

North Central Chat

Keeping you up to date
with all the Landcare and
Waterwatch news



August 2021

A message from the Regional Landcare Coordinator

Hi everyone

Since the last edition of the Chat, we've all taken to being at home once more. I trust you are not overwhelmed with a sense of déjà vu but embracing some time warm indoors, preferably with a good book and a strong cuppa. Reading has been the flavour of the month for me, having received the reporting from 16 Landcare groups funded by the 2019-20 Victorian Landcare Grants program.

The achievements of the funded groups are nothing short of amazing considering the impact COVID-19 had on groups meeting, rallying volunteers, engaging students and accessing to materials. You can read more about the outcomes of the funded projects in the News section.

The virtual paperwork didn't stop there, with the 2021 Victorian Landcare Grants assessment process taking place this past month. North Central CMA received 99 applications totalling more than \$960,000. Our regional grants assessment panel process is now complete, and we again extend our thanks to the dedicated panellists who have such a challenging time working through the excellent calibre of projects put forward each and every year.

Showcasing Landcare projects and people is a passion of our North Central Landcare team, and the 2021 State and Territory Landcare Awards are the perfect opportunity to do so. In late July, we submitted two nominations for Strathallan Family Landcare (*Australian Government Partnerships for Landcare Award and Landcare Community Group Award*) and put forward the formidable Danny Pettingill of Loddon Plains Landcare Network (*Australian Government Individual Landcarer Award*). Local Landcare facilitators and group volunteers were busily working on their submissions, so we wish all the North Central nominees the very best of luck at the awards.



Friends of Cornish Hill's 'Hands up for Habitat' project bought together students from three local primary schools for their annual 'I care for Landcare' event. Braver than I am, the group pictured here is getting to know Teddy the Mountain Huntsman under the watchful eye of John from Bug Blitz.

Photo: Courtesy of Friends of Cornish Hill.

A reminder that the National Landcare Conference and Awards have moved online and will be held during Landcare Week on Thursday 5 to Friday 6 August 2021 via <https://nationallandcareconference.org.au/>

Finally, a few small changes are taking shape for the coming months. I will be handing the reins of publishing the Chat over to Britt, while I take on new CMA project management tasks.

Enjoy the read,

Tess Grievs

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Connecting rivers, landscapes, people

The North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) acknowledges Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the region, their rich cultures, spiritual connection to Country.

www.nccma.vic.gov.au



News...

Happy Landcare Week!

It's that time of year, where the nations Landcarers take action, celebrate and reflect on the incredible work done under the Landcare banner.

2021 Landcare Week coincides with the National Landcare Conference and Awards.

Landcare ambassador and conference MC Costa Georgiadis is excited to be part of the Landcare community coming together.

"The National Landcare Conference is a timely opportunity for people interested in sustainable land management and conservation activities on their farm or land, in an urban environment, along the coast or in their backyard, to come together to share ideas and experiences in an inspiring forum," said the Landcare Champion.

"Landcare has never been more important and relevant as we manage and plan for the future during uncertain times. It really is an honour to MC this event and I look forward to talking to all the speakers and delegates online. "

Speakers will live-streamed and recorded, and will speak to a diverse range of topics. From mental health and wellbeing; bushfire recovery and resilience; to empowering rural women and meeting the challenges of climate change and much more.

Fantastic outcome for our facilitators

The Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, announced on July 12 that the Victorian Government is investing more than \$13 million over the next three years to protect, enhance and restore Victoria's unique natural environment and biodiversity through the 2021-24 Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program (VLFP).

Eighty Landcare facilitators will be employed through the 2021-24 VLFP to support around 650 Landcare and environmental volunteering groups and networks across the state. These groups deliver on-ground works to enhance our biodiversity and engage local communities.

A full list of the successful applicants for the 2021-24 VLFP can be found here:

<https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/landcare/VLFP> (see list of employer organisations)

Our region's Landcare Networks were rewarded for their excellent funding submissions, with all eight previously funded organisations receiving full funding allocations.

The recipients of the 2021-24 Facilitator funding for our region are:

- Upper Loddon & Avoca Landcare Network
- Blampied/Kooroocheang Landcare Group
- Mid-Loddon Sub-Catchment Management Group
- Connecting Country (Mount Alexander Region) Inc.
- Buloke and Northern Grampians Landcare Network
- Loddon Plains Landcare Network
- Upper Campaspe Landcare Network Incorporated
- North Central Catchment Management Authority
- Sustainable Living in the Mallee

North Central CMA lead an application on behalf of the Landcare community in the Eastern Bendigo area, and are pleased to also have secured funding for a local Landcare Facilitator. This role is currently advertised and we strongly encourage you all to share this opportunity within your networks. Read more about this opportunity via [Jobs & Tenders | North Central Catchment Management Authority \(nccma.vic.gov.au\)](#)

Success stories despite trying times in 2020

The 2019-20 Victorian Landcare Grants were devolved in July 2019 when the world was a very different place. Working through until June 2021, Landcare groups supported members, volunteers and landholders to complete an amazing array of on-ground and engagement activities despite the obvious challenges they faced.

In summary the 2019-20 North Central CMA VLG program devolved \$214,449 to 18 Landcare projects with the following outputs achieved:

- 7.5ha direct seeding
- 165ha tubestock plantings
- 150ha treated for weed control
- 4.4 km fencing installed protecting 29 ha of land
- 4 flora and 1 fauna Assessments
- 65 nest boxes built and installed
- 19 engagement events involving 708 participants.

A huge congratulations and thank you to the Landcare project managers for their persistence, commitment and completion of these vitally important projects.



Impressive before and after willow control images at the Malmsbury Common supplied by Malmsbury Landcare Group.



Morning tea 'Landcare style' at the Avon Plains Landcare Groups project planting site.

Drought Resilience Leaders Program

LEADERS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

APPLY NOW



The Drought Resilience Leaders Development Program is designed to build leadership resilience for the future in Australian rural, regional, and remote communities.

There are three elements to the program:

- Drought Resilience Leaders Development Program
- Drought Resilience Leaders Mentoring Program (DRLM) •Community Extension Grants

The 'Future Drought Fund' is a long-term Australian government investment providing a sustainable source of funding to help Australian farmers and other community members become better prepared for, and resilient to, the impacts of drought.

Who can participate?

The 'Drought Resilience Leaders Mentoring Program' is open to eligible applicants across Australia. There are no geographical requirements to participate in DRLM and the program will be conducted primarily online so wherever you are in Australia, take this opportunity to invest in yourself, your business and your region.

How to apply?

Apply to participate as either a mentor or mentee in the DRLM Program via the ARLF website: <https://rural-leaders.org.au/our-programs/drought-resilience-leaders/>



Communities Caring for Catchments

Hi all and welcome to the August edition

An external citizen science project is this month's focus but something everyone can get involved in.

An exciting new citizen science project is about to kick-off, and Waterwatchers will get first dibs at selecting sites! Read more about the Great Australian Platypus Search below (with more info coming to your inbox very soon).

Also coming to the inbox of Waterwatch volunteers is the recently developed North Central Waterwatch Volunteer survey. . Please help us to better understand the impact of our local Waterwatch program by completing the survey by the end of August.

Enjoy the read and stay safe. See you again in spring!

Regards,

Britt Gregory

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The 'Great Australian Platypus Search' kicks-off in August

Citizen scientists needed to collect much-needed data on the threatened species

The largest citizen scientist project in Australia's history, The Great Australian Platypus Search, will officially launch in August and is a crucial first step to reversing platypus population decline.

Earlier this year, the unique and iconic species was listed as Threatened in Victoria for the first time sparking the inspiration for this project. In response, the Odonata Foundation proposed a state-wide survey in Victoria during the 2021 platypus breeding season (August-October). This project will map the entire distribution of platypus throughout Victorian waterways to help inform

future management solutions to elevate its status from Threatened.

To fund the project, Odonata asked for support from the Victorian Government, World Wildlife Fund Australia, philanthropists, and the Victorian community and has since received an overwhelming response, the project is being rolled-out in Victoria.

Starting in August, the search will be completed using innovative environmental DNA technology that will detect the DNA a species has left behind in its environment.

Key project partner EnviroDNA has developed a robust and simple eDNA sampling methodology that citizen scientists, including school students, children and community groups can undertake with limited training or experience.

Water samples from more than 2,000 sites across Victoria will be collected by citizen scientists and then analysed in the EnviroDNA lab. This data will not be limited to only platypus populations with results allowing scientists to determine distributions of aquatic vertebrates over large spatial scales. eDNA gathering on this scale has never been undertaken before in Australia, and potentially the world, making this one of the most significant citizen-science projects in history.

The Odonata Foundation is calling its partners to get involved and play their part in protecting the platypus, our precious wildlife, and Australian waterways for many years to come. The project has already attracted more than 200 sign-ups across community groups, government groups, schools and individuals.

"This project is hugely significant for Threatened species research and will develop never before seen data on one of Australia's most iconic species. Involving citizen scientists is a really great opportunity to build public awareness of platypus conservation status and also any threats directly facing waterways across the state."

- Sam Marwood, CEO Odonata Foundation

Go to The Great Australian Platypus Search website for more info and to join the search.



The FrogID Team has been working hard to learn more about Australian frogs through FrogID App submissions, some of which have sadly included observations of sick or deceased green tree frogs (*Litoria caerulea*) as well as other frog species.

A potentially deadly pathogen, the amphibian chytrid fungus, combined with weakened frog immune systems during these cooler months could be at play, however it is difficult to know for sure. Frogs use their skin to drink and to help breathe, and unfortunately, this fungus attacks the keratin in the surface layers of frog skin and affects their capacity to regulate oxygen and water effectively.

If you have seen dead frogs lately, please let the FrogID team know. The team at the Australian Museum is working with others across the country to try and understand what is happening to our frogs.

[Click here to find out more.](#)



Peron's tree frog. Photo: David Kleinert Photography



Sharing the River Detectives story

We love to collaborate with like-minded organisations who share a passion for connecting young people to nature and there are some wonderful opportunities coming up.

ResourceSmart Schools is a free program offered by Sustainability Victoria that supports Victorian schools to embed sustainability across the school. In early August we will showcase the River Detectives program at the Loddon Sustainability Teachers Network Meeting.

Environment Education Victoria (EEV) is the peak body for Sustainability and Environment Education. In September we will present a webinar as part of a six-part series for their members statewide to highlight macroinvertebrate sampling and the resources the River Detectives program can offer schools. We will be very proud to co-present with students and staff of Epsom Primary School who will share their experience of learning about waterbugs. The webinar will be recorded and available for public viewing on the EEV YouTube channel until December.

To celebrate National Water Week in October, an online learning festival will offer a raft of events and resources for schools and the community across the state. To explore this year's theme of 'Explore your Backyard' we are contributing one of our popular activity matrices to the program. With a focus on nature studies and nature play, the activity matrix offers lots of fun ways to get out and explore your backyard / local waterway / favourite reserve or bushland. More details in future editions.

Nicole Howie

Waterwatch Project Officer

North Central CMA

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Water storages

For the first time since I have been providing this update, all storages have increased in volume, with the exception of Lake Boga which remains steady. Look at all those up arrows! With a saturated catchment, we are now seeing great runoff.

For more info on the climate update and to subscribe to Agriculture Victoria's Fast Break Newsletters please [CLICK HERE](#)

Region	Water Storage	% full at 24 June	% full at 28 July
Murray Storages	Dartmouth Dam	65.17	↑66.87
	Hume Dam	51.98	↑76.82
	Third Lake	48.85	↑50.99
	Reedy/Middle Lk	88.46	↑93.63
	Kangaroo Lake	92.12	↑93.92
	Kow Swamp	72.35	↑88.06
	Lake Boga	68.75	68.75
	Lake Charm	86.31	↑86.38
Loddon Storages	Cairn Curran Res	38.05	↑49.14
	Tullaroop Res	39.10	↑49.81
	Laanecoorie Res	38.13	↑74.88
Bullarook Storages	Newlyn Res	77.67	↑101.44
	Hepburns Lagoon	71.59	↑103.82
Goulburn Storages	Lake Eildon	57.54	↑65.24
	Waranga Basin	54.08	↑82.01
Campaspe	Lake Eppalock	35.43	↑41.39
Coliban Water Storages	Upper Coliban Res	88.40	↑101.30
	Lauriston Res	92.80	↑96.30
	Malmsbury Res	23.6	↑108.2

www.g-mwater.com.au/water-resources/catchments/storage-levels

www.coliban.com.au/about-us/reservoir-levels

Upcoming events and special days

August	
National Tree Day	1 Aug
Landcare Week	4-6 Aug
National Science Week	14-22 Aug
Keep Australia Beautiful Week	16-22 Aug
World Humanitarian Day	19 Aug
September	
National Biodiversity Month	
National Wattle Day	1 Sep
National Threatened Species Day	7 Sep
Bushcare's Major Day Out	11 Sep
National Bilby Day	12 Sep
National Organic Week	20-26 Sep
World Rivers Day	26 Sep
October	
Australian Wildlife Week	4-8 Oct
World Habitat Day	4 Oct
World Migratory Bird Day	9 Oct
Gone Fishing Day	17 Oct
National Bird Week	18-24 Oct
Aussie Backyard Bird Count	18-24 Oct
National Water Week	18-24 Oct
National Ride 2 Work Day	20 Oct
Enviroweek	20-26 Oct
Wombat Day	22 Oct

Sustainable Ag Snippet...

Regional Agricultural Landcare Facilitator Darren Bain

A day out in the paddock talking revegetation

The Mt Alexander Regenerative Agriculture Group organised a paddock walk with Dave Griffiths from Geometree to talk revegetation. I think it was the coldest day of the year with persistent rain and freezing wind, but to my surprise we had more than 20 people turn up.

The first property, just out of Guildford was Schu and Ben's, what a magnificent place, driving up the winding driveway with undulating hills and abundant revegetation.

The property was revegetated in 2017, but the growth over three and a half years was impressive. Schu took the group for a wander around the property talking about how they decided to revegetate the property with assistance in the design and layout from Dave Griffiths. There were a variety of species including indigenous and non-indigenous, this added to the aesthetics of the property whilst creating a property more resilient to climate change.



The next property we visited was John Carruthers, just south of Guildford. John has spent several years thinking about how he should revegetate the property. John heard about Dave and decided to invite him to the property to discuss his revegetation plans. Dave's initial advice to John was to decide where his driveway into the property would be, then he would come back and discuss design and layout. John took this advice and proceeded with constructing the driveway. Upon arrival at John's property entrance with the driveway weaving through the property looking very impressive. At the end of the driveway John had a small structure, which we all huddled under with a hot cuppa out of the rain and wind.

John spoke about his vision for his property, which was finally coming together. The revegetation is already established with John's careful planning and Dave's ability to design the revegetation in a way that encompasses the vision of the landholder and connects the natural features of the property. John is passionate about his property and his vision is becoming a reality. Hopefully, John will invite the group back to see how his property transitions into an amazing place that can be enjoyed by many generations.

The Mt Alexander group is well underway with their activities for this year and have plenty more to occur. If you live in the Castlemaine region and have an interest in regenerative agriculture, contact the facilitator, Deane Belfield, deanebelfield@eco2sys.com



John holding a model he made of his property



Revegetation preparation laying a good foundation for a successful planting program.

Courses & Resources...

Master Tree Grower- Community of Practice

Benjamin Boxshall Australian Agroforestry Foundation

Do you have a need for trees, and a desire to build your knowledge and know-how?

Do you want to ensure your trees are a valuable asset and don't ever become a liability?

Like you, the AAF believes that to create more productive farms, sustainable landscapes and resilient communities, we need to use trees – and to use them wisely.

Trees can be used as tools to protect assets, build natural capital, and restore carbon, water and nutrient cycles while producing useful and valuable products: renewable materials and energy as well as food and botanical products.

The Australian Agroforestry Foundation (AAF) plans to build a **community of practice** around regenerative practices focussed on the strategic utilisation of trees and shrubs on farms.

AAF believe that people need to work together to succeed through times of rapid change, and have begun using the Workplace for Good Platform to help support, connect and share knowledge with tree growers across Australia.

AAF will also use the platform to improve the reach and impact of our programs, and to coordinate our newest Master TreeGrower (MTG) which is to be offered to landholders in the **north central region of Victoria**.

The **Australian MTG** is a celebrated training program that aims to give participants the knowledge, resources, and networks to put trees (and shrubs) to work on their land for climate, biodiversity, and material (production) benefits.

The MTG aims to create 'master tree growers' by providing participants with the inspiration, capacity and confidence to create and curate their own regenerative, tree-based enterprises.

If you are an Australian resident interested to build your knowledge of regenerative forestry and/or to become a Master Tree Grower please head to our website to join (it's free!): [Home - Australian Agroforestry Foundation](#)

TreeProject

TreeProject is about urban and rural communities working together to put trees back in the landscape.

Volunteer Tom Collins wants to flag with Landcarers that there is a network of trained volunteers who grow local indigenous seedlings for rural landholders and Landcare groups who need help with revegetation.

"For landholders, being able to access 'at-cost' seedlings (\$220 for 500 native seedlings) from TreeProject can be critical to start restoring degraded areas.

"We have been working with a number of Landcare groups (Deep Creek, Malmsbury, Upper Maribyrnong, Arawata order seedlings annually). These Landcare groups determine what species they want to plant, then collect or order local seed, coordinate an order of 500, and then distribute the seedlings to members when they are ready for planting.

"We have a lot of volunteer growers ready to grow this summer so get your order in by 30 September 2021."



To learn more or to order seedlings visit [Order Seedlings | TreeProject](#)



Confused about tax laws and deductible gift recipient status? There is new help

As a specialist legal service for not-for-profit organisations, Justice Connect know how difficult it can be to work out whether you're eligible for deductible gift recipient (DGR) status and what the relevant DGR category might be.

The legal requirements are complex, the tax laws are complicated, and the language is old-fashioned and daunting.

We also know that for many charities, obtaining DGR status can be vital to raising much-needed funds.

That's why they're launching a new, [free DGR Tool](#) – to help you make sense of the law.

"Taking less than 20 minutes, our tool asks a series of questions about your organisation – in simple, plain English – then generates a tailored, downloadable report that summarises the information given in the tool."

The DGR Tool will help you understand:

- the meaning and benefits of DGR endorsement
- whether your organisation meets the eligibility requirements for DGR endorsement, and
- DGR categories that may be relevant to your organisation.

Use our easy-to-understand tool today so that your time and energy can be spent on achieving your mission.

Events...

2021 Chicks in the Sticks



The North Central CMA Landcare Team has partnered with the Plains for Wanderer Project to bring you the 2021 Chicks in the Sticks.

When: Saturday 9 October

Where: Pine Grove Recreation Reserve

Keep an eye on future editions of the Chat for further event details and registration links. We can't wait to see you frocked up, gumboots on and in-person in 2021!

GRDC regional events for August and September 2021

Grains Research Development Council will be in Donald on August 19. Speakers and topics for the Donald GRDC Grains Research Update include:

- Key cereal diseases to look out for in 2021 | Mark McLean, Agriculture Victoria.
- The value of protein maps as an indicator of plant-available nitrogen | Eva Moffitt, EM Ag Consulting.
- **Aerial blackleg in Canola** – what we need to know | Steve Marcroft, Marcroft Grains Pathology.
- **Adapting to dry sowing** – long coleoptile wheat | Greg Rebetzke, CSIRO.
- **Fungicide resistance – what can we learn from previous experiences** | Angela van de Wouw, School of Biosciences, The University of Melbourne.

When: Thursday 19 August 2021. 9am to 1pm

Where: Donald Memorial Hall, 33-35 McCulloch Street, Donald

Cost: \$30 per person (GST inc.) Morning tea, lunch and proceedings included.

RSVP: To register and view the full program visit the [GRDC website](#)



RESCHEDULED National Tree Day events

Last month we updated you on National Tree Day activities, which have had to be rescheduled across Victoria.

Activities are scheduled in Huntly and Axedale with the updated planting event details on the [National Tree Day website](#)



Ag Excellence Forum & Awards - 'A Climate of Opportunity in Ag'

Forum2021 will be held on August 9. Take a deep-dive in to the solutions and opportunities that exist for agriculture in the face of critical climate challenge.

Ag Excellence Alliance supports broadacre agricultural communities by leading innovation and practice through grower groups in collaboration with advisers, natural resource management (NRM) organisations, agribusiness, research and development organisations, government and educational institutions.

The forum program and registration links can be found via [Ag Excellence Forum & Awards - 'A Climate of Opportunity in Ag' Registration, Mon 09/08/2021 at 8:50 am | Eventbrite](#)

Connecting primary producers to prevent mental health risk through Campfire

The National Centre for Farmer Health has announced an innovative and exciting new chat-based platform 'Campfire' is now live as part of the Primary Producer Knowledge Network.

Campfire provides an engaging, solution-focused community for farmers and fishers to proactively improve their systems of work in support of mentally healthy workplaces via:

- practical tools and resources
- solution-focused stories that address work-related challenges
- interaction with experts and peer networks.

Online campfires will be lit at each Tuesday-Thursday evening from 7.30pm, where primary producers can discuss work-related challenges.

Bonfire events will be held fortnightly (Wednesday evenings from 7.30pm) where primary producers will hear from topic experts and participate in Q&A.

Upcoming Bonfire dates:

11 August - Planning for Success(ion)



[Register here to join in](#)
[Download the information brochure](#)

Funding opportunities...

Storm and flood clean-up program

Bushfire Recovery Victoria is supporting the clean-up and recovery work for the owners of private property damaged by the storms and floods that occurred on 9 and 10 June 2021.

Victoria's free Storm and Flood Clean-up program covers the demolition and removal of any structures on eligible private properties that were destroyed or damaged beyond repair by the June 2021 storms and floods.

This could include:

- residential homes and sheds
- commercial and public buildings
- other outbuildings.

The program will also remove hazards such as dangerous materials or trees that pose a threat to property or work crews, as well as any vehicles that were damaged beyond repair.

This program is voluntary, free of charge and open to eligible property owners.

Eligibility

To be eligible for support:

- You must be a private property owner. The private property must be in one of the 39 local government areas (LGAs) that were impacted by the June 2021 storms and floods.

For further information on this initiative visit: [Storm and flood clean-up program | Victorian Government \(www.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.vic.gov.au/storm-and-flood-clean-up-program)



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Water and the Environment



Future
Drought
Fund

Got an idea that will help build drought resilience and manage future drought? Looking for funding to help get your idea off the ground?

Through the Future Drought Fund's Research and Adoption program more than \$34 million is available to fund ideas and projects that help farmers and their communities adopt innovative approaches to improve drought resilience.

There are three grants available:

- **Ideas Grant** - providing \$50,000 for one year.
- **Proof-of-Concept grant** - providing up to \$120,000 for one year.
- **Innovation grant** - providing \$300,000 to \$1.1 million per year for up to three years.

You can apply now for one or more of these grants. The application process has two key stages, starting with an Expression of Interest about your idea and how it will put it into action.

A top tip? Be sure to read the Grant Guidelines before you apply! The Future Drought Fund team will be hosting a one-hour webinar at 10am (AEST) on 9 August 2021 that explains the EOI process in more detail. Further information, including registration to participate will be provided shortly.

The Grant Guidelines also detail important information you need to know such as dates, eligibility, how to apply and the grant selection process.

The Grant Guidelines and application forms are available on [the Australian Government's Community Grants Hub \(CGH\)](https://www.communitygrants.gov.au).

Applicants have until 9pm (AEST) Wednesday 8 September 2021 to submit their EOI through the CGH website.

Questions about the Grants and EOI can be directed to 1800 020 283 (Option 1) or support@communitygrants.gov.au. Questions should be sent no later than 5pm (AEST) Thursday 2 September 2021.