the Victorian Landcare Program with support from the Mallee CMA.

The day opened with a Welcome to Country by Uncle Kevin Pearce, followed by an introduction to the Robinvale Indigenous Landcare Group by Karen Kirby. Karen outlined the objectives of the group which include focusing on caring for the local area with an emphasis on culture and family.

The Australian Government funded Indigenous Facilitators from the Mallee CMA, Ken and Alex Stewart, delivered presentations on cultural awareness,



Brendon Kennedy demonstrates traditional Aboriginal stone knapping techniques at a cultural competency workshop organised for Landcare facilitators in the Mallee.

site identification and the way cultural heritage is considered in local Landcare projects.

Brendon Kennedy spoke about his role as the Victorian Aboriginal Landcare Facilitator and also presented a session explaining and demonstrating the traditional technique of stone knapping – the shaping of stones to make tools. All of the attendees had a chance to try stone knapping.

In the afternoon, Uncle Kevin Pearce showed the group his extensive boomerang collection and the tools he uses to make them. Aunty Rose Kirby presented her flowers made from bird feathers and also shared some of her vast knowledge of bush medicine. Aunty Rose credits her mother with everything she has learnt.

The day was rounded out with a barbecue lunch and lots of useful discussion.

According to Aunty Rose, RILG members left feeling motivated, energised and keen to focus on what the group can do in the future.

Planting a community garden

RILG members recently took part in the planting of a community garden at Robinvale P-12 College. The group organised 200 tube stock of indigenous species to be planted in the community garden. The trees were donated by Swan

Hill Rural City Council and sourced from the Mildura Native Nursery.

RILG members demonstrated how to remove the plants from their tubes and how to plant them. Students, teachers and community members assisted by digging holes, planting the trees and making up tree guards.

It was an opportunity for RILG members to introduce themselves to the community and for the students to learn teamwork and to gain some knowledge of revegetation techniques.

According to Tina De Groot, who works with the Mallee CMA to support RILG, the community garden event was an ideal way of promoting the group.

"It was encouraging to see the support given by the community and school on the day. It is anticipated that strong friendships and partnerships will be built within this environment as the local Aboriginal community place a high importance on connecting children to their country. The day even resulted in a new member for the Landcare group, bringing the total to 14," Tina said.

**For further information contact
Ken Stewart by email at
ken.stewart@delwp.vic.gov.au**

“

The group formed in mid-2014 and is the second Indigenous Landcare group in Victoria.

”



David Johnston and Auntie Carolyn Briggs from the Boon Wurrung Foundation with staff from Bass Coast Shire, Bass Coast Landcare Network, Phillip Island Nature Parks, and Port Phillip and Westernport CMA during a cultural induction site visit at Phillip Island.

Indigenous environment grants promote partnerships

By Sarah Darville

In 2014-15 the Port Phillip and Westernport CMA provided National Landcare Programme grants to Indigenous organisations within the region for environmental projects.

Eligible organisations were able to apply to the CMA's main competitive grant pool, with funding of up to \$30,000 available, or to the Indigenous environment grants with funding up to \$5000 open to Indigenous incorporated bodies.

The Indigenous environment grants were offered within three categories: education and training, country visits and on ground works. Eligible projects had to demonstrate how the activities within the projects would engage Indigenous people in environmental activities as well as provide employment and training opportunities across the region.

The grants proved to be popular and funds were fully allocated. Twelve Indigenous environment grants were approved to six organisations totalling \$45,950.

One of the projects involved the Boon Wurrung Foundation planning and delivering a cultural induction program, providing insight into local Aboriginal culture and current practices. The program

was delivered to the CMA, Bass Coast Landcare, Phillip Island Nature Parks, and Bass Coast Shire staff in November 2014.

A highlight of the program was a visit to an ancient shell midden at Swan Lake, a significant cultural site for the Boon Wurrung people, and home to a large colony of Short-tailed Shearwaters and some copperhead snakes.

Participants noted that the training helped them to consider the barriers faced by Indigenous people and to consider project links and partnerships.

Other grants awarded included developing online information to promote Traditional Owners working on country, short films explaining cultural connections, developing and printing of brochures and resources to promote services, coordinating Indigenous people to visit country and knowledge sharing to learn from existing Indigenous businesses.

Outputs from these projects will be collated and relayed to the Australian Government as part of the Regional Indigenous Facilitator role. Similar grants are likely to be offered in September 2015 along with training and support to complete the application requirements.

For more information contact the Port Phillip and Westernport CMA's Regional Indigenous Facilitator Rhys Collins by email at rhys.collins@ppwcma.vic.gov.au

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A highlight of the program was a visit to an ancient shell midden at Swan Lake, a significant cultural site for the Boon Wurrung people, and home to a large colony of Short-tailed Shearwaters and some copperhead snakes.

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The river, known to the Gunaikurnai people as Doodeyang, was a traditional travelling route and is home to many significant sites.

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Grattan Mullet of Gunaikurnai Land and River Corporation explains the cultural and historical significance of the Knob Reserve.



Kyan Ropati takes part in the boomerang throw during NAIDOC week activities at Knob Reserve.

Sharing stories of the

The Avon River in West Gippsland is a special waterway for the Gunaikurnai people and for local Landcarers from the Maffra and District Landcare Network. Rising on the slopes of Mount Wellington, the river meanders through a valley next to the MacAlister irrigation district, where it flows into Lake Wellington.

The river, known to the Gunaikurnai people as Doodeyang, was a traditional travelling route and is home to many significant sites. Scar trees show where bark canoes were cut with stone axes. Although degraded in recent times, the health of the river is slowly improving due to many Landcare plantings along its banks.

The Avon River has been a focus for recent celebrations by the Landcare community and the Gunaikurnai people.

During NAIDOC week the Maffra and District Landcare Network hosted a celebration at the Knob Reserve, west of Stratford. Cultural Rangers from the

Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) led 50 Landcarers, children and international visitors on a walk and talk through the reserve, revealing important sites such as scar trees and grinding stones, and their associated stories. Following the walk participants threw boomerangs and played a kangaroo hunting game using a tennis ball in stockings to hit a cardboard cut out.

GLaWAC Joint Management Coordinator Grattan Mullet spoke to participants about the significance of the area and explained that it was a traditional travelling route for the Gunaikurnai people.



Children learn how to make echidnas as part of summer holiday activities along the Avon River at Stratford.

“

It is great to know that as well as protecting the river, Landcare is also helping to preserve cultural heritage.

”

Avon

By Kathleen Bartlett

“Knob Reserve was an important meeting place for people to camp and enjoy the safety of the high vantage point, as intruders could easily be spotted from a great distance. Red gums dominated the landscape and bush tucker is abundant in and around them,” Grattan said.

In 2014 the GLaWAC under their Native Title obligations gained joint management of Knob Reserve.

Grattan Mullet said the reserve was important for several reasons.

“The reserve was chosen as the location of the landmark signing of the Gunaikurnai Native Title agreement in 2010, hosts the passing of Gunaikurnai Elders, and in 2013 was the location of a celebration of a memorandum of understanding between GLaWAC and the West Gippsland CMA,” Grattan said.

Training with Cultural Rangers

Following the NAIDOC week event, more than 40 staff from Landcare networks across West Gippsland and the West Gippsland CMA participated in training with Grattan Mullet and other

Gunakurnai Cultural Rangers at the Knob Reserve.

According to Maffra and Districts Landcare Network Project Officer Carmen Lee the training was a great opportunity to learn about the cultural significance and history of the river.

“It is great to know that as well as protecting the river, Landcare is also helping to preserve cultural heritage. Not only are we protecting and restoring the river for future generations, but also respecting past generations. During the training we shared stories and hopes for the river into the future, strengthening our working relationship,” Carmen said.

The Avon was also the focus for a recent summer holiday activity hosted by the Maffra and District Landcare Network and Avon Landcare Group. Holiday dreaming down by the Avon was held at Stratford and involved a workshop by local Aboriginal artist and bush tucker facilitator Cassie Harrap, as well as Waterwatch activities.

Cassie Harrap demonstrated how Indigenous people were able to find a use for everything in their local environment. Workshop participants touched, tasted and smelt different artefacts ranging from bush foods to boomerangs, animal skins and skeletons. This was followed by rope making, paint making, face painting and arts and crafts activities, all using natural materials.

Erin Nowak from BugBlitz helped more than 30 children, along with their parents, and carers take macro invertebrates from the river and use a microscope to identify them. A diversity of water creatures was found suggesting that even close to town the water quality was good.

More events are planned along the river during 2015.

Kathleen Bartlett is the Regional Landcare Program Officer for the West Gippsland CMA. For further information please contact Darren Williams on 0457 786 582.

Photographs provided courtesy of the Gippsland Times.

Bangerang Aboriginal community and the Warby Range Landcare Group – partners for 20 years

By Pat Larkin

A two-decade long relationship in north east Victoria between the Bangerang Aboriginal community – traditional custodians of the catchments of the Mid and Lower Ovens and Broken Rivers – and the Warby Range Landcare Group (WRLCG) is one of Australian Landcare's most durable and successful Indigenous partnerships.

The Warby Range Landcare Group area is situated in the catchments of the Mid and Lower Ovens and Broken and the Upper Boosey Creek, embracing both the North East and Goulburn Broken CMAs. All this area falls within the traditional lands of the Bangerang people.

The relationship began in 1995 when Glenrowan resident and Bangerang community Elder Uncle Wally Cooper was invited to a WRLCG committee meeting. Uncle Wally detailed the significance of contemporary cultural activities, and how they should be linked to natural resource protection across the broader landscape, stating that farming activities and traditional philosophies could be successfully integrated. Uncle Wally was invited to join the group and he has been a member ever since. Other Bangerang people have also joined the group and the Bangerang Aboriginal Corporation (BAC) has become a robust project partner.

The Bangerang community has worked on site assessments for most Warby Range Landcare programs, with cultural officers from the Bangerang Cultural Centre conducting pre-application inspections and tendering relevant cultural advice. Bangerang people have run cultural education programs in regional schools and with adult Landcare group members.

Bangerang people have also worked on practical Landcare projects, including revegetation. They have provided labour along with dancing, music, guided walks and catering. Uncle Wally prepares bush tucker on the back of his ute, cooking it on a tiny self-designed barbecue.

The Landcare group has helped the Bangerang community liaise with government agencies, non-government organisations, local parliamentarians and election candidates, together with organisations focused on primary industries and natural resource management.



Bangerang brothers Kevin and Jesse Cooper perform a traditional dance after a Warby Range Landcare Group tree planting day at Winton.

The partnership was formally recognised in 2005 with a Right People For Traditional Country agreement between the North East District Council of the VFF and Bangerang Elders. Ratifying this relationship brought mutual respect between local primary producers and the Bangerang community and enhanced cultural awareness within the farming sector.

The Bangerang community won the inaugural Landcare Indigenous Community Award at the 2005 Victorian Landcare Awards for its enormous contribution to the WRLCG in cultural awareness and project planning and energetic participation in field days and working bees.

The successful liaison has now extended to the Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative, of which the BAC is a member. Rumbalara approached the group in 2007 to work in

partnership on a project to restore healthy ecosystems through streamside revegetation and eradicating exotic species on an area of freehold land. WRLCG worked with Rumbalara to help design the project in consultation with local Indigenous and farming communities. Most of the labour was provided by Bangerang youth.

This long and productive association shows what can be achieved when committed groups work together for mutual benefit. Deep ties have formed between both groups, all of them stemming from the desire of community members to work together and learn from each other.

Pat Larkin is a life member of the Warby Range Landcare Group. For further information contact Pat by email at mugsville@westnet.com.au

Illustrated plants bring Landcare and the arts community together

By Sally-Ann Henderson,
Bronwyn Johnson and Jenny Davies

A chance conversation between the Yarram Yarram Landcare Network's Seedbank Officer and the president of the Yarram Courthouse Gallery revealed a shared desire to bring botanical illustration to Gippsland.

The Landcare and arts communities collaborated on the 2014 exhibition and competition titled, *Our Native Plants – Illustrated*.

The objectives of the exhibition were to increase local awareness of indigenous plants and the desire to plant them, to bring the beauty and skill of botanical art to the community, and to provide illustrations for an online revegetation guide being prepared by the Yarram Yarram Landcare Network (YYLN).

The network approached the gallery's volunteer committee and the group was soon enthusiastically engaged. YYLN was able to get a small grant from the local council to fund the revegetation guide and exhibition costs and a local revegetation company provided \$1000 in prize money.

We were fortunate to have world-renowned botanical artist Celia Rosser OAM as a judge and guest speaker for the opening night of the exhibition. Celia's involvement was a significant drawcard for entries to the competition and attendance. Our other judges, artist Andrea McCallum and field naturalist Kaye Proudley, also made great contributions.

The gallery recruited artists and organised the exhibition. The seedbank provided lists of eligible plants and responded to botanical questions from artists. Organising the judges and promotion of the event was a joint effort and brought a much wider audience than either group could have achieved on their own.

Both groups picked up new members because of the collaboration.



Mountain Grey Gum by artist Laurie Andrews.

Some Landcarers and artists decided to give botanical illustration a try, other Landcarers ventured into the gallery for the first time, observing their local flora in beautiful detail. The gallery reported that the opening event was its highest ever attendance.

According to artist Laurie Andrews observing, drawing and painting native plants reinforces her sense of wonder about the environment.

"The beauty and symmetry of nature gives me great pleasure and I try to convey this in my artwork.

"I'm particularly interested in the diversity and richness of the plants to be found in the Strzelecki Ranges, from the majestic mountain ash to the tiny filmy ferns," Laurie said.

The art and Landcare collaboration is continuing with a new exhibition planned for 2015 called *Washed Up*. Landcare, Coastcare and the Courthouse Gallery will work together to highlight pollution of our beaches and oceans.

**The artwork and the revegetation guide can be viewed at www.yylnreveg.org
For further information contact Sally-Ann Henderson by email at sally-annh@wgcm.vic.gov.au**



Bronwyn Johnson (left) and Jenny Davies outside the Courthouse Gallery with one of the entries in the botanical illustration competition and exhibition.

2015 VICTORIAN LANDCARE AWARDS

These awards are supported by Landcare Australia through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme.

The 2015 Victorian Landcare Awards are now open for nominations. It's time to celebrate the work of people in our community who make a positive difference to the local environment.

If you are involved in protecting or improving your local environment, farm, coastline, bushland, wetland, waterway, school, region or catchment, there is a category in this year's awards to suit you.

The nine national award categories are:

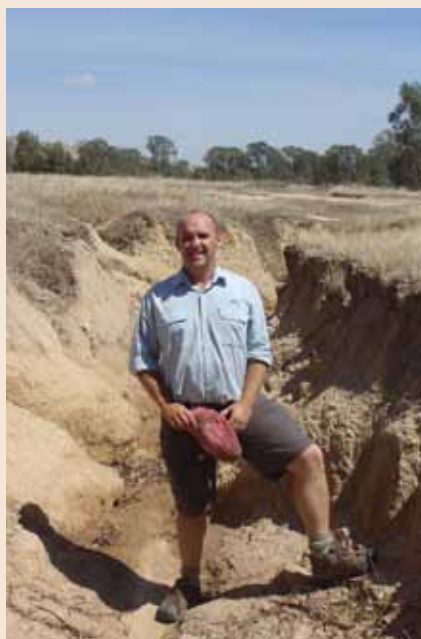
- Australian Government Individual Landcarer Award
- Australian Government Partnerships with Landcare Award
- Australian Government Landcare Facilitator or Coordinator Award
- Australian Government Innovation in Sustainable Farm Practices Award
- Coastcare Award
- Landcare Community Group Award
- Junior Landcare Team Award
- Indigenous Land Management Award
- Young Landcare Leader Award.

The four Victorian only categories are:

- Landcare Network Award
- Regional Innovation in Sustainable Farm Practices Awards. One winner for each of the 10 CMA regions.
- Dr Sidney Plowman Travel and Study Award
- Heather Mitchell Memorial Fellowship.

Entries for the Victorian Landcare Awards close on **21 June 2015**. For selection criteria, entry guidelines, terms and conditions go to www.landcareonline.com.au/landcareawards

Winners of the nine national award categories will be entered in the 2016 National Landcare Awards.



Brad Costin investigates severe erosion at Violet Town.

Retaining soil conservation

When I received the Dr Sidney Plowman Travel and Study Award at the 2013 Victorian Landcare Awards it was a highlight of my career.

My study tour focused on soil conservation practices and erosion management on the Darling Downs and in the Bundaberg region of Queensland. I was interested in looking at agronomic, catchment and engineering approaches to managing erosion. This knowledge has high value to the farming community, yet there is only a small base of government staff with skills in the area so there are limited opportunities to learn from experienced practitioners locally.

I spent three weeks in Queensland speaking with retired and practising farmers, researchers and soil conservation officers. All of them generously offered

VFF/FTLA Heather Mitchell Memorial Fellowship

At the Victorian Landcare Awards in August 2013 I was awarded the VFF/FTLA Heather Mitchell Memorial Fellowship. The Fellowship provides funds for travel, study or some other form of professional development to community members and Landcare support staff.

With my farming background and work with Landcare I wanted to evaluate analog forestry and see if the technique could be applied to agriculture in south eastern Australia to create more resilient agricultural ecosystems. By mid-November 2013 I was flying to Costa Rica to investigate a joint-project with the Analog Forestry Secretariat.

Analog forestry uses the blueprint or architecture of a mature forest to maximise ecosystem services in agricultural ecosystems and produce commercially viable crops. An analog forest may comprise

natural and exotic species, but will mimic the appearance of the natural forest through layers and complexity. How a particular species contributes to the structure and function of the forest is the key factor in determining its use. Biodiversity above and below the ground is maximised through a focus on structure and function. Although largely unknown in Australia, analog forestry is practised in many continents including America, Africa and Asia.

The fellowship allowed me to immerse myself in analog forestry for over a week, going into the jungle with a farmer with a machete in hand each morning and then learning the theory in the afternoons. His 94-hectare farm was developed on a disturbed grazing ecosystem and converted to forestry 40 years ago. It now produces cut flowers, herbs, spices, essential oils and timber as well as ecosystem services

NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN

WWW.LANDCAREONLINE.COM.AU/LANDCAREAWARDS
NOMINATIONS CLOSE ON 21 JUNE 2015



Landcare
Australia



Australian Government

National
Landcare
Programme



knowledge a focus for Dr Sidney Plowman Award winner

By Brad Costin

me their time to show me local farming issues and different approaches to soil conservation.

Soil erosion caused by early cropping practices has been a significant driver of the pioneering soil research and soil conservation programs on the Darling Downs. The region experiences intense summer rainfall that can cause damaging runoff over exposed soils. The response has focused on constructing contour banks and grassed waterways to reduce run off. Changes to cropping regimes including minimum tillage and controlled traffic farming have further assisted in reducing soil exposure and excessive runoff.

A key learning from this region is that approaches to soil conservation need to be integrated. We need to look at the threats in preserving our soil asset

at multiple points of the farming system, not just at one point. Compatibility of soil conservation measures to farming systems also need to be carefully considered. The contour banks used in Toowoomba were difficult for early farm machinery to traverse. These problems have now been resolved by changes in the design of the banks and machinery improvements.

There was also much to learn from the response of the Burnett Mary Regional Group to the 2013 floods. Floodwaters and riverbank instability damaged farms in the region. The recovery program was guided by geomorphic advice and used a combination of engineering and revegetation approaches to rehabilitate affected farms.

It was sobering to discover that much of Queensland's great local soil conservation

knowledge is being lost to the community. The study tour was an important opportunity for me to meet with many retired soil conservationists and pick their brains about what worked and what didn't work from their experiences.

My Australian soil conservation knowledge has increased dramatically as a result of the award. I would like to thank retired soil conservation officer Bruce Carey for his assistance in the study tour.

In 2015 this Award will be open to an employee of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning; the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, or a Victorian CMA.

For further information contact Brad Costin by email at brad.costin@ecodev.vic.gov.au

supports forestry study tour to Costa Rica

By Anthony Dufty

including clean water, climate amelioration and soil fertility. The farmer has practised analog forestry for 25 years.

Gaining a complete understanding of analog forestry required me to compare and contrast the technique with similar systems. My fellowship trip then took me to Indonesia where I compared the design parameters of tropical permaculture with what I learnt from Costa Rica. The two systems are close cousins, but permaculture incorporates cultural elements, working from the house and garden outwards while analog forestry works from the natural biodiversity back to the cultural elements.

The fellowship was a rich opportunity for professional development. It expanded my network of natural resource management colleagues and the personal contacts I made will provide greater knowledge and

information into the future. I have agreed to co-author a paper on analog forestry with Costa Rican Milo Faries and I have been accepted for a doctorate with the University of Melbourne investigating the application of the technique to south eastern Australia.

Sharing the information I gained on the Fellowship is ongoing and has also been a positive experience. I have organised a workshop with farmers on analog forestry and have presented to the FTLA and staff of the Port Phillip and Westernport CMA.

In 2015 the Fellowship is open to community members and Landcare support staff. It is not open to State Government employees.

For further information contact Anthony Dufty by email at anthonydufty49@gmail.com



Anthony Dufty in the Landcare marquee at the 2013 Sustainable Living Festival.

Around the State – News from the

Mallee

Mallee Landcare groups have been very active with rabbit eradication over the summer months. When the soil is at its driest ripping is most effective. Groups have also been successful in applying for funding. In the past few months 22 groups have shared just under \$630,000 for on-ground works projects.

With the release of Landcare Australia Limited's educational resource package, *Landcare Lessons for the Curriculum*, the Mallee Landcare team has engaged with our more remote schools to encourage their participation.

The team has designed a support program around enhancing and restoring natural habitats that includes expert presenters and resources. Each school identifies a local icon species to promote within their community with activities to assist with awareness and preservation.

For further information contact
Kevin Chaplin on 5051 4344.

North East

The region's 2013-2014 Landcare Report Card has been released. The report outlines the achievements of Landcare and community groups across the region.

A forum on building a local food future will be held on 1 May 2015 in Wodonga. The forum will explore issues relating to food security, food relief and sustainable production.

A second Green Army Project is underway in the Upper Kiewa. Hosted by the CMA and working with Alpine Shire, Kiewa Catchment Landcare, Parks Victoria and Falls Creek Resort, the Green Army participants are working on weed control and revegetation in public reserves and willow control in alpine bogs and wetlands near Falls Creek.

The Swamps Rivers and Ranges Project, supported by the Norman Wettenhall Foundation, recently released a blueprint which lists a range of community project ideas. Go to www.swampsriversandranges.org.

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

Wimmera

Wimmera Landcare has partnered with Volunteering Western Victoria to deliver the 2015 Wimmera Regional Landcare Awards. Wimmera winners will feed into the 2015 Victorian Landcare Awards.

A recent Wimmera Community Landcare Celebration with wildlife specialist Chris Humfrey was a great success. Chris shared inspiring stories about local threatened and endangered species, backyard habitat and biodiversity. A habitat design competition for local school students ran in conjunction with the event, with winners judged by Chris.

Partnerships between local Aboriginal community members and the Wimmera Landcare community continue to grow. Planning is underway for a cultural awareness workshop to be held in the west Wimmera in May. The event is being supported by the Victorian Aboriginal Landcare Facilitator, Wimmera CMA's Indigenous Facilitator and the Barengi Gadjin Land Council.

For further information contact
Joel Boyd on 5382 1544.

East Gippsland

Far East Victoria Landcare and the East Gippsland Landcare Network are contributing to the National Landcare Programme's TopSoils Project. This is a collaborative sustainable agriculture project involving the CMA, the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, Greening Australia, and Southern Farming Systems.

Also supported by the National Landcare Programme, the East Gippsland Regional Landcare Facilitator, Emma Orgill, is running programs on succession and financial planning, grazing management and integrated pest management. For more information or to suggest additional topics email emma.orgill@fevl.org.au

The East Gippsland Field Days will be held in Bairnsdale on 1 and 2 May and the East Gippsland Sustainable Agriculture Network Forum on 13 May.

For further information contact
Amanda Bartkowski on 5150 3581.

West Gippsland

The region's Landcare community has been busy with many activities including a popular Bees in your Bushland event held at Mossvale Park. The day explored synergies with bees, honey production and Landcare. Artists across the Yarram Yarram Landcare Network are creating artwork to submit into the Washed Up art exhibition to highlight rubbish washed up on the area's beaches.

The Latrobe Catchment Landcare Network has been working closely with a new Federation University Landcare Group that aims to inspire younger people to get involved in Landcare. Many activities have been planned over the next year.

Best practice and innovative farming have been a focus for farmers in the region. Several Shade and Shelter workshops have been well attended. The workshops looked at how to manage a property to help stock beat the heat and cold.

For further information contact
Kathleen Bartlett on 5613 5966.

North Central

The CMA had a busy start to the year. Workshops are planned for grant writing and attracting new members in May.

Regional Landcare Facilitator Ashely Rogers coordinated her third annual Future Farming Expo in partnership with Goulburn Broken CMA and Murray Landcare (NSW).



North central Landcarers enjoyed a breakfast with the birds event at Lake Murphy.

Regional Landcare Coordinators



The Corangamite Rural Women's Network met at the Warrambeen Landcare Centre in February.

Farmers, scientists and industry experts shared their research, experience and ideas on increasing farm profitability. Leading soil scientist Declan McDonald presented on regenerative farming practices that utilise greater soil depth to enhance soil health and secure long-term profitability.

World Wetlands Day was celebrated in the region with water bird watching bus tours, Hird Swamp and Tutchewop wetland walkabouts, and ecologist Matt Herring as the guest speaker at a breakfast with the birds at Lake Murphy.

A joint volunteer recognition event was held recently to celebrate the hard work of Landcare and Waterwatch volunteers within the region.

For further information contact
Amelia Morris on 5440 1807.

Glenelg Hopkins

The CMA conducted two Cultural Heritage Forums in 2014. The forums were organised in collaboration with the Victorian Aboriginal Landcare Facilitator, Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, Martang and Wathaurung Registered Aboriginal Parties, and Landcare group members.

The forums were well attended and participants were introduced to the different categories of cultural heritage objects, the community's legal obligations relating to registered site protection, and the process for identifying sites on their land. More forums are planned in 2015.

The CMA will hold the region's Environmental Achievers Awards in June. The awards are an opportunity to acknowledge the great work completed

by individuals and groups. Winners of the different categories will be submitted into the 2015 Victorian Landcare Awards.

For further information contact
Tony Lithgow on 5571 2526.

Port Phillip and Westernport

There have been high levels of interest in the Conservation Action Planning process being rolled out with targeted Landcare groups in the region. Three workshops organised by the CMA were attended by 69 people representing Landcare groups, networks, natural resource management agencies and environmental non-government organisations. Two workshops organised by the Nillumbik Landcare Network were also well attended.

The region's 2013-14 Landcare Report Card has been published and demonstrates that our Landcare community is getting stronger. The number of groups has grown from 78 in 2012-13 to 81 in 2013-14. The number of Landcare networks has also increased suggesting Landcare is becoming increasingly connected and organised.

For further information contact
Doug Evans on 8781 7920.

Corangamite

Birregurra Primary School's Landcare champions are the stars of a new YouTube clip *Securing the future – sowing the seed of Landcare*. The clip is the second in a series of Landcare stories featuring the Birregurra Primary School students working with the Upper Barwon Landcare team. Go to the CMA's YouTube channel to watch the clip.

The inaugural Corangamite Rural Women's Network convened at the Warrambeen Landcare Centre in February. More than 30 local women participated in the successful event which included discussions on rural health, farmer nutrition and farming history and a walk at the merino stud farm. The network has more events planned across the region.

Visit the Landcare Gateway for more information on Indigenous cultural awareness events being held in April.

For further information contact
Tracey McRae on 5232 9100.

Goulburn Broken

On 16 December 2014 three substantial fires burnt 17,000 hectares of our catchment. Landcare and community natural resource management groups have taken a lead role in assisting the community to recover from these events.

Special mention needs to go to the Gecko CLaN, whose facilitators Kerri Robson and Libby Skilbeck have managed this extra workload. The community generosity has been inspiring with Blazeaid, church groups, Lions and Apex clubs along with corporates such as the National Australia Bank and agri businesses all donating time, money and materials to the fire recovery cause.

For further information contact
Tony Kubeil on 5761 1619.

In brief

Landcare honours for Susan Campbell

By Susi Johnson

Long-time Farm Tree and Landcare Association (FTLA) committee member Susan Campbell was recognised for her service to conservation and the environment in this year's Australia Day Honours.

Sue's response to this honour was typically modest. She's been keen to emphasise that her work has been part of larger collective efforts and hopes that this honour will raise the profile of the organisations in which she has been involved – and there have been many.

Sue has been part of the FTLA committee for most of the past 30 years, serving as president in the mid 1990s and again in 2008-10. She has also been a member of Springhurst and Byawatha Hills Landcare Group since it was a Farm Tree Group and has served on the board of Greening Australia Victoria, Conservation Volunteers Australia, the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, and the North East Catchment and Land Protection Board.

Sue spent almost 40 years as a sheep farmer in Wangaratta where she was actively involved in numerous rabbit control boards and initiatives. Sue and her husband Sandy's efforts in sustainable farming were recognised when they won the North East HiFert Sustainable Farming Award and the Rural Press Landcare Primary

Producer Award at the 2003 Victorian Landcare Awards. Sue recently relocated to Benalla and immediately became a member of the steering committee for the Benalla Rural City Environment Strategy Plan.

In her professional capacity as a landscape architect Sue spent 15 years with the Albury-Wodonga Development Corporation where she oversaw the development of an urban forest, which now boasts two million trees.

The Susan Campbell Reserve in Wodonga recognises Sue's role in the region's beautification and as a mentor to young people. Not content with her impact on the Australian landscape, Sue's idea of a rewarding holiday is a revegetation project in Uganda or restoring panda habitat in China.

Congratulations to Sue and to the other Landcarers recognised with 2015 Australia Day Honours including Liz Barraclough, Alison Teese, Allan Thomson and Richard Weatherly.

Susi Johnson is Executive Office of the FTLA. For further information email Susi at ftla@vff.org.au

Next issue – Urban Landcare

The next issue of the magazine will feature stories about urban Landcare. We are interested in stories about Landcare projects in urban communities including cities and regional towns as well as stories about the relationships between urban and rural Landcare groups.



Sue Campbell at a primary school in the Jinja district of Uganda, where she was working with Soft Power Education, a British registered charity and Ugandan non-government organisation committed to improving quality of life through education.

Contributions to the next issue should be sent to the editor by Friday 5 June 2015.

Carrie Tiffany, editor
Victorian Landcare and Catchment Management Magazine

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Email: editorviclandcare@gmail.com

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



Mailing list enquiries and to receive your copy via email alert

Contact Farm Tree & Landcare Association
Phone: 9207 5527 Fax: 9207 5500 Email: ftla@landcarevic.net.au

Read the magazine online

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



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