

VICTORIAN

# LANDCARE

Spring/Summer 2011 Issue 53

& CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT

## LANDCARE AWARDS FEATURE

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Gecko CLaN pasture success

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Cate Barham – a young achiever

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Elizabeth Balderstone – top primary producer



# Victorian Landcare and Catchment Management

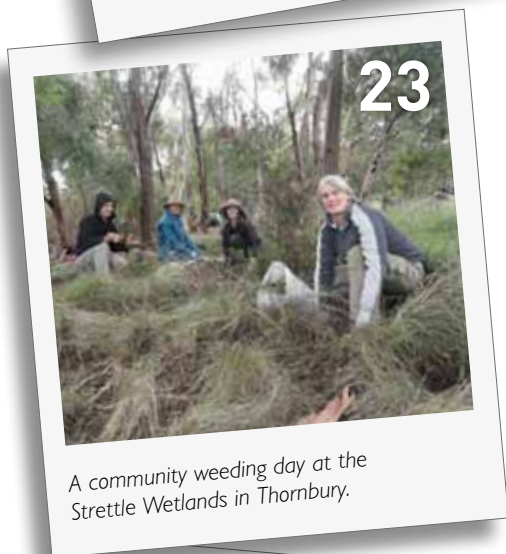
SPRING/SUMMER 2011 ISSUE 53

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A community weeding day at the Strettle Wetlands in Thornbury.



A salinity trial on Elizabeth Balderstone's property at Darriman – fescue is establishing well.

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"Moonrise behind an old gum tree," Robert Gardiner.  
This image was one of the entries in the 2011  
Landcare Photography Competition. See page 28  
for all the category winners.

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# From the Minister

This issue is a testament to the achievers of Landcare – some named and others acknowledged for their behind-the-scenes work. Congratulations to the 24 winners, the highly commended entrants and all of the individuals and groups who were nominated in the 2011 State Landcare Awards.

It was a great pleasure for me to meet the award winners at the recent ceremony held at Government House in Melbourne, as the awards have special significance this year because we celebrate the 25th anniversary of Landcare in Victoria. I would like to personally commend all those volunteers who do so much for Landcare and the environment. Congratulations on your efforts and achievements in the past 25 years. I look forward to the next 25 years alongside future generations of Landcarers.

In this important milestone year, I was pleased to announce grants of \$600,000

to enable Landcare groups and networks throughout the state to mark this milestone. Each of Victoria's ten CMA regions received \$60,000 to distribute to groups for small projects. The Victorian Government is committed to supporting and resourcing Landcare to help achieve real differences to our environment and community.

I have been encouraging groups and networks to apply for one of the 60 Landcare facilitator positions that are part of the Government's \$12 million commitment over the next four years to support Landcare co-ordinators and help local community volunteers to protect and restore Victoria's environment.

The Growing Sustainable Communities Landcare conference at the MCG was another highlight event for me this year. It was a chance for Landcarers to mix with those who shared their common goals and focus, as well as giving us the chance to

reflect on the past and plan for the future. Thank you to the conference organisers, it was an amazing event.

Congratulations are also due to the winners of the Landcare photography competition whose beautiful images are featured in this issue. The photographs really demonstrate the diversity of Landcare.

As the next issue will come out in the new year, I'd like to wish you all a happy and safe holiday. I hope you have a great festive season and I'm certain Landcare 2012 will be just as successful as this year!

Ryan Smith  
Minister for Environment and  
Climate Change



The winners of the 2011 Victorian Landcare Awards with Minister for Environment and Climate Change Ryan Smith, and Governor Chernov (centre), at Government House.

# Landcare through the years



Landcare was founded at Winjallock near St Arnaud, Victoria, on 25 November 1986.

It was formal recognition of a movement that had been evolving for many years. Today

Landcare is a national and international program that has earned great community respect.

To commemorate the 25th anniversary of Landcare here are some of the milestones:

## 1940s

Australian farmers start forming land management groups.

## 1960s

The Soil Conservation Authority establishes the Hanslow Cup, a competition for the best application of soil conservation principles.

## 1970s

Volunteer groups are working to combat soil erosion on a district scale.

## 1980s

The Garden State Committee is formed and the Victorian Farmers Federation Farm Tree Groups get underway. Greening

Australia launches the one billion trees program. The National Soil Conservation Program is established. The Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers gets underway and TreeProject reaches out to farmers, with volunteers growing and planting seedlings on properties across Victoria. The Salinity Bureau starts working with communities on Salinity Management Plans.

## 1983

A dramatic dust cloud rolls into Melbourne and heightens community interest in land degradation issues.

## 1984

The Potter Farmland Project is launched in western Victoria.

## 1986

The Farm Tree and Landcare Association is established.



*In 1986 Joan Kirner, Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands, along with Heather Mitchell, Victorian Farmers Federation President, officially launch Landcare at Winjallock, near St Arnaud.*



*A field day in progress on John Armit's property in the Tambo Valley for the presentation of the 1964 Hanslow Cup.*



## 1988

Glenaroura Land Management Group and Northcote Rotary plant 200 trees. Since then Northcote Rotary, Thornbury Darebin Secondary College and Manningham Rotary have been involved in propagating up to 9000 seedlings each year. More than 70,000 trees have been planted over the life of the project. More recently the Victorian Pajero 4WD Club and Victorian 4WD Rural Response Group have helped with transport and fencing.

## 1989

Alcoa Australia becomes a corporate partner to support Landcare projects across Australia. Other large corporate sponsors follow including: Elders, Sony, Banrock Station Wines, Computershare, Westpac, Coles, Australia Post, Holden and CitiPower.

## 1990s

Landcare goes national and the Australian Government declares the Decade of Landcare.

## 1995

Victorian Landcarer Sue Marriott is awarded a Churchill Fellowship and travels to South Africa, Poland and the United Kingdom. Within two years Landcare is on the national agenda in South Africa. Landcare is now found in 18 countries.

## 1995

Research reveals that 35 per cent of Victorian Landcarers are women.

## 1995

Southern Farming Systems Group forms with a focus on profitable farming in higher rainfall zones (Geelong, Streatham, Hamilton, Gippsland and Tasmania).

## 1997

First Victorian Landcare Network forum is held near Bacchus Marsh.

## 1998

Hindmarsh Shire co-ordinates restoration of corridors of indigenous vegetation across 80 kilometres of farmland to connect two national parks and protect 100 kilometres of the Wimmera River and wetlands. Over 100 metropolitan volunteers attend a community planting weekend with 250 locals. These mass annual planting weekends continue.

## 2000

First International Landcare Conference held in Melbourne.



*City dwellers from Ballarat joined their rural neighbours from the Leigh Catchment Group for a series of field days in 2001.*

## 2002

The Camperdown College Environment Group propagates indigenous plants for restoration projects at Mt Leura and Mt Sugarloaf. The group has also created bush-tucker gardens, established an environment education centre and organised a national wetlands conference which attracted 150 students from across Australia.



*2004. A group of Master Treegrowers learn how sugar gums can be managed to provide sawn timber and fuelwood supplies.*

## 2005

Gippsland-East Gippsland Aboriginal Co-operative undertakes the Tatungoloong revegetation project allowing traditional owners to reclaim, restore and reconnect with the Boole Poole Peninsula.



*Claudia James from the Wallan Environment Group and the 1st Wallan Wallan Scouts at a National Tree Day planting in 2007 along Taylors Creek in Wallan.*

## 2008

The Victorian Landcare Council is established to represent the interests of volunteer Landcare in Victoria.

## 2009

Landcare is at the frontline of recovery efforts after the devastating Black Saturday bushfires.

## 2010

Bidja Bila (Men of the River) Indigenous Landcare Group formed in Victoria's north-east.

## 2010

First Landcare-branded AFL match, Richmond v Sydney (Round 14), is played at the MCG.

## 2011

More than 1200 Landcare, Coast Action/Coastcare, Conservation Management Networks and friends groups are operating in Victoria. Sixty-two Landcare networks provide an umbrella organisation for many of Victoria's Landcare groups. A Victorian Landcare Conference celebrates the 25th anniversary of Landcare.



*In July 2011 Stradbroke Hall is decorated with wattle, banksia, callistemon and hakea blooms for an anniversary event celebrating the Merriman Creek Landcare Group's 26th birthday.*

# Landcare awards recognise outstanding

The carpark was full of utes and the grand ballroom was buzzing as 400 members of Victoria's Landcare community celebrated the 2011 Victorian Landcare Awards at Government House in November.

Governor Alex Chernov AO QC welcomed the guests, congratulated the award nominees and made a special thank you to the award judges. He said the achievements of Landcare in Victoria were a tribute to all who are involved and drew attention to the need for the community to work together in confronting new challenges to the environment.



Elizabeth Balderstone with her DPI Sustainable Farming Award for West Gippsland and Rural Press Primary Producer Award in the garden at Government House.



Cassy Jamieson, Chelsea De Bone, Taylor Johnson and Pea Saunders from Balnarring Primary School after receiving a Highly Commended in the Westpac Education Award.

"Recently we are seeing new environmental challenges. The importance of biodiversity surviving climatic changes will concern all who participate in this outstanding organisation (Landcare)," Governor Chernov said.

Victoria's Minister for Environment and Climate Change Ryan Smith said the awards celebrated the 25th anniversary of Landcare and the great work done by thousands of volunteers across the state to make a difference in their local

environment by supporting and maintaining the great natural assets throughout Victoria.

"Landcare is a grass-roots environmental movement that was started by a group of Victorian farmers in the 1980s and what has been achieved since then deserves our praise and ongoing support," Minister Smith said.

"The winners of the 2011 Victorian Landcare Awards embody the enthusiasm and commitment that has made Landcare



Members of Victoria's Landcare community gathered in the grand ballroom at Government House.



# community effort



Heather Campbell from Landcare Australia Limited, Minister for Environment and Climate Change Ryan Smith, Darren Perry, winner of the Leighton Holdings Indigenous Landcare Award, and Governor Chernov.

in Victoria what it is today and I'd like to congratulate the Highly Commended and all nominees for their solid efforts.

"These Victorians give up their time to make a difference in their local areas and the Victorian Landcare Awards are a great opportunity to celebrate and recognise the real difference volunteers can make to the environment and to our community," Minister Smith said.

"These awards recognise what Landcare is all about, people working together to put the environment first, while strengthening community partnerships.

"I hope that all Victorians will join me in recognising the significant impact that

Landcare has had on our environment and our community," Minister Smith said.

Wurundjeri elder Aunty Di Kerr gave the welcome to country and Catriona Rowntree, presenter for the Channel Nine Network's Getaway program, was the MC for the event. Catriona's grazier husband, James Pettit, is the Chair of the Geelong Landcare Network.

After the ceremony Governor Chernov invited the guests to inspect the state rooms at Government House and enjoy morning tea in the beautiful gardens.

"It's as much your house as it is mine," Governor Chernov said.

## Highly Commended

**The 2011 Victorian Landcare Award judges highly commended the following nominations.**

**Australian Government Individual Landcarer Award** Jean Carnell

**Toshiba Community Group Award** Fish Creek Landcare Group

**Westpac Education Award** Balnarring Primary School

**Urban Landcare Award** Friends of Willow Park

**Rural Press Primary Producer Award** Rick and Jenny Robertson

**The Bushfire Recovery Award** Friends of Robin Hood Reserve

**Long Service to Landcare Award** Rob Youl, Lyn Coulston

**Heather Mitchell Memorial Fellowship** Kim Boswell

**DPI Sustainable Farming Award West Gippsland** Rosemary and Graeme Trease



Heather Campbell from Landcare Australia Limited, Minister for Environment and Climate Change Ryan Smith, Julie Hind from the Friends of Willow Park (winners of the Toshiba Landcare Community Group Award) and Governor Chernov.



David Redfearn, Ray Radford, Ruth Shiel, Paul Prentice and Nicole Lowe from the Friends of Merri Creek accepting the Urban Landcare Award from Minister for Environment and Climate Change Ryan Smith, and Governor Chernov and Heather Campbell from Landcare Australia Limited.



Landcare stalwarts Rob Youl and Horrie Poussard caught up with friends and colleagues at the awards. Rob Youl was highly commended in the Long Service to Landcare Award and Horrie Poussard is one of the initiators of Landcare in Victoria.

# Toshiba Landcare Community Group Award

## Friends of Willow Park

**TOSHIBA**  
Leading Innovation >>>

The Friends of Willow Park, an urban Landcare group in Wodonga, was formed after a successful community campaign to save the park from a local council proposal to build a three-storey aquatic centre on a large parcel of parkland.

The group's President, Julie Hind, moved to a house bordering the park in the same week that the council's plans became public. Julie attended one of the first meetings of a save-the-park group and then went on to become one of the founding members of the Friends of Willow Park.

"It was obvious that we needed to be proactive if we wanted to protect the park into the future and have a say in how it is used and managed," Julie said.

After extensive work in partnership with the City of Wodonga, the Friends of Willow Park have developed a master plan for the park that will guide its future over the next 25 years.

Willow Park is a large urban public open space on the floodplains of the House Creek and surrounded by residential housing. The friends group led the community consultation for the master plan. A questionnaire and a Play and Say Day elicited responses from people about their concerns for the park, what they valued about it and their vision for its future.

The group has undertaken revegetation works, constructed nest boxes for locally endangered squirrel gliders and completed Waterwatch monitoring in the park in



*Floods in Wodonga last year dislodged nest boxes and uprooted newly planted trees in Willow Park, but the friends group is undeterred.*

partnership with local schools, TAFE and youth groups.

From an original 15 members there are now 100 families involved in the Friends of Willow Park and many more attend the group's events. Julie believes the efforts of the group are paying off.

"People are starting to behave differently in the park – there's a real sense of community ownership. I've noticed people stopping to pick up litter and re-stake young plants. This is something that wouldn't have happened before," she said.

The group uses social activities to help avoid burn out. They go out to dinner together once a month and have encouraged more people to attend events with some smart marketing ideas. When the monthly working bees weren't attracting many people they changed the name of the activity to 'Community Gardening in the Park' and got a bigger crowd. Activities for dog owners, families with young children, and gardeners,

have all helped to get the environmental message out in different ways.

The group's initial repairs to House Creek by removing weeds and replanting suffered a blow last year when four flood events destroyed 75 per cent of the new plantings.

But Julie Hind is optimistic that the new works will produce an even better future for the creek, restoring the natural flow of the water and even re-creating former wetlands.

"Biodiversity is a big focus for us. We are working on a biolink that will go beyond the park boundaries and encourage local residents to take stewardship for smaller sections of House Creek that border their properties. We're hoping the success of the Friends of Willow Park will encourage others to take responsibility so we can protect the whole eight kilometres of the creek," Julie said.

The group's vision for the park is an urban bushland loved and enjoyed by all in the community – they are well on the way to achieving that.



*The Friends of Willow Park at a weed identification field day in the park.*





Farmers involved in the Gecko CLaN pasture cropping project assess ground conditions at a grazing management field day in September this year.

“

*Pasture cropping involves sowing annual cereal crops into living perennial pastures so that the crops grow symbiotically with the existing pasture. It's a regenerative technique.*

”

## Australian Government Innovation in Sustainable Farm Practices Award Gecko CLaN Pasture Cropping Project



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A pioneering approach to pasture cropping is producing outstanding results for a Landcare network in the Goulburn Broken area. The Gecko CLaN is an affiliation of 23 Landcare groups from Yarrawonga to Mansfield and Avenel. According to the network's Pasture Cropping Project Officer, Jacqui Campbell, the project got underway because of the drought.

“People were really struggling. Many had to look at their enterprises and find something to give them hope that they would be able to continue. We needed a low-cost, low-input system and that's exactly what pasture cropping is.”

Pasture cropping involves sowing annual cereal crops into living perennial pastures so that the crops grow symbiotically with the existing pasture. It's a regenerative technique. It loosens the soil surface at wider intervals than traditional cropping and provides a greater amount of litter which is returned to the soil's surface. This provides excellent conditions for the germination and growth of native grasses.

Pasture cropping has many benefits. Perennial pastures provide persistence and resilience within the crop and are more efficient at using water. Fertiliser and chemical use is reduced. Soil health and moisture retention is improved and there is an increase in fodder available all year round. With the paddock covered at all times soil structure repairs itself, nutrients and water remain on the property and there are fewer weeds.

The Gecko CLaN was able to transfer the technique, originally developed in northern NSW, to Victoria, through developing an extensive network of demonstration paddocks and using farmers to teach farmers. The network has now received three Caring for our Country grants for the project.

Jacqui Campbell practises what she preaches. Pasture cropping is underway on her family's beef enterprise near Violet Town. According to Jacqui, pasture cropping is suited to a mixed farming operation where stock are being run.

“It's a total change of mindset and it certainly doesn't look as even as traditional cropping, but it's helped many local farmers survive through difficult times. We have paddock trials right across the catchment so farmers can find a local example they can relate to, and our field days are very specific and outcome focused,” Jacqui said.

New developments in the project include a focus on grazing as a management tool and improving local knowledge of native grasses.



Farmers inspect a trial plot at an introduction to pasture cropping field day at Avenel.

# Bushfire Recovery Award

## Nillumbik Shire Council Natural Environment Recovery Working Group

The Shire of Nillumbik includes the communities of Christmas Hills, St Andrews and Strathewen, which were all affected by the Black Saturday fires of February 2009. An area of 98 square kilometres was burnt, including public and private land.

The Natural Environment Recovery Working Group was established in May 2009 to co-ordinate activities and support

programs following the bushfires. The group also makes recommendations to council and regional committees and taskforces on natural environment recovery issues from a community perspective.

The group meets on a monthly basis. It discusses environmental recovery from the level of individual property owners through to catchment management issues.

Topics include group feedback and reports, pest plants and animals, biodiversity and work on public land that impacts on private landholders.

The needs of individual landowners have been brought to the group by Landcare and Community Recovery Committee members and referred to the Rural Extension Officer and the volunteer and Contract Liaison Officer at Council, as well as back to Landcare groups where feasible. This has ensured that assistance is targeted appropriately to ensure sound property management and environmental outcomes.

Dawn and Gary McDonnell from St Andrews believe the support they were offered after the fires was outstanding.

"There were times when we could have walked away from our property – not knowing where to start with erosion, weeds and pest animals as well as the building issues," Dawn said.

The Natural Environment Recovery Working Group has been the focal point in delivering bushfire recovery assistance to landholders in the Shire of Nillumbik and the very high uptake of the support offered is an indication of its success.



Members of the Nillumbik Shire Council Natural Environment Recovery Working Group observe the regeneration at Kinglake National Park 18 months after the Black Saturday bushfire.

## Baw Baw Shire Council

The Bunyip Ridge bushfires on Black Saturday affected many communities in the Baw Baw Shire. After the fires the four main community recovery committees of Labertouche, Drouin West, Longwarry and Jindivick each developed a community recovery plan.

All four committees identified the environment, walking tracks and bushland reserves as priorities for recovery works from donated funds. The Baw Baw Shire Council Natural Environment team applied to the Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority and was successful in obtaining funds to implement these plans.

The project saw walking tracks, bridges, picnic grounds, signage, car parks and



Students from Marist Sion College work on the Bandicoot walking track – a Baw Baw Shire Council fire recovery project.



## Upper Goulburn Landcare Network

Within weeks of the Black Saturday bushfires the Upper Goulburn Landcare Network had held emergency meetings, and with support from the Goulburn Broken CMA diverted its efforts to full-scale bushfire recovery.

The network operates in the Shire of Murrindindi which was devastated by the fires. Nearly half of Murrindindi was burnt including the entire townships of Kinglake and Marysville.

Based in Yea, the Upper Goulburn Landcare Network is a collective of 17 local Landcare groups.

The network identified fencing as an urgent priority in helping fire affected landholders with the recovery effort.

The network swung into action co-ordinating 3310 volunteers from businesses, community groups, service clubs and concerned individuals. The volunteers were equipped with protective clothing, trained in the safe use of tools and



*Volunteers from National Australia Bank braved cold and wet conditions to work on environmental recovery projects organised by the Upper Goulburn Landcare Network.*

supplied with refreshments. The volunteer teams removed 86 kilometres of burnt fencing and rebuilt more than 195 kilometres of fencing.

The network also co-ordinated volunteers working on revegetation. It has planted 17,600 trees and shrubs and distributed a further 15,000 to landholders in need. Native fauna has also benefited. Volunteer teams made timber nesting boxes for large birds and small mammals. The network has erected 49 boxes and distributed a further 116 boxes for landholders to install.

According to David Howie, the Uniting Church Minister serving the bushfire affected region, the enormity of the bushfires and the total devastation of the land that they caused was beyond most people's experience.

"Even beyond the fencing program, it is the Upper Goulburn Landcare Network which has placed a priority on aiding the healing and recovery of the landscape. It is because of their work that we now see some signs of new growth and new life returning to the land," David Howie said.

***All of the bushfire recovery projects acknowledged funding support received from local government, the State and Federal Governments, the corporate sector and community donations.***

revegetation works undertaken at Glen Cromie Park, the Labertouche Flora and Fauna Reserve, the Longwarry Bandicoot Walking Track, Nangara Reserve, Robin Hood Reserve, Picnic Point Reserve and the Jindivick to Nangara Bridle Trail.

At Robin Hood Reserve the council worked with a friends group to rehabilitate the reserve and erect a bushfire memorial for the Drouin West community.

Brian Connelly, Chair of the Drouin West Recovery Committee, said the success of the project can only be measured by a visit to the reserve.

"Particularly on the weekends, you can see the numbers of people using the

facilities that have been installed as part of the project. Respect for the memorial is also evident in the absence of obvious vandalism," he said.

Many new community groups formed after the fires to help manage the different recovery projects. The council developed a friends group manual to assist new groups to get up and running. An environmental calendar of events has also been a great success at publicising environmental activities.

Following the fires there was an inundation of weeds across the affected area. The council also worked in partnership with other agencies to educate, train, equip and support landholders to successfully treat the weed outbreak.



*Longwarry Primary School students helped with the fire recovery effort on National Tree Day.*

# Australian Government Natural Resource Management Award



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## West Gippsland CMA

The West Gippsland CMA's approach to Landcare is based on that of a supportive family – local groups have ownership and a voice while the bigger regional priorities for natural resource management are identified and met. The CMA shares a vision for Landcare as being strong, resilient, effective and unique.

There are five Landcare networks in the region, 70 Landcare groups and almost 2000 community Landcare members. The regional groups and networks have strong local priorities and identities, but with the support of the CMA they also come together under the banner of GippsLandcare to promote strategic co-ordination and create opportunities for investment.

In 2010 GippsLandcare supported the first ever Landcare-branded AFL game. The message, Tigers Roar Support for Landcare – Get Involved Today!, increased awareness of Landcare in the region and right across the state.

The CMA views Landcare as the key mechanism for delivering natural resource management in the region. Local Landcare group action plans and Landcare strategies feed into the Regional Catchment Strategy and its related action plans.

Some of the successes of the ten-year Landcare and CMA partnership include a quarterly Regional Landcare Forum, shared support for on-ground works, employment opportunities and career pathways for Landcare staff, respect and support for community leaders and the recognition and celebration of Landcare achievements.

The five Landcare networks in the region are quick to praise the CMA. Peter Newgreen from the Latrobe Catchment Landcare Network believes the CMA's involvement in the Baw Baw to Strzelecki Biolink Strategy is a good example of a strong partnership that is delivering excellent on-ground outcomes.

"Much of this strength can be directly attributed to the commitment the CMA has to Landcare," Peter said.

Belinda Brennan from the South Gippsland Landcare Network quotes projects including the Cape Liptrap to Bunurong Biodiversity Biolink, the Tarwin Catchment Enhancement Project and Corner Inlet Connections as prime examples of successful CMA partnerships.

Belinda says the support provided by the CMA has meant that Landcare in



*A farm walk during the West Gippsland CMA's Landcare Week activities.*

West Gippsland is going from strength to strength.

The Chief Executive of the CMA meets regularly with the chairs of the five Landcare networks to discuss issues of concern and ensure the continued success and viability of Landcare. The CMA is a good example of the West Gippsland Landcare motto – Landcare is for everyone!



*Representatives from the Bass Coast Landcare Network, Latrobe Catchment Landcare Network, Maffra & District Landcare Network, South Gippsland Landcare Network and Yarram Yarram Landcare Network with West Gippsland CMA board members and staff celebrating 25 years of Landcare at a recent Regional Landcare Forum.*



# Dr Sidney Plowman Travel and Study Award

## Malcolm Thompson



According to Mallee Landcare stalwart Malcolm Thompson, the best time to plant trees was 50 years ago – and the second best time to plant trees is now!

Malcolm has spent the last 18 years working in the Mallee and his commitment to revegetation is legendary.

Malcolm's work has focused on revegetation of indigenous species through tubestock planting and direct seeding, fencing of remnant vegetation, fencing of saline areas, replanting saltbush and salt tolerant trees, sand dune reclamation and weed control programs.

Malcolm is always ready to share his knowledge about native vegetation techniques and the value of biodiversity. He makes the time to talk to landholders,



*Malcolm Thompson prepares a site at Ned's Corner for direct seeding.*

Landcare groups, school groups – in fact anyone who will listen.

Malcolm will use the award to travel to Western Australia to investigate successful revegetation projects. He will visit the Men of the Trees (MOTT) – an active group of 2000 volunteers who plant more than 500,000 trees each season. MOTT has

been operating since 1979. The group is acknowledged across Australia for its leadership role in engaging with the community, partners and volunteers.

Malcolm will also view demonstrations of equipment with the aim of identifying new revegetation technologies that can be trialled in the Mallee.

## Heather Mitchell Memorial Fellowship Karen Brisbane



Karen Brisbane has been working in Landcare in the Goulburn Valley for 12 years. She co-ordinated the Goulburn Murray Landcare Network for ten years and in 2010 was appointed as the Victorian Government's first corporate Landcare facilitator, hosted by the Goulburn Broken CMA.

Karen has been involved with every aspect of Landcare. She has worked in local area planning, group project support, funding and report writing, co-ordinating Green Corps teams, running Rabbit Buster, FoxOff and weed programs, developing and delivering schools education programs, co-ordinating Crown land grants, managing environmental restoration projects and organising numerous bus trips, field days, displays and events.

More recently, Karen has developed a sponsorship toolkit and a statewide guide

to community grants and managed the Goulburn Broken Regional Landcare Awards.

Karen also volunteers with the Victorian Landcare Network, assisting with the organisation, co-ordinating meetings and commenting on documents and processes.

Karen's dedication and commitment to Landcare is known throughout the region, across Victoria, across Australia, and even internationally. In 2009 Karen was the Australian Landcare International Fellow. She spent 26 days visiting natural resource management projects in the US and gave 15 presentations about local Landcare.

The Heather Mitchell Fellowship will allow Karen to travel to northern Thailand to assist landholders who are developing whole farm plans and dealing with salinity issues in their rice paddies. Karen's



*Karen Brisbane hopes to create positive links between Thailand and Australian Landcare through her fellowship.*

connection with the program, called Soil Doctors, came about when she hosted four delegates from the Thailand Land Development Department to visit irrigation and salinity projects in the Goulburn Valley.

Karen also plans to enrol in the Goulburn Valley's Fairley Leadership course. The course encourages and develops leadership qualities for the benefit of the regional community.

“

*There are so many new things happening, and that gives me a lot of energy. All this means I have the greatest job in the world.*

”



*Belinda Brennan is the koala with Rob Jones from the South Gippsland Landcare Network board at the Foster market.*

## Australian Government Local Landcare Facilitator/Coordinator Award Belinda Brennan



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Belinda Brennan believes that everybody should be involved in Landcare – she just needs an opportunity to chat with them and explain why! Belinda is the Co-ordinator of the South Gippsland Landcare Network. Over the past four years she has developed, co-ordinated and overseen the delivery of over \$1.8 million of Landcare projects for the region.

Belinda is a great believer in thinking outside the square. When she learnt that 50 per cent of people who buy land in South Gippsland are not from the area she created a welcome to Landcare pack and convinced 17 real estate agents to distribute it.

The One Million Trees for South Gippsland program owes a great deal to Belinda's dedication and enthusiasm. Belinda developed a successful partnership with South Gippsland Water to fund propagation kits, develop a showcase native garden at Mossvale Park and provide small tree planting grants for groups.

She also co-ordinates the Friends of Strzelecki Koalas project. The project

is identifying key patches of remnant vegetation and areas of revegetation to create biolinks that increase the long-term ecological resilience of the landscape and ultimately help protect native species. Belinda has been engaging the community in the project with displays, seed collection, propagation, tree planting and weed control.



*Belinda Brennan hands out propagation kits at the One Million Trees launch.*

Belinda's family is actively involved in Landcare too. At the launch of the One Million Trees project her children, husband and parents came along to lend a hand. Belinda believes that work/life balance is an important issue for people in Landcare and when managed properly it can help prevent burn out.

"I work school hours so I get to spend time with my children. But they also know I often have meetings in the evenings. They are happy to be involved in Landcare activities on the weekends such as dressing up as koalas or walking in the Arty Gras Parade."

Belinda says working in a volunteer organisation gives her opportunities to be flexible and creative and to develop new programs.

"There's a lot of energy in the network. If someone comes up with a great idea we always try and give it a go. The job I started four years ago certainly isn't the job I'm doing now. There are so many new things happening, and that gives me a lot of energy. All this means I have the greatest job in the world."





Corangamite Shire worked with the South West Waste Reduction Group to provide free kitchen scrap bins to encourage residents to compost at home and through the kerbside greenwaste system.

“

Community education and awareness is one of the council's priorities. Council staff regularly attend community events providing environmental advice, giving away indigenous plants and handing out Landcare flora and fauna brochures to local residents.

”

## Local Government Landcare Partnership Award Corangamite Shire Council



For locals in the Corangamite shire the 'what's on' page of the council's website is the first port of call for finding out about community events.

The Corangamite Shire Council has worked collaboratively with local community groups for many years to address natural resource management issues.

Community education and awareness is one of the council's priorities. Council staff regularly attend community events providing environmental advice, giving away indigenous plants and handing out Landcare flora and fauna brochures to local residents. The council also works in partnership with many community groups helping them with media and promotional support.

An environmental and sustainability workshop series has been popular. This year's topics included sustainable living, living green while renting and Brolga workshops.

The council provides a range of incentives to local residents, businesses and groups. There is an environment improvement program, a community grants scheme and funding for Conservation Volunteers Australia and Green Corps crews.

Landcare projects are always underway. The council works with businesses, neighbouring councils, schools and



Cobden Scouts help to plant over 800 native plants at Corangamite's Cobden Lake in June this year.

community groups on Landcare initiatives. Pest plant control programs with Landcare networks have been critical for the local environment. A partnership with DSE is helping to map significant biodiversity assets and a Rural Roadside Management Plan is guiding the management of weed control, biodiversity conservation and fire prevention. The plan, which was developed with a stakeholder reference group, covers the entire local area.

The council has worked closely with the Cobden Lake project team on weed control, revegetation and improving facilities. The council has assisted the group with funding applications, volunteer crews,

media and publicity, walking track designs, community planning and co-ordinating weed control and planting activities.

Local groups are quick to praise the efforts of the council. Anne Carrucan from the Mt Leura and Mt Sugarloaf Development Committee said many of the committee's achievements wouldn't have been possible without the technical and financial support provided by the council.

"We had help with funding, volunteer and work crew assistance, administration support and publicity materials. Our group is looking forward to many more years of successful collaboration with the Corangamite Shire Council," she said.



# Australian Government Coastcare Award



CARING  
FOR  
OUR  
COUNTRY

## Friends of the Great South West Walk

For the last 30 years a dedicated band of volunteers has been maintaining a 250-kilometre walking track along the capes, bays and beaches of the south west coast.

According to Friends of the Great South West Walk Works Co-ordinator Gordon Page the group concentrates on reducing the effects of water runoff from the track, controlling weeds and general erosion works.

"We have a membership base of around 150 and there is an associated walking group with 40 members. We send a crew of volunteers out to the track three days a week – rain, hail or shine!

"I head out with a crew every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday and it's a great day. It's mainly retirees. We have people from all walks of life – a wool manager, a chippy, a lab technician – even a retired headmaster."

The coastal erosion along the walk is due to the extreme elements. The cliffs and dunes are continually being pounded by the relentless winds and surf coming off the Southern Ocean. The walking track reduces the impact of foot traffic by keeping walkers on a defined path. A range of water bars has also been installed to minimise gouging and to disperse the water over a broader area.

The group's technical abilities at controlling and mitigating coastal erosion have been recognised by local agencies. Their methods have been trialled and assessed over a 30-year period.

Friends of the Great South West Walk run regular guided walks along different sections of the track as well as one supported walk every year where walkers can tackle the whole 250-kilometre track.



*Friends of the Great South West Walk work with students from Wesley College spreading Coast Wattle to help stop erosion.*



Gordon says the group is motivated by a love of the bush and a sense that they are doing something important. He has walked the track eight times and is now a support driver for the two-week walk.

"Last year one of the walkers recorded 110 different species of birds along the track. People come from all over Australia and even overseas to do the walk. While the friends group maintains the track they are able to enjoy the environment without damaging it."

The friends group has forged many partnerships with the community. They have links with two Portland Rotary clubs, the Lions club, schools, field naturalists, Parks Victoria, DSE, the Point Danger Committee of Management, Birds Australia and many local Landcare groups. An association with Business and Community Links sees a local business donate a worker for a day.

The Friends of the Great South West Walk are a skilled group of volunteers who show outstanding dedication to protecting and conserving the environment of the south west coast.





Cate Barham (centre) with friends supporting the Barwon Coast 'Bin it or Swim in it' campaign by wearing t-shirts to the beach during peak visitor periods.

## Be Natural Young Landcare Leader Award

Cate Barham



When Cate Barham was growing up at Stawell, in the Grampians, she looked forward to the annual trip to the coast with great excitement. Now, at just 21, Cate is one of the founding members of the Ocean Grove Coastcare Group and one of Victoria's most inspiring young environmental leaders.

Cate left Stawell to study visual arts, but after a year she became fascinated with the flora and fauna she was drawing and wanted to know more about it. She transferred to a conservation and land management course in Geelong and hasn't looked back. Participating in Volunteer Tour Guide Training with the Queenscliff Marine Discovery Centre also cemented her love for the coastal environment.

After moving to Ocean Grove two years ago Cate helped form the Ocean Grove Coastcare Group and took on the position of secretary.

Cate has helped to co-ordinate working bees for removing garden escapees from the dunes around Collendina, hosted walk and talk events along the foreshore, volunteered at the Bellarine Landcare

Group Nursery and organised Clean up Australia Day activities. She also regularly supports other community groups including the Friends of Ocean Grove Nature Reserve, Friends of Buckley Park, and Friends of Barwon Bluff by attending their activities and events.

Cate is recognised in the group as one of its most active and enthusiastic members. She has actively helped recruit many other members to the group with a special emphasis on engaging young people in caring for their local natural environment.

Cate is currently working as a co-ordinator for the Bellarine Landcare Group and is enjoying the opportunity to broaden her skills. And she loves living close to the coast.

"I love the beach. I walk along the beach every day with my dog Pockets and boyfriend Mitch – Pockets is a Jack Russell cross. His official title is 'Ocean Grove Coastcare Responsible Pet Ownership Mascot'," Cate said.

Cate's passion for art helped her to discover her interest in the environment, and she's not quite ready to let the art go.

Her dreams for the future include teaching and working in a museum illustrating fauna and flora specimens.

“

*After moving to Ocean Grove two years ago Cate helped form the Ocean Grove Coastcare Group and took on the position of secretary.*

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Max Skeen on the banks of his beloved Wimmera River.

# Long Service to Landcare Award



## Max Skeen

To the people of the Wimmera, Max Skeen is a local Landcare champion. Over his 25 years of involvement in Landcare he has helped to transform the Wimmera landscape with millions of trees, shrubs and grasses established on vast areas of private and public land. Max's efforts have improved the condition of waterways, soil, biodiversity and habitat across many projects.

During his many years as the Regional Landcare Co-ordinator with the Wimmera CMA, Max supported the formation of the Hindmarsh Landcare Network and the development of the Project Hindmarsh annual planting weekend. Project Hindmarsh has since established more than 1.5 million trees to create wildlife corridors linking the Little Desert National Park to the Big Desert National Park, and the Wimmera River to the South Australian border.

Max has also been a local leader in the effort to strengthen partnerships between Wimmera Landcare groups and local Indigenous community groups. He has worked to develop relationships with Traditional Owners from the Wotjabaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagalk people.

In 2008 Max organised a Mountains to the Mallee Walk that saw Wimmera Landcare

groups connect with Traditional Owners along the Wimmera River. Max supported and encouraged more than 400 people on the 350-kilometre walk that took 15 days to complete.

After the walk Max said, "The truth is, we don't really know our landscape until we experience it first hand. Getting out and physically being there, observing it and absorbing history from locals takes our understanding to a new level."

Leanne Jackman, chair of Project Platypus, believes that Max has been a great leader for Wimmera Landcare.

"During my time in Landcare I've noticed the respect that Max is given from landholders, agencies, investors and

groups. He's able to relate to landholders at a grassroots level with a genuine interest in what they are doing.

"Max never looks for recognition, but he's always there to support and provide direction. Max has a great ability to look forward objectively and advocate for the interests of the environment and local landholders. The Wimmera is a better place because of him," she said.

Although he retired last year Max is continuing his involvement in Landcare through a position on the Hindmarsh Landcare Network Board and the Wimmera River Improvement Committee.

Thanks to Paul Carracher from the *Wimmera-Mail Times* for the photograph.

## Landcare Honour Roll

A 2011 Victorian Landcare Long Service Honour Roll has been compiled to mark the 25th anniversary of Landcare in Victoria. The honour roll was an opportunity for groups and networks to acknowledge the work of their longest serving and most committed members.

There are 363 people listed on the roll across four lengths of service, from 10 years to more than 25 years. The honour roll can be viewed on the Landcare Gateway. Go to [www.landcarevic.net.au](http://www.landcarevic.net.au) and search for honour roll.



# Australian Government Individual Landcarer Award

Shaun and Lisa McIntyre



CARING  
FOR  
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COUNTRY

Shaun and Lisa McIntyre from Karabeal in the Grampians have been at the helm of the Panyyabyr Landcare Group since its formation 18 years ago. Shaun and Lisa met at agricultural college and their relationship grew from a shared passion for the environment and sustainable farming.

Shaun's family have farmed at Karabeal for five generations, while Lisa is originally from Melbourne. Lisa and Shaun were keen to start a Landcare group in the area – to work on environmental issues, but also so Lisa could get to know the locals.

In 1993 Lisa and Shaun sent out a leaflet to all of the families who live in the Panyyabyr area and the group hasn't looked back since. From an original membership of 30 families, the group has grown to include 54 families. Shaun has been the president of the group since its first meeting and Lisa has been the secretary.

The couple have been the driving force behind most of the group's activities, organising field days, pasture field trials and weed control, soil health, farm forestry and direct seeding projects. Lisa keeps everyone in the area up-to-date with what's happening in the group. Many activities are conducted jointly with the neighbouring Mirrantawa Landcare Group.

Lisa says a diverse range of projects keeps everybody interested.

"One of the group's recent projects involves treating the local landscape as one large farm and aims to join all of the local residents and farms to the Wannon River and swamps by extensive vegetation corridors."

*Lisa McIntyre (in the white jumper) speaks at a perennial pastures field day run by the Panyyabyr Landcare Group. Lisa says field days are important social events – a chance to kick the gravel, share a cup of tea and catch up with each other.*



*From left, Lachlan, Miranda, Lisa, Airlie, Shaun and Alec McIntyre inspect some Landcare works on their property at Karabeal.*

Shaun and Lisa believe that Landcare has really improved the local environment and this encourages them to continue working in the group.

Lisa also credits the achievements of the group with strong support from the committee and especially from the treasurer, Colleen Lomas.

Shaun and Lisa have an inclusive approach to running the group. They listen to the community and have developed good relationships with the local natural resource management agencies.

"The group has a great social and community ethos. It is inclusive of all family members with lots of room for the informal get togethers that cement

relationships. The success of this could be seen during the stresses of the drought years and the Grampians fires," Lisa says.

Lisa hasn't considered the possibility of burnout. She says the future for the group is looking bright.

"We've got second generation members getting involved now and lots of exciting new projects on the go, so it's looking good."

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*Shaun and Lisa have an inclusive approach to running the group. They listen to the community and have developed good relationships with the local natural resource management agencies.*

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Darren Perry on Lindsay Island, one of three islands in the Murray River that stretch between Wentworth and the Victorian border. Darren says the islands are some of the richest sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage in the whole of Victoria.

## Leighton Holdings Indigenous Award

Darren Perry



Darren Perry, a Ngintait man from Swan Hill, has been critical to the success of several major environmental projects at

Mulcra Island – one of north west Victoria's most culturally sensitive sites.

Mulcra Island is an anabranch of the Murray River. The drought and low river levels of recent years prompted the need for an environmental watering program that began in 2007. More recently the construction of weirs and reservoirs at Mulcra Island has helped to protect the island and allow for the efficient management of environmental water flows.

Mulcra Island is an important cultural site for local Indigenous people – surveys have identified scarred trees, hearths, campsites, middens and burial grounds on the island.

Darren Perry has been working in the cultural heritage field for many years and has a family connection to Mulcra Island through his ancestry. Darren helped to develop two cultural heritage management plans that protected the culturally significant sites during the construction of five regulators and stop banks on Mulcra Island.

The cultural heritage management plans allowed for Indigenous people to have input into planning the construction works, protecting culturally significant sites and

managing any new sites found during construction. The plans were among the largest of their type implemented in Victoria. They covered an area of 3000 hectares, involved extensive construction works and included five Indigenous stakeholder groups.

Darren led two cross-cultural training sessions with private construction contractors working on the project. The sessions were run by Indigenous community members together with the Mallee CMA and involved 45 contractors undertaking ground-disturbance works at the island.

Darren believes the project is important not just because it protects the cultural sites, but because it revives the natural environment from where the Ngintait people's culture grew.

"I was taught by elders how to identify sites – how to care for our culture and to protect it.

"We need a legacy to hand on to future generations. Our way of doing things is to look after our past and to hand it on – keeping the environment healthy is a vital part of this," Darren said.

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*The project is important not just because it protects the cultural sites, but because it revives the natural environment from where the Ngintait people's culture grew.*

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Proud winners at the 2011 South Gippsland local Landcare Network Awards.

“

*The SGLN staff credit the many dedicated volunteers who undertake the on-ground work with making the network so successful.*

”

# CitiPower and Powercor Landcare Network Award

## South Gippsland Landcare Network



The South Gippsland Landcare Network (SGLN) is made up of 18 Landcare groups and covers an area of 4000 square kilometres across the shires of South Gippsland, Cardinia, Bass Coast and Baw Baw.

The network was formed in 1995 by a key group of volunteers. It represents

the 712 families involved in Landcare in South Gippsland – approximately 2000 individuals. The network is involved with the local community to improve the long-term sustainability of farming and the environment. The focus is on finding practical solutions to land management issues.

The SGLN is managed by a board of 12 enthusiastic volunteer members. The work is challenging, especially when it comes to sourcing funds; however, members have been quick to innovate, finding new partners and even expanding the range of projects they are undertaking. In the last four years the network has developed, co-ordinated and overseen the delivery of more than \$1.8 million worth of Landcare projects.

The network operates under a strategic plan with six key themes: caring for our land; Landcare groups and memberships; funding; collaborations and partnerships; education, communication and promotion; and, governance.

In 2009 the SGLN was entered on the

Register of Environmental Organisations and established the South Gippsland Landcare Fund. The network is one of only a handful of Landcare organisations to be entered on the register and be granted deductible gift recipient status.

The network currently has 13 major projects underway. These include projects for new landholders, the enhancement of the Tarwin catchment, pest plant and animal control, a Cape Liptrap to Bunurong biodiversity biolink, healthy soils, targeted land stewardship, a catchment profile for Corner Inlet and a coastal Gippsland Bridal Creeper project.

The network's two showcase projects are One Million Trees for South Gippsland and the Friends of the Strzelecki Koalas.

The SGLN staff credit the many dedicated volunteers who undertake the on-ground work with making the network so successful. The strength of the network is also evident in the number of organisations who continue to support it and the range of new partners who have joined in recent years.



A remnant protection field day at Koonwarra.

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*Kids can get a bit lost in the middle years. We know that hands on learning means they are more likely to retain information, so focusing our studies on the creek has educational as well as social benefits.*

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*Ballarat Christian College students in front of their organic vegetable gardens.*

## Westpac Education Award



### Ballarat Christian College

Hanging out at the creek doesn't mean goofing off for the year 9 students at Ballarat Christian College. The students devote seven hours a week to the creek project and use it to focus their studies in science, ecology, geography, natural resources and organics.

The creek is also at the centre of a leadership program where year 9 students buddy with students from grade 1 and 2 as environmental mentors. As the knowledge and confidence of the students has increased they have taken their environmental message to the broader community as well – giving presentations at the 2011 Melbourne Water Kids Teaching Kids Conference.

The creek is a stormwater system that runs through the school grounds, feeds into the Yarrowee Creek and then connects to the Leigh and Barwon Rivers. According to year 9 co-ordinators Giselle Greene and Andrew Kynoch, before the project got underway the creek was weed and snake infested and strictly out of bounds for students.

"After four years of intensive work the creek is now an asset for the school. We've removed the weeds and the

rubbish, installed a sediment trap, done a lot of revegetation work and established an organic vegetable garden. There's a great sense of pride among the year nines who take turns in maintaining the site each year. Students really enjoy spending their free time at the creek," Giselle said.

According to Giselle the year 9 cohort was selected to be the creek caretakers as it can be a tricky year to keep students engaged.

"Kids can get a bit lost in the middle years. We know that hands on learning means they are more likely to retain information, so focusing our studies on the creek has educational as well as social benefits."

On any school day at the college, year 9 students will be found at the creek completing science and environment related school work as well as redeveloping and stabilising an offshoot of the creek, weeding, tending the organic garden and undertaking maintenance tasks. A recent project involves building a wood-fired pizza oven so the students can host events and cook their own organic food.

Waterwatch monitoring is also an important activity. Rebecca George,

Waterwatch Education Officer with the Corangamite CMA, says the students involved in the creek project are environmental leaders for the school and for the wider community.

"They are a very dedicated and passionate bunch. It's clear they want to do what's best for the health of their creek and it's been inspiring to see them keep up the water quality monitoring each year."

*"I like being able to remove the reeds from the creek as well as observe the macro-invertebrates,"*

Heidi Monkman, year 9.

*"The creek is great because I get to work outside and get wet! It helps to break up a busy week,"*

Ross Weightman, year 9.



# Urban Landcare Award

## Friends of Merri Creek



Department of  
Sustainability  
and Environment

Merri Creek is one of Melbourne's much loved urban waterways. It is the longest tributary of the Yarra River and runs from the Great Dividing Range through the northern suburbs of Melbourne to join the Yarra at Dights Falls in Abbotsford.

The Friends of Merri Creek urban Landcare group was formed in 1988 to revegetate the creek and enhance and preserve the native grasslands along its banks. The friends also help direct the planning and management of the creek through their role on the Merri Creek Management Committee.

Ray Radford has been the secretary of the group for 15 years. Ray used to go running along the creek. He saw people doing large scale plantings during the bicentennial in 1988 and decided to get involved.

Ray says the changes to the creek environment since that time have been enormous. Many areas have been opened up and made accessible with pathways, and the revegetation work has greatly improved the local landscape.

"In the 1960s the southern area of Merri Creek was referred to as a rat infested drain. Today it is a much loved

environmental asset, enjoyed by the many people who walk, run and cycle along its banks," Ray said.

Friends of Merri Creek have spearheaded public advocacy for the conservation of the creek and protected it from numerous development threats. As well as its many projects in the southern area the group is also active north of the Western Ring Road, where much of the land along the creek is privately owned.

The Friends of Merri Creek have led major campaigns to save native grasslands at Craigieburn (Galgi Ngarrk) and Campbellfield (Bababi Marning) which resulted in them being declared as reserves in 1998.

The group holds a number of working bees which involve planting, weeding, litter clean-ups, monthly water quality monitoring, quarterly bird surveys and an annual harvest of Kangaroo Grass (for use in plantings).

More than 70,000 indigenous plants have been planted by the group since 2000. Over the last seven years they have held more than 300 different activities involving 3400 volunteers.



*The Friends of Merri Creek during a planting day at the Cooper Street grasslands (Bababi Marning) in Campbellfield.*

According to Ray, activities that are highly visible, like those along the well-used Merri shared path, attract more volunteers than those in less visible locations, like the grasslands.

"We can put up signs along the pathways and let people know about activities along the path, but it's harder at other places. Getting more young people involved has also been a priority for us. We've noticed that fauna events, like bird surveys, attract more young people and we recently set up a Facebook page to help spread the word," Ray said.

A survey of Growling Grass Frogs along the creek is one of the group's upcoming events. The Friends of Merri Creek newsletter was recently renamed the *Merri Growler* in honour of the frog.

*The Friends of Merri Creek show the results after a day of weeding at the Strettle Wetlands.*



“

*More than 70,000 indigenous plants have been planted by the group since 2000. Over the last seven years they have held more than 300 different activities involving 3400 volunteers.*

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# Rural Press Primary Producer Award

## DPI Sustainable Farming Award\* West Gippsland



RURAL PRESS LTD



Department of  
Primary Industries

### Elizabeth Balderstone

Elizabeth Balderstone sees herself as the custodian of her property Warrigal Creek at Darriman, near Yarram, and she's very aware of its heartrending history. Prior to European settlement the area was the home of the Brataualung clan of the Gunaikurnai people. In 1843 a massacre of these people took place, believed to be on the banks of Warrigal Creek.

Elizabeth's connection with the property began in the 1970s when she met her future husband, Alistair Irving, and his father John – both keen tree planters.

Elizabeth and Alistair were early members of the Stradbroke/Woodside Farm Trees Group and then Elizabeth joined the Woodside Landcare Group when it formed in 1989.

Alistair died in 1987 and some years later the larger family farming partnership was split. Elizabeth has continued the focus on improving productivity and sustainable land management practices on her property.



*Elizabeth Balderstone in a belt of revegetation that was direct seeded in 2005. The site links up with Jack Smith Lake. A variety of different species were seeded including grasses and understorey plants with seed provided by the local seedbank.*

Since 1995 Elizabeth has completely fenced off and revegetated the entire length of Warrigal Creek and its tributaries that run through the property – significantly increasing its biodiversity values. A conservation covenant has been placed over 80 hectares of the property, including 49 hectares which adjoin the Jack Smith Lake State Game Reserve, which are fenced and managed as a Wildlife Management Co-operative with Parks Victoria. More than 2000 trees have been planted in this area.

The 1378-hectare farm supports a merino flock, a prime lamb enterprise, a herd of beef breeders and lucerne production under irrigation for hay and silage. A whole farm plan has guided Elizabeth's farm management, but she views it as a dynamic document and is constantly reviewing it to see where improvements can be made.

"I'm very conscious that what we thought were good practices in the past, with the benefit of hindsight, were not always so. I have a strong belief that fate has made me the custodian of this land and that I'm responsible for trying to restore the balance, and leave it in a healthier and more sustainable condition."

Elizabeth has improved pasture management on the property, conducted salinity trials, and monitored resource use to minimise greenhouse gas emissions. She credits her generous and enthusiastic family, staff and advisers for helping to transform the farm.

"At the beginning the task seemed impossibly daunting, but now we have entered our second stage with the establishment of new corridors and shelter belts. The goal is that 15 per cent or more of the property will be in protected and non-grazed areas.

"We are also increasing our focus on establishing persistent, drought tolerant perennial pastures, especially with the challenges and changes presented by climate change, and given our fragile coastal sandy soils."

Elizabeth says she sometimes wonders what Alistair Irving and his father would think of the changes to the property if they were able to see it today.

"There's still a lot of work to do, but the change is encouraging. In the last 20 years Landcare has really transformed our local landscape for the better."

“

*I have a strong belief that fate has made me the custodian of this land and that I'm responsible for trying to restore the balance, and leave it in a healthier and more sustainable condition.*

”

**\*DPI Sustainable Farming Awards were granted in five of the ten CMA regions. No nominations were received for some regions. In other regions the independent judges deemed that no nominations adequately addressed all of the relevant criteria.**



## DPI Sustainable Farming Award North East Neil Paulet and Janice Horsfield

Neil Paulet, his wife, Janice Horsfield, and their two sons have developed a range of good management practices on their cattle grazing property in the Tallangatta Valley.

Neil and Janice bought the original property in 1988 and have since expanded, purchasing three more parcels of land. They run a 325-hectare cattle grazing operation and have more than 300 hectares of bush.

Neil says the property was in a fairly ordinary condition when they first bought it.

"The bush wasn't in the right location to be useful to the stock for shade and there were very few trees on the grazing country. It was clear we needed trees for shade and shelter."

Neil and Janice have now revegetated 95 per cent of the creek frontages, waterways

and gullies on the properties. They also have a 28-hectare agroforestry plot on some steep country.

Neil has lost count of the number of trees they've put in, but he says it would be between 30,000 and 40,000. He credits his parents with getting him started on tree planting. They valued trees on their Gippsland dairy farm, starting with planting Cypress Pines for windbreaks in the 1950s.

Livestock management on the properties is based upon strategic rotational grazing. Cattle are grazed at high intensity on small areas for short periods and are then rotated around the farm. This promotes strong pasture growth and recovery rates, maintains ground cover and improves soil and livestock health.



*Neil Paulet and his son James on the family cattle grazing property in the Tallangatta Valley.*

Perennial pastures have been established, electric fencing is extensive and off stream water supplies have been installed.

Neil has been an active member of the Tallangatta Valley Landcare Group for over 15 years and is currently its secretary. He is the Immediate Past President of the Mitta to Murray Landcare Network.

## DPI Sustainable Farming Award Port Phillip and Westernport Faye Tuchtan and Graham Wood



Graham Wood and Faye Tuchtan are innovative, high profile business leaders in the Bass Valley who have embraced Landcare and become two of its most stalwart advocates.

Faye manages a stud cattle genetics and seedstock business and Graham operates an agricultural machinery sales company. They farm cattle on two properties – south of Grantville and at Bass.

Both properties were very run down when they were purchased, with poor soil health, extensive weed infestations, derelict fences, water quality problems and unprotected areas of remnant vegetation in poor condition. They have worked tirelessly to improve

*Graham Wood and Faye Tuchtan in front of the dam they built on their property at Bass. The dam has ended their reliance on mains water.*

the properties and maximise their commercial return in line with principles of environmental sustainability.

According to Faye it was an environmental best management practice course and the local Landcare people who motivated them to get the works underway.

"We've been trying to do things more naturally right across the farm – improving soil health, minimising fertilisers, breeding cattle that produce less methane, revegetation, protecting remnants, recycling silage wrap and using less power and fuel – there are a lot of improvements that can be made."

Graham and Faye have held many field days on their properties. They are known throughout the region as a couple who use and promote Landcare principles and practices and are always keen to share their experiences with others.

## DPI Sustainable Farming Award Corangamite Troy Missen

Troy Missen has developed a farming system that matches land use to land class. His property at Werneth, south of Ballarat, has been in his family since 1987. Troy took over the farm in 1994 and runs a cropping, grazing, lucerne and farm tree enterprise.

Over time Troy has expanded the business, buying more land, leasing other country and developing extensive share farming and contracting operations.

Troy's interest in sustainable farming led him to no-till cropping. He uses mapping software to identify and overlay information obtained through the use of crop sensors, plant testing, zonal soil testing and harvest yield maps so that changes in productivity can be compared across years and between paddocks. Inputs such as fertiliser, gypsum and lime are used strategically to address soil type specific issues and nutrient applications are based on soil moisture and likely crop responses.

Troy says his involvement in the No Till Farmers Association has been critical for the changes he's made on the farm. In 2008 he changed over to a full control traffic system after seeing demonstrations on farms in Queensland.

"With full control traffic we use the same defined track whenever we put a machine over the crop. This means we sacrifice a narrow strip of compacted soil, but the rest of the soil will never have a wheel over it again."

According to Troy the narrow traffic strips become compacted like roads – they are easier to drive and require less fuel and less horsepower. It also makes the paddocks accessible when they are wet.

Troy's attention to detail is paying dividends. Improved farming practices, such as stubble retention and soil conservation techniques such as cover cropping that retain groundcover and enhance moisture retention, are resulting in higher farm productivity. The no-till sowing and controlled traffic approach improves soil structure and growing conditions, while the combination of these practices is predicted to increase soil carbon over time.

Revegetation has also been one of Troy's priorities. He has fenced his section of the Little Woody Yaloak Creek, removed gorse and replanted the riparian areas to complement the remnant native vegetation.



*Troy, Carly and Joel Missen standing alongside Little Woody Yaloak Creek that was fenced and revegetated in 1999.*

"The sheep used to camp in the creek during the summer and erode the banks, but since they've been out the whole area has come back beautifully. Last year we had a big flood over summer, but the creek held up well and we had no damage."

Improved soil structure and groundcover has reduced water turbidity running off the farm and the water in the Little Woody Yaloak Creek is clearer. The index of stream condition in the creek increased from average in 2003 to good in 2009.

Troy is an active member of the Woody Yaloak Catchment Group. In 2000 he took on the role of GIS co-ordinator, maintaining project details and training local farmers and he now serves on the committee.

Troy left school early to farm. He says it would have been nice to have gone on further and got a degree, but there are plenty of opportunities to educate yourself in farming.

"There are so many top farmers around who share their knowledge through field days and trials and different groups. Cam Nicholson from the Woody Yaloak Catchment Group is a good example. Whenever Cam asks me to have a go at a trial I say yes, because I always learn something."



*Troy Missen in his lupin crop. Troy established the plantation in the background in 1996. It has been very successful at controlling a saline soak that had been increasing in size.*





*Rick and Jenny Robertson enjoy their bushland and swamp remnant. The site is protected with a conservation covenant*

## DPI Sustainable Farming Award East Gippsland

### Rick and Jenny Robertson

Rick and Jenny Robertson have managed their 1000-hectare merino sheep and fine wool property at Bengworden for 22 years. They are both active members of the Bengworden Landcare Group and have a shared interest in sustainable farming.

Rick and Jenny have established more than 100 kilometres of shelterbelt tree lines across the property. The tree lines work as natural linkages across the landscape, complementing a 23-hectare area of bushland and swamp protected by a covenant.

A further 38 hectares of sandy ridges on the property is used as a plantation woodlot for sawlog production. This has optimised the return from country that has a poor carrying capacity and protects it from erosion. Salinity has also been an issue. Salt affected land adjacent to the foreshore of the Gippsland Lakes has been reclaimed with a 10-hectare plot of saltbush. The saltbush also provides shelter and a valuable reserve of green feed for lambing ewes in harsh weather.

Despite these improvements, diminishing commodity prices, drought, crop failure and looming debt were threatening the property. In 2008 Rick and Jenny happened to see an ABC Landline program on NSW farmer Nigel Kerin's success with regenerative farming. The Robertsons' three daughters were watching too and

they encouraged Rick to give it a go.

Rick and Jenny reassessed the property and under the guidance of consultants moved towards a regenerative farming system. They set up an extensive laneway system to improve stock management, introduced cell grazing, closely analysed their stocking rates in conjunction with rainfall charts and projected feed budgets and introduced a pasture cropping system.

The pasture cropping regime provides quality feed for the winter deficit, out-competes annual weed species and encourages the regeneration of perennial pasture species. The grazing management aims to have 100 per cent ground cover all year round through the adoption of cell grazing.

Rick says their involvement in the Bengworden Landcare Group has helped support them through these changes.

"It's a proactive group and there's a good core of people who share our ideas and are giving this new system a go."

Rick and Jenny acknowledge that there is still a lot of work to do. But things are turning around. Their inputs have been reduced by 60 per cent and the wool cut has increased by 19 per cent.

Jenny says that she and Rick love farming and are excited about the future.

"We think there's an exciting future in farming. By taking a good look at our grass management we've been able to have more control over the future by reducing our risks – and a positive impact on the balance sheet too."

“

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”

# 2011 Photography competition winners

More than 100 entries were received for the 2011 Landcare Photography Competition.

Judges Andrew Chapman, Tracey Koper and Tim Arch were impressed by the quality and diversity of the photographs that were entered.

Entries were judged in three categories: sustainability, water and 'what Landcare means to me'. Each winner received \$150 to donate to a Landcare group, school or charity of their choice.

**a) Sustainability – general winner**  
**Bernard Carroll**  
**Dairy herd grazing**

This photograph was taken on Bernard's 450-hectare family farm at Mudgegonga.

*"I have been involved with the Mudgegonga and District Landcare Group since it was established in 1994. There have been many thousands of trees and understorey plants established along the streams, gullies, erosion sites and steep unproductive areas of our farm since then. Our farm was severely impacted by the Black Saturday bushfires. Pasture and fencing was our biggest loss, the tree plantations and shelter belts have recovered reasonably well."*

**b) Sustainability – general winner**  
**Laura Bando**  
**Switch off**

Laura is a student at Caulfield Grammar. Her photograph sums up her views on energy – that we should turn off lights and conserve energy as much as possible.

*"The photograph was taken at my school camp at Yarra Junction. At the camp students in year 7 and 8 learn*

*how humans consume and conserve the environment. I believe that we all should be careful when it comes to the environment and do what's in our power to conserve it."*

**c) What Landcare means to me – general winner**  
**Robert Gardiner**  
**Moonrise behind an old gum tree**

Robert's photograph of the moon rising behind an old gum tree features on the front cover of this issue. The photograph was taken after midnight on the Black Range in Murrindindi.

*"The timeless grandeur of the Australian night sky reminds me of our great responsibility and honour, to protect our little world from over-clearing, endless energy demands and exploitation."*

**d) What Landcare means to me – school winner**  
**Lara Maruff**  
**Reach for the sky**

Lara is 13 years old and lives on 20 acres in St Andrews. She took this photograph in Gisborne.

*"I see beauty in everything, most things people wouldn't even stop to look at. I believe there is a place for nature everywhere, from the trees, to the bark it sheds, to the leaves that grow from it, to the insects and animals that eat the leaves."*

**e) Water – general winner**  
**Roslyn Jamieson**  
**Lower Kalimna Falls**

Roslyn is the Chair of the Southern Otway Landcare Network, President of the Apollo Bay Landcare Group, and a member of the Victorian Mobile Landcare Group. She took this photograph at Kalimna Falls, near Lorne.

*"I am passionate about Landcare in all its forms and help out with tree planting, weeding and wildlife monitoring wherever possible. I have lived in the Otways for four years now and just love the fresh air and beautiful scenery."*

**f) Water – school winner**  
**Charmoni Martin-Cogger**  
**Wetland colours**

Charmoni is 12 years old and took this photograph at the Spectacle Wetlands in Kwinana, close to her home. The wetlands are seasonal and usually retain some water over summer. They are an important stopover for migrating bird species.

Charmoni's favourite photographic subjects are her 13 pets. She is also interested in wildlife and has supported the Bilby foundation in the past. One day she would like to be like David Attenborough, whose documentaries she loves.







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# Around the State – News from the

## Port Phillip and Westernport

All of the new Community NRM Co-ordinator positions have now been filled. We welcome Geoff Boyes and Bridgette MacCallum at the Cardinia Environment Coalition, Joel Geoghegan at the Bass Coast Landcare Network and Kathleen Bartlett at the South Gippsland Landcare Network.

The CMA is hosting Emmanuelle Brunet for the Yarra catchment, William Hogg for the Werribee catchment, Grant Godden for the northern catchments and Matt Khoury for the Mornington Peninsula. Geoff, Grant and Matt are part-funded through the Regional Landcare Facilitator Initiative.

Congratulations to our winners in the 2011 Victorian Landcare Awards. It's great to see their stories in this edition.

**For further information contact**  
**Doug Evans on 9712 2296.**

## Goulburn Broken

The region celebrated 25 years of Landcare at the recent annual local Landcare awards. Around 130 people attended the evening with Upper Goulburn Landcare Networking winning the Network Award. The Koyuga Kanyapella Landcare Group won the Group Award, Shepparton High School and the Bunnings Project won the Education Award, Russell Wealands won the Hubert Miller Award and the Gecko CLaN won the Sustainable Farming Award. Royce Dickinson was also acknowledged for his Landcare efforts.

25th Anniversary Landcare grants from the Victorian Government have provided funding for 19 projects in the region including community education about native fish, walking tracks and rail trails. Ten events are being run through the Regional Landcare Facilitator project, the theme of these being farmers teaching farmers.

Landcarers from the region recently attended the 25th Anniversary Landcare Conference and the state Landcare awards. Congratulations to all the winners and to those who were nominated.

**For further information contact**  
**Tony Kubeil on 5761 1619.**

## East Gippsland

East Gippsland's 8th Annual Care Day was held in September. The event rewards volunteers from Coastcare, Waterwatch,

Landcare and Fishcare for their efforts throughout the year. More than 50 volunteers enjoyed a plant history walk along the shores of Lake Tyers and activities at the Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust learning about the history of the land, the lake, the church and the farm.

Landcare groups across the region have started their 2011–2012 projects funded through the Victorian Landcare Grants. The energy and capacity of groups is heartening to see. Equally busy are those groups who successfully applied for 25th Anniversary Landcare Grants.

Welcome to our newest group, the Snowy West Landcare Group. This group is operating under the Far East Victoria Landcare Network and is about to embark on their first project – rehabilitating the rail trail near Orbost.

**For further information contact**  
**Sandie Brown on 5150 359.**



*Volunteers shared their experiences at East Gippsland's 8th Annual Care Day in September.*

## North Central

There is plenty of activity in the region with the 2011–2012 Victorian Landcare Grants now being distributed to successful groups. The grants will enable groups to continue to be active in their community while undertaking local priority projects.

A Family Fun Nature Day held in Castlemaine in September drew a crowd of over 700 people to environment-themed stands which included several of the Landcare groups from the Castlemaine area. The event was a great opportunity for the groups to showcase their projects and recruit new volunteers.

The CMA Waterwatch team, with support from the Landcare team, launched a **Frogs Field Guide** at Smeaton in October. The guide is for anyone interested in learning more about the frogs of north central Victoria. The guide is a handy size to use in the field and contains lots of information to help identify frogs, eggs or tadpoles.

**For further information contact**  
**Jodie Odgers on 5440 1883.**

## Mallee

It has been an interesting few months for Landcare in the Mallee as groups anxiously await the outcome of the new Landcare Facilitator initiative. Hopes are high that the Mallee will secure some positions.

Many groups are reporting a good season and are looking forward to returning to previous projects that had suffered during the drought. Interest in remnant vegetation protection and rehabilitation works is high. Increasing rabbit numbers have prompted groups to apply for DSE Victorian Landcare Grant funding to conduct rabbit ripping and tree planting activities.

Junior Landcare is making a comeback in the region as the focus on climate change, carbon farming and renewable energies is taking hold in our schools. I have been taking a number of enquiries about how junior Landcare could be integrated into the school curriculum. The Red Cliffs Community Landcare Group is an innovative model for junior Landcare and is creating interest in the region.

The state Landcare team held their regional meeting at the Trust for Nature property, Ned's Corner Station, in August. The team also visited the Yelta Landcare Group and the Millewa Carwarp Landcare Group to view their projects and discuss how they see Landcare now and in the future. The team was impressed by the visit and has vowed to come back and spend more time in the region.

**For further information contact**  
**Kevin Chaplin on 5051 4344.**



# Regional Landcare Co-ordinators



Members of the Millewa Carwarp Landcare Group met with the State Landcare team at a trial site near Werrimull recently to look at the grazing potential of locally indigenous plants on low productive soils.

## West Gippsland

There are big changes and new opportunities for Landcare across the region. All five networks are hoping to secure a share of the Victorian Government Facilitator Funding Initiative to help support and develop local Landcare.

The networks have now held their annual general meetings and the quality and quantity of community activity and on-ground works is very impressive. Early calculations indicate that the region's Landcare networks, groups and communities will have undertaken projects worth in excess of \$1.5 million. Full details will be published in the 2010–2011 Regional Landcare Report Card.

Congratulations to the South Gippsland Landcare Network (SGLN) for winning the Parks Victoria Environment and Sustainability Award in October. Further congratulations are due to the SGLN for their success in the 2011 Victorian Landcare Awards as well as to the other nominees and winners and the 65 regional nominees on the 2011 Victorian Landcare Long Service Honour Roll.

*For further information contact  
Phillip McGarry on 1300 094.*

## Wimmera

Congratulations to the Hindmarsh Landcare Network on the success of its Farming without Fossil Fuels day in

October. Landcarers from around the region found the events in Kaniva and Jeparit informative and entertaining. Thanks to Steven Hobbs for showing so many people around his farm and biodiesel plant. The Laharum Landcare Group also put in a big effort transporting their gasifier to Kaniva. The gasifier was a highlight and the group's contribution was much appreciated.

Rod Quantock's performance filled the Jeparit Memorial Hall and got people laughing as well as thinking about serious climate change issues. Congratulations are due to everyone involved in the event.

*For further information contact  
Joel Boyd on 5382 1544.*

## Corangamite

The region has secured \$755,000 across four projects through Caring for our Country grants this year – a fantastic effort by those who put the submissions together.

It's been a busy time with many groups celebrating 25 years of Landcare with community events as well as many on-ground projects. Congratulations to the groups who received a share of the \$60,000 of funding from the Victorian Government. Events are listed on the Landcare Gateway for those who would like to get involved.

The Stony Rises Land Management Network has recently established west of Colac. Welcome to Bret Ryan, the new Corangamite Regional Landcare Facilitator.

*For further information contact  
Tracey McRae on 5232 9100*

## Glenelg Hopkins

More than 140 people attended the Glenelg Hopkins Environmental Achievement Awards held in Hamilton in late August. The awards recognised the tireless contribution that groups and individuals make towards improving and protecting the region's natural assets.

Groups have been taking advantage of the excellent weather conditions to complete their 2010–2011 Landcare Grant projects and there has been a strong response from groups applying for projects for next year. A number of networks and consortiums have also submitted applications for Landcare facilitator positions.

The Landcare Gateway website is an important communication tool for the region. The CMA regularly updates information about grants and Landcare news and many groups in the region are using the gateway to display their activities and projects.

*For further information contact  
Tony Lithgow on 5571 2526.*

## North East

The region marked 25 years of Landcare with four anniversary activities held during September, including the 2011 North East Active Service Awards. More than 200 Landcarers and Landcare supporters attended the events which were supported by the CMA and the Victorian Government.

More than 100 active service awards were presented, totalling 1420 years of Landcare service in the region. The awards highlighted the enormous contributions made by volunteers to Landcare in the North East. A booklet and a DVD celebrating 25 years of Landcare in the North East was also launched on the night. A Landcare digital library continues to be developed and expanded as more and more photographs and publications come to light.

*For further information contact  
Tom Croft on (02) 6024 9107.*

# In brief

## Indigenous Landcare

The Ghunda Mulla (Fresh Water Women) Landcare Group was formed in north east Victoria earlier this year to support Indigenous women to be involved in Landcare and community activities. Members of the group enjoyed a recent visit to Walpiri country in the Tanami Desert to learn about bush tucker plants.

The Junction Landcare Group is encouraging Indigenous youths to get involved in natural resource management

and to learn about their cultural connections to the land. The group is planning some projects related to the native fish strategy, including making reed fish spears and a bark canoe.

**For further information contact  
Richard Kennedy at the North East  
CMA on (02) 6043 7613.**

## Next issue – invasive plants and animals

The next issue of the magazine will feature stories on invasive plants and

animals. We welcome your contributions on these issues as well as your general Landcare news and views.

Contributions to the next issue should be sent to the editor by 10 February 2012.

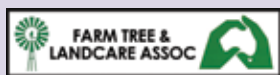
Carrie Tiffany, editor  
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*Members of the Bidja Bila, Ghunda Mulla and the Junction Landcare groups gathered at the confluence of the Kiewa and Murray Rivers to celebrate Native Fish Awareness week recently. Members learnt about the recovery of the Murray Cod, Silver Perch and Yellow Belly – iconic native fish species. Activities included weaving fish traps and baskets and spear making. A group of local elders demonstrated how to cut a canoe from a large River Red Gum. The canoe will be displayed in the local museum.*

The Victorian Landcare & Catchment Management magazine is published by the Victorian Government Department of Sustainability and Environment 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.



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## Read the magazine online

Back issues of the Victorian Landcare & Catchment Management magazine can be found at [www.dse.vic.gov.au/victorianlandcaremagazine](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/victorianlandcaremagazine)  
The print size of the magazine can be enlarged online for easier reading.

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