

VICTORIAN

LANDCARE

Summer 2019 Issue 74

& CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT



WOMEN IN LANDCARE

Penny Roberts – a force of nature

Learning to lead by listening

Inspiring women of the Wimmera



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Victorian Landcare and Catchment Management

SUMMER 2019 ISSUE 74

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Cover photograph

Penny Roberts in an area she and others from Newham and District Landcare Group have planted as part of the Cobaw Biolink. Photograph by Sandy Scheltema.



From the Minister

Welcome to the first issue dedicated to honouring the contributions that women have made to Landcare across Victoria; in the past, present and into the future.

Landcare began in Victoria in 1986, when Joan Kirner AC, then Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands joined forces with Heather Mitchell, then president of the Victorian Farmers Federation. These two remarkable women have been positive role models for many rural women (and men) and encouraged participation in the Landcare movement.

There are thousands of women who are members of Landcare groups and networks across Victoria; many are on boards and committees and work as Landcare facilitators and on agricultural and scientific projects.

It is wonderful to be able to feature some of these women in this issue and share information on programs designed to

increase the skills and confidence of rural women. I hope that these stories will inspire more women to put themselves forward for leadership roles.

In this issue, Andrea Mitchell from Project Platypus (Upper Wimmera Landcare Network) introduces us to some inspiring women volunteers in her region.

Helen Scott from the Newham and District Landcare Group tells us about the women she has met and worked with in her post-retirement career in Landcare, with a special tribute to a dynamic local Landcarer, Penny Roberts.

Kellie Nichols, Executive Officer of Bass Coast Landcare Network explains how she leads a team of 33 staff while juggling further study and the needs of her young family.

Fern Hames from the Arthur Rylah Institute at the Department of Environment,

Land, Water and Planning has had a long career in ecology and working with the community on conservation projects. She shares her tips with us about how women can navigate this terrain through communication and building alliances.

Finally, I extend my congratulations to our 2018 National Landcare Award winners. Wandoo Estate Aboriginal Corporation won the Australian Government Partnerships for Landcare Award, and Kathleen Brack won the Austcover Young Landcare Leader Award.

Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio MP
Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Minister for Solar Homes

Environmental Volunteering Plan

Victoria has a strong history of environmental volunteering, with volunteers contributing enormously to our biodiversity, our economy, and our communities. However, environmental volunteering is changing, with increasingly busy lifestyles and changing community expectations.

Over the past year, the Victorian Government has worked with the environmental volunteering community – many of them women – to explore how to support and grow the sector. The result of this collaboration is Victorians Volunteering for Nature – Environmental Volunteering Plan. This Plan is a new

direction that seeks to sustain, expand, value and understand volunteering in Victoria.

Interested in finding out more? To read or download the recently launched Plan go to environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/victorians-volunteering-for-nature

We're keen to keep the conversation going on the future of environmental volunteering in Victoria. Share your reflections on the Environmental Volunteering Plan by emailing environmental.volunteering@delwp.vic.gov.au



Our national Landcare champions

Victoria received two National Landcare Awards (from nine National Landcare Award categories) at a gala dinner in October 2018. More than 600 Landcarers from across the country came together in Brisbane as part of the three-day biennial National Landcare Conference, where the 2018 National Landcare Award winners were announced.

Landcare Australia CEO Dr Shane Norrish commended the National Landcare Award winners on their outstanding accomplishments.

"It's an honour to be able to recognise the great work being carried out by our Landcare champions. The National Landcare Awards offers Landcarers the ideal opportunity to get together and celebrate the individual and collective achievements of the community," Shane said.

Wandoon Estate Aboriginal Corporation won the Australian Government Partnerships for Landcare Award. The Corporation represents the Wurundjeri people, the Indigenous owners of the historical property Coranderrk in the Yarra Valley.

Set up as an Aboriginal Reserve in 1863, Coranderrk closed in 1924. In the absence of a local Landcare group, the Port Phillip and Westport CMA partnered with Wandoon Estate to restore environmental health and productivity to the farm. A farm consultant is now mentoring the

Indigenous owners in farm management techniques, including productive beef cattle grazing, habitat restoration, and waterway management and protection.

Kathleen Brack won the Austcover Young Landcare Leader Award. Kathleen is the Regional Landcare Program Officer for the West Gippsland CMA. After just three years in the role Kathleen has changed the way the Landcare story is being told in the region. She has created new messages and found innovative ways of engaging with her community.

Keen to attract more young people to Landcare, Kathleen ran an Intrepid Landcare Retreat at Wilsons Promontory in May 2017 for 20 people aged 18 to 35. The participants learnt about Landcare, talked, hiked and worked with the local friends group. Graduates from the retreat have gone on to form the Gippsland Intrepid Landcare Group.

West Gippsland CMA Chief Executive Officer Martin Fuller said it was fantastic to



Austcare CEO Maria Parry (left) presents Kathleen Brack with the Austcare Young Landcare Leader Award.



Brooke Collins (left) and Jacqui Wandin accepted the Australian Government Partnerships for Landcare Award on behalf of the Wandoon Estate Aboriginal Corporation.

see Kathleen's dedication to and work within Landcare acknowledged at the national level.

"Kathleen has done a great job of supporting our five local Landcare networks as well as attracting young people to the Landcare movement across Gippsland," Martin said.

For more information go to www.nationallandcareconference.org.au/awards/



From left Evelyn Lillie, Mary Hughes, Marie Harding and Judy Lackman enjoying a Women on Farms organising committee meeting at Warragul.

Women on Farms to

The Women on Farms (WOF) movement has a lot in common with Landcare. Both are community driven, grassroots activities which are celebrating more than 30 years of operation. Landcare was founded by the late Joan Kirner, former Premier of Victoria, and the late Heather Mitchell, the former Victorian Farmers Federation President. Joan Kirner was a much-loved guest at several WOF weekends.

Five of our members on the WOF 2019 organising committee, Evelyn Lillie, Judy Lackman, Leeanne Evans, Marie Harding and I are also active Landcare group members and many of us have been Landcare leaders in our areas.

Q&A with Bass Coast Landcare leader Kellie Nichols



By Rosemary Scott-Thompson

Kellie Nichols is the Executive Officer of Bass Coast Landcare Network (BCLN). She started working in Landcare in 2002 and is known locally as a powerhouse of energy and enthusiasm.

Kellie leads a team of 33 people in a large and flourishing network, successfully juggling the needs of her growing family and her commitment to her work and the environment. I asked Kellie about her role and what inspires her.

Q. What was your inspiration to study environmental science?

“The songs of Midnight Oil. I loved being outside and riding my horse through the bush from my parents’ training stables and spending time with my grandfather who was a farmer. My biology teacher at school, Mr Brown, was also inspirational.”

Q. How did university direct your future employment?

“I loved the various jobs I had with DELWP when I left university after my honours year. They involved fire management and ecology, emergency response and developing the fire web, which was very exciting. Family brought me to Phillip Island and I began work with the Bass Coast Shire Council that eventually developed into the role I have now and the formation of the BCLN.”

Q. What are the best aspects of working with BCLN?

“The people. Every day I am inspired by the people I work with, the amazing volunteers, and the community connections that drive such a thriving environment. Every day is different. I love being part of making a difference locally and I enjoy mixing with the BCLN corporate partners too. With ten member Landcare groups there is a diversity of talented and committed people to call on and work with. I also like staying connected with my own Landcare group, Australian Landcare International, and other groups that enrich my work.

“My husband and I both work fulltime and we have two school-aged children, so the flexibility of being able to work from home sometimes and involve the children in Landcare activities helps us juggle the work/life balance.

“I want to keep extending my knowledge so I’m continuing to study. An MBA in the area of social impact is next. This year I also completed the Gippsland Leadership Program. It was a fantastic experience.”



A view from the sea – Kellie Nichols on the ferry to French Island.

Q. What are the most challenging aspects of your role?

Funding is the greatest challenge. BCLN has been very successful so it is challenging to maintain that level of success and sometimes frustrating when we can’t find the right funds for amazing projects. It is also a challenge to make sure that the funds don’t drive or dictate the projects and we continue to be true to our strategic plans for the community.

“Staff and volunteers need a level of security and I feel a responsibility to ensure that we continue to grow, or at least maintain BCLN’s ability to deliver environmental works into the future.”

Rosemary Scott-Thompson is an Education Officer with BCLN. For more information go to www.basscoastlandcare.org.au

celebrate 30 years in Warragul

By Mary Hughes

WOF gatherings are an opportunity for women to get together to share practical tips, farming lessons, and inspiring stories. Our members come from many diverse rural communities. WOF gatherings celebrate these differences and what we have in common – a respect for and value of the land. Sustainability is the fundamental goal.

Evelyn Lillie of Yarragon South has attended 28 annual WOF gatherings across Victoria. She is encouraging women to attend the next gathering to be held in Warragul from 29 – 31 March 2019.

“Women on the land care for our families, our animals, our environment and for each other. Come along to experience the hugs, enthusiasm, warm smiles and the supportive interest,” Evelyn said.

The Warragul gathering will be the third event held in West Gippsland. The theme is ‘striding forward.’ The program will include workshops, speakers and local tours.

Judy Lackman, also from Yarragon South, says the gathering will be a great opportunity to compare the environmental challenges and successes

encountered in rural enterprises different from our own.

“We meet other women who are proud to share their experiences and to showcase their farms and local heroes. We have a few such women right here in West Gippsland,” Judy said.

Women of all ages and backgrounds are welcome to register for the 2019 celebratory WOF gathering. There is no need to be actively engaged in farming to participate.

For more information go to www.wofg19.org.au or email [Mary.Hughes at mkhughes@dcsi.net.au](mailto:Mary.Hughes@mkhughes@dcsi.net.au)

“
 During Penny’s term as president the group’s membership grew from 40 to 100 families, more than 35 per cent of Newham district’s population.
 ”



From left Alice Aird, Penny Roberts and Helen Scott take a break during a working bee in 2014.

Some outstanding women of the Newham and

Before I moved to our property outside Woodend in 2004 my botanist sister advised me to join a local Landcare group and start learning. It was great advice. The Newham and District Landcare Group (NDLG) was then in its first year (I joined in 2006) with a vision to enhance biodiversity and natural ecosystems within the local environment.

I am now an addicted regenerator of land and a passionate gardener. I consider my long years of employment as practice for my retirement work in Landcare and other community activities. There are many wonderful women involved in local Landcare. Here is a snapshot of a few of them.

A force of nature

Penny Roberts has been one of our Landcare champions since the group’s inception in 2004. During Penny’s term as president the group’s membership grew from 40 to 100 families, more than 35 per cent of Newham district’s population. Penny is known fondly as a force of nature due to her commitment, energy and ability to get things done. Her leadership has helped members achieve success in our major project, the Cobaw Biolink, as well as successfully engaging Newham Primary School and the local community in many Landcare activities and events.

Penny has been responsible for securing and managing many significant grants for

the group, including our current Victorian Government Biodiversity On-ground Action Grant. Since its inception, the group has collectively secured more than \$520,000 funding from 21 different grants. This funding has enabled on-ground works at 53 private properties along the Cobaw Biolink’s axis, at Hanging Rock Reserve, and has helped protect a Federally-listed threatened species, matted flax-lily (*Dianella amoena*) on a local roadside.

Penny willingly shares her skills and knowledge of indigenous plants, seed collection, propagation, revegetation techniques, landscape-level planning, pests and project management. She trains members during planting days, working bees at Newham Primary School and roadside weeding events. A group of volunteers trained in propagation methods by Penny has supplied tens of thousands of indigenous tube stock for use within the Cobaw Biolink. Penny encourages volunteers to be independent and to take up challenges like conserving remnant roadside vegetation and habitat.

An assiduous networker, Penny hosts dinners for new members each year which lead to friendships and involvement in planting days on each other’s properties. She has instigated numerous educational events and field days for the group and the wider community.

Environmental education at Newham Primary School is a priority for Penny and the group. The group provides funding for materials and specialist teachers on school trips and camps, and activities such as a kitchen garden program and science classes. The students are encouraged to publish their reports in the NDLG newsletter.

Penny organised the school’s propagating group with parents and grandparents providing labour. The group has grown plants to order for Melbourne Water Stream Frontage Management Program participants, school landscaping projects, and has supplied low-cost indigenous plants to Landcare members, raising more than \$67,000 for the school.

Penny’s work was recognised with a commendation in the 2017 Victorian Landcare Awards Australian Government Individual Landcarer category.

The weedies

Sue Massie is the convenor and recorder of activities of the NDLG’s Roadside Management Group Sub-Committee. Known as the weedies, this group has been underway since 2005, mapping weed infestation on roadsides for the Macedon Ranges Shire Council’s (MRSC) database and organising working bees to remove noxious and woody weeds on roadsides.

The group meets bi-monthly at members’ homes. Fran Spain and Julianne Telbach are



Jenny Waugh (left) and Penny Roberts distributing tree guards along the Cobaw Biolink.

District Landcare Group

By Helen Scott

also stalwart weedies. Fran was secretary of the group for three years. She is a great organiser of events such as wildflower walks, propagation workshops and the biennial Newham Garden Club plant sale.

As a weedie myself I have been working closely with Alice Aird to persuade landowners and MRSC to improve practices on rural roadsides. In 2015 Alice and I made a budget submission to MRSC for an updated roadsides management plan. Mapping was completed in 2018 and the draft plan is due for release early in 2019. Alice, Penny and I continue to make robust submissions to various MRSC environmental strategies, and we have organised many meetings, displays and events including a tour of local roadsides with our State and Federal Members of Parliament.

Alice believes it is often feelings that ignite action.

"It was the pain of losing a more natural bit of roadside that I had been enjoying, but not actively being a custodian of, that made me become more active to conserve these irreplaceable overlooked places.

"I've discovered that I care deeply about these small patches of unmanaged ecology, grateful that my love for these places has been revealed to me. I don't have to go far away to be in nature that is unregulated, wild, still what it is and has been for a long, long time," Alice said.

The weedies goal is to encourage locals and agencies to be custodians of the small wildernesses and important biodiversity connections that remain on some of our rural roadsides. Alice is also involved in Rivers of the West.

A blogger and the Waterwatchers

Brigitte Kny is a wildlife carer who contributes her popular and humorous blog to our newsletter, featuring animal characters she has cared for. Her 2008 booklet, *Plants, Flowers, Shrubs and Fungi of Kolora* is sold to raise money for the group. Brigitte and her husband Karl work tirelessly on restoring the environmental values of their property, including hosting events and monitoring the health of the local Garden Hut Creek for Waterwatch.

Waterwatch is also one of Jenny Waugh's projects. Jenny, with her partner Jim Sansom, was one of the founding members of NDLG. A former science teacher, Jenny has been working with students from the local primary school on a monthly basis for the last 12 years to monitor water quality in Deep Creek.

These are just a few of the exceptional women in our Landcare group that work together in a spirit of great enthusiasm and cooperation.

Helen Scott is secretary of the NDLG and manages the group's website at www.newhamlandcare.info

For more information email Helen Scott at orseda@outlook.com



Morning tea time during a roadside working bee in 2017.



Antarctica is awesome, but just as awesome is the network of extraordinary women all around the world working towards changing the way we lead, and the way we treat our planet.



Fern Hames on a women's Homeward Bound leadership expedition at Antarctica in 2016.



Fern Hames and Taungurong Elder Uncle Roy Patterson at a Native Fish Awareness Week event in Marysville in 2010.

Learning to lead by listening

By Fern Hames

One evening, in a tiny country hall by a meandering river, I realised that the best thing I could do was to keep my mouth shut. In that moment I recognised the power of people learning and growing their advocacy together.

It was a regular monthly meeting with people who lived along the river including Landcare group members, anglers, the CMA, local council, and me from the Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research (ARI). We'd spent many months talking about the river – what we loved about it, issues we wanted to address and actions to take.

On this night, a new member came along to advocate for more willows along the river. I went to give my opinion, but then I realised I should just keep quiet. I didn't need to say a thing. The people who lived along the river knew the story. We'd explored this many times, and shared all the research and our experiences in discussions, at field days and on walks along the river. The river had plenty of advocates that night and I had achieved what I'd intended all along – I'd made myself redundant.

From algae to community

That evening was another turning point in a meandering career journey, in which I've progressively moved my attention from the wild things in the world to the people who interact with them. I began my career studying Antarctic algae. I adored absorbing everything I could about Antarctica, and imagining these tiny, resilient plants nestled in sheltered spaces on that distant southern continent.

My work then shifted to studying freshwater fish – in aquaculture, and then ecology. It became clear that I needed to connect with the people who were managing aquaculture systems. It was people who were driving the impacts on our rivers. It is people who have the tools and influence to shape what happens in those systems. And it is people who live in, and also care about, those places.

So over the years I've become increasingly interested in connecting people with each other, science and nature. I've worked as a researcher, remote expeditioner and lecturer. I've developed aquaculture policy, helped farmers improve water efficiency, and volunteered in Tanzania with the Jane Goodall Institute.

My work coordinating native fish research through the Murray-Darling Basin Authority from 2007 to 2013 was when I first truly realised the power of a widely collaborative approach to research, of sharing science stories, and supporting linked action. We worked with Traditional Owners, Landcare groups, farmers, irrigators, paddlers, recreational fishers, birdwatchers, students, teachers, artists and musicians. We learnt together about our rivers and their fish and worked together to support them. I still see the legacy of that work in ongoing advocacy and strong custodianship.

Growing the voice of women in science

In my current role at ARI I'm committed to doing all I can do to connect people to science and nature. I've also circled back to Antarctica. In 2016 I joined the inaugural Homeward Bound leadership program, designed to grow the voice of women in science.

This experience has helped to clarify some of the key qualities I have found useful as a woman working in science. These include a deep commitment to authenticity, having the courage for fierce conversations, finding allies, building networks, being bold, speaking up, developing a sense of humour and a commitment to kindness, and always maintaining good communication.

In January 2019 I will be back on the ice, leading science communication with the next Homeward Bound team. Antarctica is awesome, but just as awesome is the network of extraordinary women all around the world working towards changing the way we lead, and the way we treat our planet. I learn something from them every day. They give me a powerful sense of optimism, and reinforce my knowledge that we are, indeed, stronger together.

Fern Hames is Science Manager, Communication and Collaboration at ARI. For more information email Fern at fern.hames@delwp.vic.gov.au

The legend of Joan Wallis

By Jenny O'Sullivan

Joan Wallis was a very influential woman in Landcare. She strived to put the principles of ecological sustainability into practice on her own farms and to encourage others to do the same.

Joan and her husband Gary moved to South Gippsland in 1987 and immediately got involved with sustainable farming and tree groups. In 1992 Joan and Gary were founding members of the Fish Creek Landcare Group and became driving forces behind the success of the group. The Wallises have demonstrated how Landcare and primary production can be combined in the region, planting thousands of trees and ensuring their farms remains economically viable. A third of their beef and dairy farms at Fish Creek and Hedley are under shelterbelts or protected native vegetation.

Joan inspired many through her positive example and the whole farm planning sessions she conducted, literally day and night, across Gippsland over nearly two decades.

Frank Hirst describes Joan as the best extension officer he ever worked with.

"Joan was the heart and soul of every gathering, be it at her whole farm planning courses or her work with the Gippsland Agroforestry Network, or her local church and the many other community groups she was involved with," Frank said.

Joan Wallis passed away in 2014 due to non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. Her legacy lives on in the healthy landscape on her own farm and also in the many farms she supported in the region. She is greatly missed.



Joan and Gary Wallis at the South Gippsland Landcare Network Awards in 2009.

Nerrena/Tarwin Valley Landcare Group rallies to protect local wetland

By Kate McKenzie



The current executive of the Nerrena/Tarwin Landcare Group (NTVLG) in South Gippsland is all women. The group values diversity and there are many men caring for the land within the NTVLG area and also actively involved in the group. However, what Kate Walsh, Coral Hughes, Jill Vella and Sue Miles have achieved through open communication, cooperation and determination is well worth recognition.



Members of the Nerrena/Tarwin Valley Landcare Group discussing mistletoe at a recent bird monitoring session.

The Black Spur Creek Wetlands project demonstrates some of the achievements of these women. The wetlands (40 hectares in size) encompass the confluence of the west branch of the Tarwin River and Black Spur Creek. The South Gippsland Highway and the Great Southern Rail Trail run through it.

Parts of the wetland weren't heavily cleared for farming, so it's a snapshot of what South Gippsland would have looked like when it was managed by Aboriginal people. The wetlands are rich with bird and aquatic life. The banks are fringed by swamp paperbarks and majestic blue gums and Strzelecki gums. There are interesting landforms and the nearby Koonwarra fossil beds contain fossils that are more than 100 million years old.

The challenge of uncertainty

The proposed re-alignment of the South Gippsland Highway was a concern for the group, as it would mean the loss of some irreplaceable older trees and important biodiversity. There was also a lot of uncertainty as to where the highway would be built.

In the early 2000s the local community recognised the significance of the wetlands and organised meetings and working bees, but work was discontinued because of uncertainties, especially around the highway realignment.

In 2016 a new section of the Great Southern Rail Trail was constructed providing public access to the wetlands. The finalisation of the Major Road Projects Authority (MRPA) plans for the South Gippsland Highway around the same time



Parts of the wetland weren't heavily cleared for farming, so it's a snapshot of what South Gippsland would have looked like when it was managed by Aboriginal people.



The Black Spur Wetlands at the confluence of the Tarwin River and Black Spur Creek.



Members of the Nerrena/Tarwin Valley Landcare Group get together on a section of the Great Southern Rail Trail at the Black Spur.

provided an impetus to work on a Black Spur Creek Wetlands Plan once again.

In September 2016 the NTVLG, with assistance from the South Gippsland Shire Council, developed a 20-year plan to protect and restore the wetlands and associated Strzelecki gum woodlands. Developing the plan wasn't without its challenges.

Managing many stakeholders

Jill Vella explains that a number of stakeholders were involved.

"The wetland covers a large area of public land managed by several stakeholders, including the West Gippsland CMA, DELWP, the Great Southern Rail Trail committee, South Gippsland Shire Council and private leaseholders. Throw the MRPA in to the mix and it's clear that the goodwill of all players is a huge issue."

Given that NTVLG neither owns nor manages the land, the usual methods of harnessing resources and getting on with the work were not applicable.

According to Coral Hughes, using open communication and a professional approach to gain the trust and respect of relevant land managers was critical.

"I was happy to contribute my enthusiasm, ability to cooperate and desire to do what needs to be done to make it happen," said Coral.

Kate Walsh believes the project has brought many opportunities to the group.

"It has provided us with the opportunity to work with the MRPA who have access to research, (both cultural and scientific) and

resources to implement works to protect, restore, enhance, manage, and extend the biodiversity that we have on site. It has been a pleasure to work with MRPA's Debbie McLees," Kate said.

Advice for groups

Kate's advice for groups looking to undertake similar projects is that every piece of land has significance and the potential to provide environmental services.

"Develop a shared vision and core values and, if possible, a plan at the outset. Try to turn your barriers into opportunities and work with a strong core team of committed individuals. It's important to develop partnerships and involve the broader community. Respecting and trusting the diverse skills within the community is critical, as is maintaining on-ground contact with the natural environment you are committed to.

"Our project is ongoing. We are continuing to raise awareness and getting to know each other, the wetland, and our project partners. Our aim is for the NTVLG and the wetland project to have far greater longevity and momentum than any individual person or group," Kate said.

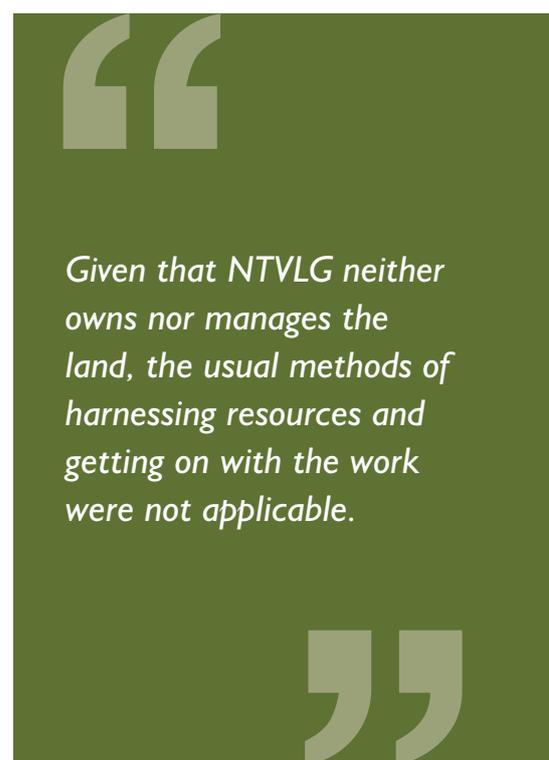
Sue Miles believes the project has given the group a shared focus, attracted new members and built the capacity of the group.

"When we start bird monitoring, community members who have not previously been part of Landcare will hopefully join us. The Koonwarra Recreation Reserve recently became a member of the NTVLG and we have

other individuals showing interest. People love being part of a successful organisation that is going somewhere," Sue said.

The South Gippsland Highway re-alignment is scheduled to commence in mid-2019.

Kate McKenzie is the South Gippsland Landcare Network Coordinator. Her position is funded through the Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program. For more information email Kate Walsh at walshpk@gmail.com





Barapa Barapa Elder, Aunty Esther, in her possum skin cloak, ran a storytelling session on the experiences of women in culture, at the 2015 Chicks in the Sticks event at Carlsruhe.

Chicks in the Sticks – supporting rural women to take the lead

By Ashley Rogers and Tess Grieves

Rural women play an important role in agriculture and environmental management. However, women are still under-represented in community leadership positions in Landcare and farm production groups. Chicks in the Sticks events aim to bring rural women together to showcase their achievements, share knowledge, create new networks and build leadership capacity.

Chicks in the Sticks events were initiated by the Wimmera CMA in 2011 and they spread to the North Central region in 2013 and to the Goulburn Broken region in 2015. The annual events often attract close to 100 women.

Women-only events are nothing new, extending back millennia to when Traditional Owners practised women-only customs and business on Country. Single gender events are rarely used in current extension practices, with organisations preferring to reach out to as many people as possible. Creating an event series that excluded men was a genuine risk, but since its inception more than 600 rural women have attended the seven events.

Chicks in the Sticks is essentially a field day. The day is designed by women, for women. The events involve an outdoor meal in a picturesque location, usually a unique environmental or sustainable

farming site, with inspiring presentations from local women. Guests are invited to have some fun and dress up in their favourite frock and wear gumboots.

The events aim to be bold, challenging and meaningful on a very personal level, while addressing broader agricultural and environmental issues. Feedback after the events has highlighted the importance of women-only events in creating a sense of safety and allowing for challenging conversations.

The day often includes discussion of diverse topics not generally explored at a typical farm and environment extension events. These include: mental health, suicide prevention, personal wellbeing, self-care, increasing women's visibility and nurturing a sense of place. Feedback from other projects in the agricultural and natural resource management industries has

indicated that these broader issues are important to women and can be barriers to change.

The most recent Chicks in the Sticks event was held in October 2018. More than 80 women cruised the majestic Murray River on board MV *Mary Ann* at Echuca.

Kia Hooke from Serpentine was impressed by how well organised the event was.

"I appreciated the time and effort that has gone into planning it to occur during the day, on a weekend, which allowed me to work around the kids, so I could attend," Kia said.

Ashley Rogers (currently on extended leave) is Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator for the Goulburn Broken CMA. Tess Grieves is Regional Landcare Coordinator for the North Central CMA. For more information email Tess at tess.grieves@nccma.vic.gov.au

A passion for nature

By Elizabeth Fraser

Looking back at my interests in nature and conservation, I can see that it was in my blood. I was raised in the Dandenong Ranges in the family home built in 1889 by my great-grandfather. My grandfather was Chairman of the Trustees of the Royal Botanic Gardens.

My father was the third generation to take on the property with its wet and damp forest vegetation. When my father returned from the war in 1946, he decided to live permanently in what had been a holiday home for his Melbourne based parents. The whole family loved trees and were keen to introduce anything English.

In the early 1970s both my father and his sister realised the loss of Australian native trees and plants was affecting the wildlife. They became champions for bush preservation through Trust for Nature. When I had completed my nursing qualifications, and my husband and I decided to buy the property, our first task was to remove the hollies, sycamores and pittosporums. This involved obtaining permission from Cardinia Council as they were considered significant trees.

During my working life as a nurse, and while raising children, I completed a degree in botany. When my aunt donated Harbury, 20 acres of bushland in Pakenham Upper, to the Trust for Nature, I helped to manage it. We had an active friends' group, working bees, open days, scientific studies and fungi walks and talks. Forty years of activity went by very quickly.

Once I retired from nursing, I was looking forward to a second botanical career and became involved as a volunteer with Deep

Creek Landcare, then Bessie and Ararat Creek Landcare, as well as the Cardinia Environment Coalition (CEC). I took great delight in the outdoor activity, the sense of making a difference and mixing with other people who enjoyed getting their hands dirty planting trees with these Landcare groups and also with Toomuc Landcare Group. Ten years passed, including six years as President of the CEC. It has been a very satisfying experience.

I feel proud that Harbury Reserve is still a haven for lyrebirds and that our property now has regenerated and revegetated bushland. The CEC is also making an important contribution. It manages seven parcels of public land within Cardinia Shire and assists Landcare groups with project management.

For six years the CEC has celebrated every second international women's day with a very successful Cardinia women in conservation dinner at which three local women speak about the dedicated energy and innovation they bring to local conservation work.

I have also been fortunate to lead a united CEC committee working with Cardinia Shire, Pakenham Golf Club and Ecolinc Bacchus Marsh on a project to build an eco-centre and indigenous nursery on a reclaimed wetland site for conservation,



Elizabeth Fraser is proud of the achievements of the Cardinia Environment Coalition.

community and teaching purposes. This project is supported by many local community groups and is set to open in 2019.

Gardens for Wildlife has become a recent interest. The vision of having urban, developed landscapes also acting as havens for native insects, reptiles, birds and animals is appealing indeed.

Nature volunteering is very satisfying due to the people you meet and the general wellbeing it brings. I just love that everyone is doing it because it's a passion, and not because they have to.

Elizabeth Fraser is a member of the CEC and Bessie and Ararat Creek Landcare Group. For more information on the CEC go to www.cecinc.net.au



Elizabeth Fraser on a walk at the Mt Elephant Trust for Nature property.

“
Once I retired from nursing, I was looking forward to a second botanical career and became involved as a volunteer with Deep Creek Landcare, then Bessie and Ararat Creek Landcare, as well as the Cardinia Environment Coalition.
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The appeal of getting involved in Landcare is that it is taking action on environmental issues that are extremely important to me – that being restoring our local urban environment. I never gave much thought to being a woman in Landcare, I just jumped in and was supported from the start.

”



Young women from Illawarra Intrepid Landcare get their hands dirty on a revegetation project at Dubbo.

Intrepid Landcare founders share their stories

Getting involved in Landcare was a simple yet fortunate accident for Megan Rowlatt and Naomi Edwards, co-founders of Intrepid Landcare, an organisation created to inspire, connect and empower young people to join local environmental initiatives in their communities.

Megan's Landcare journey began when she saw a Conservation Volunteers Australia advertisement on television in Wollongong. She wanted to get outside and do something meaningful and was feeling a lack of connection and social isolation at the time. Naomi was at the local supermarket

a year after leaving school when the trusted parent of an old school friend invited her to get involved in Coastcare along the Gold Coast. Both women were attracted by the appeal of something fun, and the potential to learn and connect with other like-minded people.

“Older men were dominant at that time, but this wasn't something that phased or limited me. In fact they turned out to be my greatest mentors in life and that cannot go unacknowledged.

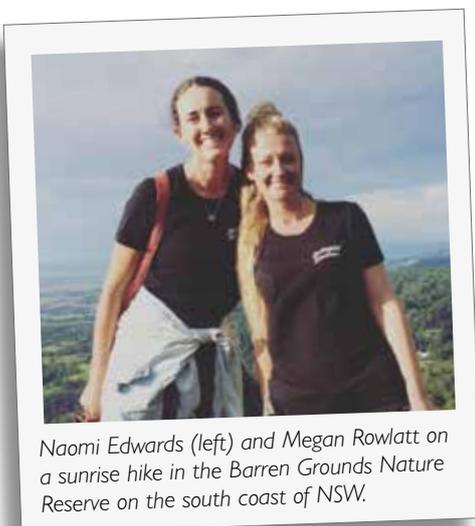
“Landcare offers me access to a connected community of human beings, a place where I am able to find people who share interests, passion and purpose. I feel heard, I am in service to my community and the environment, and I am supported. It's about being part of a community that wants to thrive and grow together. I feel that's what Intrepid Landcare offers particularly well. They are my family.

“But what I also feel is important to acknowledge is that my deep and genuine connections to women within my own generation (and older generations) didn't come into my life until I started creating projects for other young people to get involved in. Naomi was one of those women. Our projects have attracted a lot of like-minded women who share a love of nature and adventure, and that

More than a decade later, Megan and Naomi are Landcare trailblazers. They are passionate about getting young people involved in Landcare projects that restore landscapes (from urban to remote), catchments, coastal systems, and the marine environment, and sharing what Landcare can offer for individual and community wellbeing.

Megan credits her mentors

“The appeal of getting involved in Landcare is that it is taking action on environmental issues that are extremely important to me – that being restoring our local urban environment. I never gave much thought to being a woman in Landcare, I just jumped in and was supported from the start,” Megan said.



Naomi Edwards (left) and Megan Rowlatt on a sunrise hike in the Barren Grounds Nature Reserve on the south coast of NSW.



Some future Landcare leaders on an Intrepid Landcare Leadership Retreat in Macedon Ranges in October 2018.

By Toni Stevens

has been such a beautiful thing to experience,” Megan said.

Naomi stresses the importance of diversity

Naomi’s experience is similar to Megan’s, but she is definitely aware of a gender inequality in Landcare, which is a reflection of the wider society.

“You can’t deny gender imbalance when it comes to the decision makers in Landcare, the people who hold positions of power and authority on boards and committees, and especially in government and parliament. This is where a framework for equality and accessibility needs to be considered and meaningfully implemented,” Naomi said.

“It is interesting that when I was in the field and getting dirt under my nails I did feel equal. However as soon as I was around the table in certain Landcare boards and committees in my early twenties, I didn’t feel equal. I even considered buying some R.M. Williams boots and a few more checked shirts (no kidding!) so I looked more like everyone else. But with some mentoring from other women around the table, I realised I could be free to be myself, and that I don’t have to look or be like everyone else to be valued and heard.

“I can wear my bright and colourful dresses, and change my shoes between field trips and board meetings. When I embraced my difference, I started to feel included which encouraged me to take on other roles and pave the way for more women and young people to be elected into certain positions.

“The point I’m making is that we need diversity, and we need to celebrate diversity. But to get diversity we also need supportive environments to encourage all people to flourish in their own way, so they can see themselves as contributors and be prepared to contribute,” Naomi said.

Intrepid Landcare welcomes both men and women. Megan and Naomi are aware that as Intrepid Landcare evolves and matures they need to remain aware of diversity and to make sure blind spots don’t develop. They are constantly questioning accessibility and diversity so that more young people from all walks of life can be connected to the environment and a community that supports them to thrive and grow.

Toni Stevens is a science communicator from Melbourne. She became involved in Intrepid Landcare in Wollongong in 2009 and hasn’t looked back since.

Intrepid Landcare offers coaching, presentations, workshops and adventurous leadership retreats for young people keen to get involved in the environment. To find out more go to www.intrepidlandcare.org

“

Intrepid Landcare welcomes both men and women. Megan and Naomi are aware that as Intrepid Landcare evolves and matures they need to remain aware of diversity and to make sure blind spots don’t develop.

”

Four inspiring women of the Wimmera

By Andrea Mitchell

There are many inspiring women active in Landcare projects across the Wimmera. Here are just four of these busy and committed women.



A post-retirement tree change has brought Madelene Townsend back to her love of nature.

Madelene Townsend

Madelene Townsend has always been fascinated by nature and how resilient it is, especially in Australia. She was born in Sussex, England, and has rich childhood memories of living in a market garden with her parents. They grew vegetables, flowers and nuts and kept chickens. She remembers disappearing to play in the woodlands and seeing squirrels, rabbits and deer through the changing seasons.

Madelene and her husband Terry moved to Moyston from Melbourne in 2005 when they retired. Madelene was keen to learn more about the local bush.

"I went to my first meeting of the Moyston Landcare Group and I was hooked. I thought, wow, this is just fantastic, and I knew I wanted to join."

In 2006 Madelene was elected as the group's secretary and treasurer.

"I struggled in the beginning because I was new to the community. I felt like a complete stranger, but with the encouragement and support of the serving presidents I gained the confidence to tackle grant applications and other projects. It was a big learning curve, but I enjoyed it," Madelene said.

Madelene's warmth and sincerity shine through in all that she does. Most recently she has been running cake stalls to fundraise and promote Landcare. Madelene believes fun, family orientated gatherings and interaction with children helps foster and develop enthusiasm in Landcare.

"You plant little seeds of thought and then people get interested and it grows from there. The benefits are huge – what was once barren land in our area is now full of trees and wildlife – what more could you want," she said.

Penny Warner

Born and bred in Stawell, Penny Warner's connection to the land started in childhood when she visited her grandparent's farm in Moyston.

"Every holiday I went down to the farm," she said. "I love the land, I love the land."

Penny has helped Project Platypus (Upper Wimmera Landcare Network) for several years at their annual plant outs. The plant outs require a huge commitment from volunteers – not just in tree planting, but also in catering and organising.

For the past four years Penny has prepared morning-teas of cakes and scones for the plant outs. Her evening leisure time is spent making up hundreds of tree guards. She is a great community asset.

Penny volunteers because she simply enjoys it.

"I get to mix with people, instead of sitting at home. And I get out in the bush and it is beautiful," she said.



Penny Warner volunteers much of her leisure time to making tree guards for Project Platypus (Upper Wimmera Landcare Network) plant outs.

Leanne Jackman

Leanne was brought up in outback Australia and has always had a love for nature, but she credits Landcare with shaping her understanding of the impact of humans on the environment.

"If we want to have a beautiful environment for the next generation we need to look after what we have," she said.

Leanne runs a biodynamic farm with her husband Peter at Dadswells Bridge, on the edge of the Grampians. She believes the philosophies behind biodynamics and Landcare are closely aligned, for example a focus on healthy soils, encouraging biodiversity and a natural balance in the environment.



Penny Warner has helped Project Platypus (Upper Wimmera Landcare Network) for several years at their annual plant outs. The plant outs require a huge commitment from volunteers – not just in tree planting, but also in catering and organising.





Leanne Jackman from Dadswells Bridge is a passionate Landcare advocate.

Native grasses have been allowed to thrive on Leanne and Peter's farm and tree corridors and plantations have been incorporated to increase biodiversity.

Leanne started her Landcare journey at plant outs for Project Platypus (Upper Wimmera Landcare Network). Her gentle nature, ability to bring people together and solve problems has made her an asset to the Landcare community. She is a passionate Landcare advocate, keen to share her views on the environment. She works in a voluntary capacity for Landcare locally, regionally and at a state level.

"It concerns me that people take what we have for granted, they think it is always going to be there," Leanne said.

Leanne is the current secretary of Northern Grampians Landcare Group, a board member of Project Platypus (Upper Wimmera Landcare Network) and the secretary of Landcare Victoria Incorporated.

Angela Turrell

Angela Turrell is a member of Jallukar Landcare Group and a past representative on the Project Platypus (Upper Wimmera Landcare Network) Board.

According to Jess Gardner from Greening Australia, Angela's passion, along with her professional background, has made her an asset to Landcare.

"I first met Ange when we started the Jallukar Native Grasslands Project (JNGP) together. Her professionalism, business and

marketing skills have brought so much to the project. She has a passion for wildflowers and native grasses of the area which has inspired many others to get involved," Jess said.

Angela has contributed to Jallukar Landcare Group by using her skills in project management, grants writing and report writing. She also assisted with strategic planning to help inform the group's direction.

The group was keen to be proactive about sourcing grants. With Angela's input they have sourced grants for JNGP that have aligned with the group's goal – of restoring and revegetating the environment.

"The JNGP has galvanised members because it intrinsically values flora and fauna. There has been a groundswell of support for the project and this can be seen in the growing membership base of the group. The group is incredibly social and with a hell of a lot of expertise," Angela said.

Angela is recognised locally as being a model of expertise, dedication and tenacity. She is a greatly valued member of the group and her community.

Andrea Mitchell is the Local Landcare Facilitator with Project Platypus (Upper Wimmera Landcare Network). Her position is funded through the Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program. For more information email Andrea at llf@platypus.org.au



Angela has contributed to Jallukar Landcare Group by using her skills in project management, grants writing and report writing. She also assisted with strategic planning to help inform the group's direction.



Angela Turrell from Jallukar Landcare Group has always loved the environment. "It is innate, part of my spirit. I crave the Australian bush," she said.

Michelle Stacey's war on weeds

By Jacqui Salter



Michelle Stacey is a fifth-generation Flinders farmer and President of Main Creek Catchment Landcare Group (MCCLG). Nothing irks her more than invasive weeds.

"I hate weeds. Being a farmer, you're out there trying to deal with weeds on a regular basis. I look around the Mornington Peninsula and see what could be done so easily if there was a coordinated approach to weed control," Michelle said.

Michelle grew up on the property that has been in her family since the 1860s when her ancestors, John and Hepzibah Baldry, arrived from England and set up a sheep and dairy farm. The couple first lived in a bark hut on Main Creek, raising a family in difficult circumstances, before building the mud brick homestead, which still stands today.

A desire to learn more about sustainable land management motivated Michelle to join MCCLG eight years ago. She and her partner Geoff Baker had just moved back to the family farm from the Northern Territory, where they had managed large tracts of Defence Department land.

"I saw a revegetation project on the property next door which prompted me to start asking questions and looking for information. I was keen to get ideas on how and what to do," Michelle said.

Michelle enjoys being part of the MCCLG education program, including frog nights, snake talks, and bush and property walks. She has learnt much about indigenous flora and fauna of the area.

"Seeing local ecologists talk and listening to other Landcare members sharing their knowledge – you are learning all the time. I also enjoy meeting like-minded people and getting to know the community. Everyone is from such diverse backgrounds. Yet we can come together and work together for a common goal," Michelle said.

Learning from the experts

Michelle has gained valuable skills and knowledge about sensitive bushland management through her involvement in Landcare.

"Since moving back to Flinders, I've enjoyed learning from local experts about different methods of weed control such as hand weeding, rather than just boom spraying. In the NT you're using helicopters to do weed control because it's a much bigger scale."

Using her project management and negotiation skills, Michelle has been instrumental in tackling karamu (*Coprosma robusta*), a highly invasive woody weed from New Zealand which forms a dense monoculture – even killing mature trees. She nominates the Meakins Road project as the most satisfying achievement to date.

With funds from the Port Phillip and Westernport CMA and Landcare Australia Limited the MCCLG worked with the Mornington Peninsula Shire to mulch



Michelle Stacey, a fifth-generation farmer from Flinders, is determined to prevent the spread of the weed karamu in her local area.



From left Mornington Peninsula Mayor Bryan Payne with Michelle Stacey and Bernie Schedvin collecting the Main Creek Catchment Landcare Group's Keep Australia Beautiful Award.

karamu and replant with indigenous vegetation to create an important wildlife corridor. Landholder education and engagement was a large part of the project.

Karamu control project wins award

"We did an initial door knock to get the landholders on board. We kept them updated and gave them the opportunity for feedback," Michelle explained.

Bringing landholders along was a key to the project's success. The group's achievements were recently recognised as finalists in the Keep Australia Beautiful – Tidy Towns Protection of the Environment Award.

Michelle holds grave concerns for the integrity of Victoria's bushland if more is not done to control karamu.

"Our parks and bushland areas will be overrun by karamu unless we do something now to prevent this weed spreading," Michelle said.

Despite these concerns, Michelle is positive about the future of Landcare.

"MCCLG has lots of members and is a great group. The future for Landcare on the peninsula is bright. I'd encourage people to join because it's a great community organisation to be involved in. The more people we've got aware of our weed situation, the better chance we've got of dealing with the weeds".

Jacqui Salter is the Landcare Facilitator with the Mornington Peninsula Landcare Network. Her position is funded through the Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program. For more information email Jacqui at jacqueline.salter@mornpen.vic.gov.au



Lisa Miller from Southern Farming Systems leads a Women on Farms pasture workshop at Inverleigh.

“
 The aim is to give women a safe space to ask questions and to have their understandings affirmed by someone from off the farm.
 ”

Women on Farms workshops increase the confidence of rural women

By Zoe Creelman and Karen O’Keefe

If you look around at agricultural field days, you’ll be most likely met by a sea of men and very few women. This is despite the fact that 50 per cent of the population is female and women often play a significant role on the farm.

Feedback from Landcare events has shown that a lack of confidence is a key barrier to women’s involvement in agriculture. The feedback has also demonstrated that women are very willing to learn and that they often have greater knowledge than they give themselves credit for. With increased confidence women can provide another perspective on farm business planning and efficiencies and help to test important decisions.

Southern Farming Systems, together with the Corangamite CMA’s Regional Landcare Facilitator Program, has developed a pilot program called Women on Farms to support rural women in the catchment. The aim is to give women a safe space to ask questions and to have their understandings affirmed by someone from off the farm.

The pilot program involved four technical workshops delivered to women in the Woody Yaloak Catchment area and the Geelong Landcare Network area over 12 months. Workshop participants had an opportunity to connect with other women on farms and industry experts.

Each workshop had a theory and practical component, with an emphasis on group discussion and answering questions. The workshops aimed to provide a technical starting point for women to brush up on knowledge they already possess and to learn new information about mixed production systems. Topics have included soils, climate change, pastures, crops and livestock production.

The program has been very successful. Many of the participants were not

previously members of Southern Farming Systems or of Landcare groups. Women between 31 to 40 years of age were best represented and 86 per cent of participants identified as commercial farmers predominantly from mixed enterprise cropping and grazing businesses.

The program has been designed so it can be repeated in other areas and has already been delivered in the Glenelg Hopkins CMA region.

Zoe Creelman is a former Research and Extension Officer with Southern Farming Systems and Karen O’Keefe is the Regional Agricultural Landcare Facilitator with Corangamite CMA. For more information email Karen at karen.okeefe@ccma.vic.gov.au

Lost and found in the Dandenongs

By Karen Alexander

“If you get lost just walk down a creek and you’ll reach a road to home.” This was my father’s advice to me as a child when I set out exploring in Sherbrooke Forest in the Dandenong Ranges. From these early wanderings came my love of the environment and my venture into Landcare.

In 1987 my partner David Neilson and I moved back to the Dandenongs to 10 hectares that had been part of a farm my grandfather had cleared, leaving just 10 large mountain ash. We were now the proud owners of land and keen to revegetate. The cattle were removed, and we watched to see what would happen. Not surprisingly the blackberries took off and the dry grass became a fire risk.

A group, a network, a coalition...

With some local friends we formed Johns Hill Landcare Group (JHLG) in 2002 aiming to reconnect the bush between Belgrave and Gembrook. Our agenda was fitted around available grants – planting on unused roads and creek lines, weed control and revegetation on private properties.

I also helped set up the Cardinia Environment Coalition (CEC) – an association of local Landcare and friends groups in order to provide input to the new Cardinia Shire Council.



Karen Alexander with mature trees and regenerating under storey on her bush property in the Dandenong Ranges.

“

Two questions kept bugging me. First, how can the knowledge of local experts be passed on? And second, why don’t people do their weeds?

”

We also worked with the Shire of Yarra Ranges and went on to form the Southern Ranges Environment Alliance that covered our area.

Two questions kept bugging me. First, how can the knowledge of local experts be passed on? A couple of the members of JHLG were top seed collectors for native nurseries but were approaching 80 so while their brains were good, their legs were less so. And second, why don’t people do their weeds? We didn’t know what motivates people to tackle weed control. A lot of effort was going into awareness programs, but we

didn’t know if they worked. In 2009 JHLG partnered with Cardinia Shire Council to research the incentives and barriers to weed control.

Weed research produces successful model

We targeted people who wanted to do their weeds but didn’t. The barriers were time, cost, inappropriate information and inaction by neighbours. The motivators were financial support and a Landcare person who provided appropriate information. The time barrier was overcome by doing a weed plan and the bad neighbour problem by working at a local level.

Remembering Andrea Brumley

By Meryll Wright and Peter Wallace

A successful pilot followed with funding for a neighbourhood weed facilitator and weed contractors. Now, 25 landowners are still doing their weeds. The model works but funding is hard to find for someone to build relationships with individual landholders.

In 2010 Landcarers in central Victoria asked for my advice on how they might work at a landscape scale. After a lot of hard work by many people the Central Victorian Biolinks Alliance was formed. The alliance has 18 Landcare network members, and funding for four projects that will bring local knowledge and the best science together to protect species and prepare for climate change.

Landcare is a brilliant model. It is all about building relationships – on committees, with landholders and with agencies – to deliver healthy natural systems and sustainable farming. But relationship building is under-valued and there is little funding. The stop-start grant model is inefficient as we lurch forward with good work, then backwards as funding dries up. It is dispiriting for volunteers.

We have put 20 years of work into our own property. Thanks to Melbourne Water's Stream Frontage Management Program, seven of our 10 hectares are now under a Trust for Nature covenant. Once the blackberries were removed and after extensive weeding and planting the natural regeneration has returned with vigour. The 10 mountain ash are tall and healthy. I wonder what my grandfather would think...

Karen Alexander is a life member of JHLG and Bush Heritage Australia and a board member of Central Victorian Biolinks Alliance. She was awarded an OAM for services to the environment in 2015 and was the 2014 Emerald Citizen of the Year.

For more information on the weed research go to www.johnshill.org.au/weeds-away/

Members of the Nicholson River Landcare Group (NRLG) were greatly saddened by the loss of their friend and colleague Andrea Brumley in 2015. Andrea had been a member of NRLG since 2008 and had held the positions of treasurer and president.

Andrea was a scientist with knowledge, skills and practical experience across a range of environmental areas, including native flora and fauna and pest plants and animals. She loved Landcare activities and was a passionate educator – always keen to pass her knowledge on to others.

Andrea was very involved in running an annual walk on the property of Maria and Leo Rijs at Nicholson. On-going revegetation works on the property were transforming the landscape.

Andrea led the walk, first explaining the geology and geomorphology of the site, before the walkers completed the nine kilometres of tracks along Salt Creek and Butchers Creek.

The walk has now been named the Andrea Brumley Memorial Walk in her honour. In October 2018 more than 30 walkers undertook the walk. The walkers represented NRLG and three other local Landcare groups. Members of Andrea's extended family from Melbourne and beyond also participated.

NRLG has installed a seat of remembrance on the rail trail at Nicholson in permanent recognition of Andrea's enthusiasm, knowledge, leadership and commitment. She was a very special person.



Andrea Brumley doing what she loved at a working bee for the Nicholson River Landcare Group in 2013.

Around the State – News from the Regional



Lisette Mill (far right) with local Landcare facilitators and representatives from Landcare Australia, Country Fire Authority, Glenelg Hopkins CMA and DELWP in front of a newly recorded Aboriginal scar tree on Gunditjmara Country.

Aboriginal Landcare Facilitator

Basalt to Bay Landcare Network's Landcare Facilitator, Lisette Mill, is a keen observer of her natural landscape. She is responsible for the recent identification and recording of an Aboriginal scar tree that is now registered on the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Register and Information System and protected under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006.

Each site recorded on the register tells a story of the past that goes back many thousands of years and demonstrates that there is still much to learn about our Aboriginal history.

If you think you have found an Aboriginal cultural heritage place or objects on any public or private land in Victoria, you must report it to Aboriginal Victoria under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006.

For more information contact Jackson Chatfield on 0419 504 541.

Corangamite

The CMA and the Landcare community have undertaken a Landcare review in the region to enhance relationships between government and community natural resource management.

The review consisted of workshops with Landcare group and network chairs and Landcare facilitators, and interviews with key stakeholders. It aims to ensure a better alignment between Landcare and the CMA's Regional Catchment Strategy.

Planning is underway for the Otway Food and Fibre Showcase to be held on 28 April 2019 at the Colac Showgrounds. This biennial event attracts great presenters and a wide variety of local producers.

After seven years at the CMA in Regional Landcare Facilitator and Coordinator and management roles, Bret Ryan has left to follow a career in business management. We wish Bret all the best for the future.

For more information visit www.ccma.vic.gov.au (What we do/Community/Landcare) or contact Corangamite CMA on 5232 9100.

East Gippsland

The Friends of the Upper Nicholson Catchment Inc. hosted a lyrebird awareness lunch in October 2018. The lunch was held at Clifton Creek and included guest speakers from the Sherbrooke Lyrebird Survey Group. A dawn walk was held the next day to survey lyrebirds on a property adjacent to the Nicholson River.

The Far East Victoria Landcare Network celebrated 10 years of operation in November 2018. More than 80 Landcarers attended a dinner of local produce including microgreens and beer supplied by 21 local producers. Each of the network's Landcare groups gave a presentation on a project, passion or person.

Recent rainforest walks, and plant identification weekends have also been well attended and well received in the region.

For more information visit www.egcma.com.au (What we do/Landcare) or contact Carolyn Cameron on 5150 3682.

Glenelg Hopkins

Congratulations to the 16 groups that were awarded 2018/19 Victorian Landcare Grants for a range of on-ground projects and capacity building activities.

The CMA welcomes Mirinda Thorpe as the new Landcare Facilitator working in the west of the catchment. Mirinda's position is funded through the Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program. She will be working with a number of groups, including Wando River Landcare Group, Culla Pigeon Land Management Group and the Balmoral Landcare Group.

Thank you to all groups that completed the annual Landcare Group Health Survey. The data provided will help to provide targeted support to groups and the information will be included in the region's annual Landcare Report Card.

For more information visit www.ghcma.vic.gov.au (Get involved/Landcare) or contact Tony Lithgow on 5571 2526.

Goulburn Broken

The end of 2018 has seen the community natural resource management networks in the region in full swing delivering their National Landcare Program (NLP) projects. A lot of effort has been put into getting occupational health and safety and governance issues sorted so that groups can continue to work on their projects under the new NLP rules.

Projects that were funded by the 2018/19 Victorian Landcare Grants are underway, and 21 Group Support Grants have been allocated across the region.

Our Regional Landcare Facilitator Ashley Rogers started her maternity leave in November 2018. We wish her all the best for the adventure ahead. Kerstie Lee from the Up2Us Landcare Alliance will be filling the position while Ashley is away.

Landcare Coordinators

Seasons greeting to all in the region. 2018 was a great year. The contribution and commitment of our community volunteers and support has been overwhelming.

For more information visit www.gbcma.vic.gov.au (Community natural resource management) or contact Tony Kubeil on 5761 1619.

Mallee

With the challenge of extremely dry conditions and heavy frosts in 2018, farmers in the Mallee were faced with tough decisions on whether to persist with a crop, cut it for hay or graze it. Responding to the same dry conditions, some Landcare groups started ripping rabbit warrens earlier than usual.

Training for Landcare facilitators on mapping and strategic planning is coming up. Landcare facilitators in the Mallee are meeting every two months to plan local events that highlight the work Landcare groups do and raise the profile of Landcare within their communities.

Congratulations to Cardross Primary School, Koorlong Primary School, Murrayville Community College, Nichols Point Primary School and Tyrell College on their success with the 2018 Victorian Junior Landcare and Biodiversity Grants. We look forward to seeing students working on their projects at school and on local reserves.

In late November Louise Nicholas resigned from the RLC role at Mallee CMA. We wish Louise all the best for the future.

For more information visit www.malleecma.vic.gov.au (Get involved/Landcare) or contact the Mallee CMA on 5051 4377.

North Central

The region hosted a successful Chicks in the Sticks event in October 2018 to celebrate the achievements of rural women in environment and agriculture. Jointly hosted with the Goulburn Broken CMA, this was the sixth annual event held in the region. Guest speakers included Bronwyn Blake, author of *Gulf Women – Voices from remote North West Queensland*, and Cath Walker from the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

Bronwyn delighted the audience with readings from her book, including tales of kitchen floor births, snakes attempting to strangle sleeping children and station cooks causing chaos. Cath emphasised the importance of caring for one another, especially during dry times, and watching for signs of mental health issues within the farming community.

In October 2018 the annual joint meeting between the Landcare facilitators and chairs hosted staff from the Victorian Landcare Team. The group discussed the Victorian Landcare Program and provided feedback including regional priorities, to ensure a positive future for Landcare in the region.

For more information visit www.nccma.vic.gov.au (Landcare) or contact Tess Grieves on 5440 1893.

North East

Landcare groups and networks have been busy delivering a wide range of field days and workshops through spring and early summer. Topics have included fruit fly management, nest box monitoring, Aboriginal culture in the landscape and revegetation site monitoring techniques.

Two new Landcare videos have been released recently by the CMA, with assistance from the Victorian Government. *Brolgas Dance Again* outlines activities to raise awareness of brolga breeding sites in the Rutherglen area. *Blackberry: People. Science. Persistence. Together*, covers the recent Mitta to Murray Blackberry Action Group partnership with Agriculture Victoria to find new biocontrol options for blackberry.

For more information visit www.necma.vic.gov.au (Landcare and community projects) or contact Tom Croft on 02 6043 7648.

Port Phillip and Western Port

Landcarers from the region were delighted to see Jacqui Wandin and Brooke Collins accept the Australian Government Partnerships for Landcare Award at the National Landcare Awards in Brisbane in October 2018. The pair accepted the gong for their work with the Wandooon Estate Aboriginal Corporation at the Coranderk homestead and farm in the Yarra Valley, a project empowering Wurundjeri people. The CMA is a partner organisation for the estate.

Four individuals and groups from the region were assisted in attending the National Landcare Conference with DELWP funding. They are set to bring a host of new ideas and innovations to their groups.

New Regional Landcare Coordinator Barry Kennedy was welcomed by Landcare facilitators and Landcare network leaders with a tour of existing and potential project sites, and the many gems in the region.

For more information visit ppwcma.vic.gov.au (Landcare and Sustainable Agriculture) or contact Barry Kennedy on 9971 6506.

West Gippsland

West Gippsland was fortunate to host two recent international Landcare delegates during their Gippsland tour as part of a program to share ideas and extend the Landcare movement worldwide.

The West Gippsland region welcomes Scott Elliott to the position of Network Coordinator and Caitlin Jackson as the new Project Officer in the Yarram Yarram Landcare Network.

South Gippsland Landcare Network's Kate McKenzie has taken 12 months maternity leave and Glenn Brooks-MacMillan has stepped into her role. Cassie Wright will also join the Network as a part time Project Officer assisting in a range of projects.

A range of field days and training days took place during spring. Successful events included rabbit control information evenings, a care for our land expo hosted by Avon Landcare Group, and a three-day property management planning course held in the Bass Coast Landcare Network.

For more information visit wgcm.vic.gov.au (Getting involved/Landcare) or contact Marnie Ellis on 1300 094 262.

Wimmera

We welcome Al Stephens as Manager of the Project Platypus (Upper Wimmera Landcare Network). Al has previously worked with Project Platypus and has contributed much to the collective Landcare effort in the Wimmera. Al takes over from John Pye who deserves recognition for his enormous volunteer effort to steer the Landcare network through a period of change and secure a bright future.

The Landcare Victoria Incorporated Grampians Landcare Forum will take place from 29 –31 March 2019 at Halls Gap. The event is being supported by Wimmera and Glenelg Hopkins CMAs and local Landcare facilitators and will have a focus on Aboriginal engagement and participation, and sustainable agriculture.

The Wimmera Regional Landcare Awards will again be incorporated into the Volunteering Recognition Awards in partnership with the Centre for Participation. Nominations open 13 February 2019 and close 13 March 2019. Forms and further details are available on the Wimmera CMA's website.

For more information visit wcm.vic.gov.au (Get involved/Landcare) or contact Joel Boyd on 5382 9919.

In brief

Upcoming Corangamite Rural Women's Forum

A Corangamite Rural Women's Forum will be held at Barwon Park Mansion in Winchelsea on 15 March 2019. The forum will showcase many of the inspiring and influential women in the region with a great range of speakers.

The forum is part of the Corangamite Rural Women's Network, an informal group of local women who volunteer to help plan and deliver workshops, training and farm tours.

The network aims to enhance community resilience by strengthening connections between women and increasing their skills, knowledge and confidence. More than 250 women have participated in the network's activities since the first event in 2014.

For more information contact Corangamite CMA's Regional Agricultural Landcare Facilitator Karen O'Keefe at karen.okeefe@ccma.vic.gov.au



Members of the Corangamite Rural Women's Network working group at Lake Purrumbete in 2017.

Community helps monitor tree health

A group of Strathbogie Ranges residents has developed a tree health guide and survey to identify and monitor eucalypts affected by dieback or tree health decline.

The group is asking the community to help gather information through an online app that has an accompanying field guide to help with tree identification

and measure specific features. The group is keen to find out what the current health of local trees is, whether some species are more or less healthy than others and, if tree health is in decline, how fast is that decline?

Go to the Goulburn Broken CMA website at www.gbcma.vic.gov.au and search for Tree Story Citizen Science Project.

The Victorian Landcare & Catchment Management magazine is published by the Victorian Government Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and distributed in partnership with Landcare Victoria Incorporated 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 Landcare Victoria Incorporated
Phone: 9207 5527 Fax: 9207 5500 Email: info@lvi.org.au

Read the magazine online

To access the Victorian Landcare & Catchment Management magazine online (as web pages or pdfs) go to www.landcarevic.org.au/landcare-magazine/
Back issues of the magazine can be accessed online as pdfs.

Next issue

The next issue of the magazine, to be published in winter 2019, will feature stories on Landcare and health. We are seeking stories on all aspects of health including group health, physical health, mental health, and of course the health of the environments we are working to protect and restore.

Our readers are keen to learn about the successes of different projects, as well as what hasn't worked, and the insights and reflections of your group or network along the way. Please contact the editor with your story ideas and suggestions. The magazine fills up very quickly so please get in touch well before the copy deadline.

Contributions should be sent to the editor by Thursday 21 March 2019.

Carrie Tiffany, editor

Victorian Landcare and Catchment Management Magazine

Email: editorviclandcare@gmail.com



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