

# North Central Chat

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



June 2020

## A message from the Regional Landcare Coordinator

Hi everyone,

As I write, we have just had news that Landcare and other environmental volunteering programs are able to cautiously re-engage with their favourite outdoorsy activities. It is vital that as COVID-19 restrictions ease, we stay vigilant to Land Manager advice, social distancing, volunteer number limits and event registrations for traceability as per the Premiers advice. See the next page for further information.

Love it or loathe it, social media has been invaluable during this last few months to keep up-to-date with all the Landcare Groups as many groups have been busily communicating, sharing and planning their next phase of activity online.

I was thrilled to see Loddon Plains Landcare Networks 'LPLN Regenerative Reads' Facebook feature. It comprised a twice weekly post of resources aimed to inspire, covering environment, land management, agriculture and more. I must admit, seeing Leon Costerman's '*Native Trees and Shrubs of South Eastern Australia*' featured, certainly took me back to my university days. I remember wandering around Box-Ironbark forests being assessed on how best I could decipher the differences between Red, Yellow and Grey Box. I don't think I've had the nerve to pick it up since!

It is of course most thrilling to see photos of groups getting stuck back into what they do best with many socially distant working bees, plantings and weed control events taking place recently.

Over this coming month, Darren and I will meet again online with the Landcare Facilitators, as we have done monthly during lockdown. At our next meeting we will be joined by Statewide Aboriginal Landcare Facilitator Jackson Chatfield, to discuss how his role can support strong partnership projects between Landcare and Aboriginal Victorians.



A stunning boom of Drumsticks (*Pycnosorus globosus*) was a delightful sight at a recent property visit in Axe Creek. Keep reading to learn more about growing these beauties at home.

DELWP recently advised that due to the disruption we've all experienced, there is scope for project extensions for any Landcare Groups currently funded through the 2019-20 Victorian Landcare Grants. We are keen to hear if you need more time to deliver your project.

We have planned some fantastic online sessions this month with funding from the Victorian Landcare program, so check out the Events page for more details.

Enjoy the read,

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## News...

### Landcare and Community Programs Volunteering and Grants Coronavirus (COVID-19)

#### Frequently Asked Questions – 19 May 2020 (DELWP Updated)

We know your environmental volunteering work means a lot to you, as it does to us too, and we are cautiously welcoming the easing of restrictions whilst being urged to remain vigilant and ensure everyone's safety.

As part of changes to restrictions on 11 May 2020, up to 10 people can gather outdoors for recreational activity or exercise as long as appropriate hygiene and physical distancing provisions are observed. This applies to our Landcare volunteers and we ask that you continue to follow public health measures, Land Managers advice and stay informed [here](#).

Environmental volunteers continue to be resilient and adaptable and it is with these strengths we'll get through this challenging time together.

#### What can I do?

As part of changes to restrictions on 11 May 2020, up to 10 people can gather outdoors for recreational activity or exercise as long as appropriate hygiene and physical distancing provisions are observed. You can continue to volunteer while the organisation you are volunteering with is still operating. However, if you can do your volunteer work from home, you should.

You should maintain physical distancing by keeping at least 1.5 metres between yourself and other people at all times and practise good hygiene by regularly washing your hands with soap for at least 20 seconds.

As always though, Victorians are being asked to be considered and use common sense when it comes to their activities. You should only leave home if you really need to.

### Landcare and Community Programs Grant Rounds

#### Victorian Landcare Grants (VLG)

**2019/20** – VLG projects are funded through your local Catchment Management Authority (CMA) and are due for completion by 30 November 2020. **An extension of up to six months is available for those who require it,** and variations to projects can be made to activities that are within the scope of the VLG guidelines. Please

contact your Regional Landcare Coordinator (RLC) at your CMA if you need a variation.

**2020/21** – Victorian Landcare Program staff at DELWP are working with the RLCs and CMAs regarding the delivery of the 2020/21 VLG under the current public health measures. More information will be provided on the 2020/21 VLG in the future.

To read the full FAQ update refer to the [Landcare Gateway link](#)

### Landcare Facilitator funding announcement

**On Friday 22 May, Minister for Energy, Environment & Climate Change, Lily D'Ambrosio, announced an extension to the Victorian Local Landcare Facilitator program until December 2020.**

"Many Victorians would be only too aware of the vital role our volunteers are playing in the recovery of local communities and their landscapes from this summer's devastating bushfires.

"Landcare has been an institution in Victoria for 30 years and now more than ever these invaluable people need our support in these challenging and unprecedented times.

"That's why I'm very pleased to announce the Victorian Government will be extending funding for existing Victorian Landcare Facilitators until the end of the year.

"This is an important decision to ensure these workers are supported and can continue to make a significant contribution to both our environment and our economy."

Frequently Asked Questions: to view the Frequently Asked Questions on the 6-month extension of the [VLFP FAQs - May 2020](#).



*We love supporting our Facilitators!*

*Photo: Northern Rivers Round-up Facilitator Event, Nagambie 2018.*



## Wastewater wonderland

Article by Adrian (Panda) Martins, Axe Creek resident and Landcare volunteer.

**If you are thinking of building a new house in a semi-rural or rural environment or in the process of doing so, then one of the main components you will need to think about is the treatment of your wastewater.**

Technology has seen the advancement of septic systems from the once concrete chamber and single trench disposal type to the modern biocycle variety. Basically, it's the same thing except today's systems have better design components including disposal fields.

Your wastewater system functions effectively when the effluent water is absorbed by plants that are suitable for planting in disposal fields. System manufacturers and most local government councils will provide a list of species that can be used in these fields as part of the permit issued to install your system.

Whilst the list provided for our place located south east of Bendigo contained a few 'native species' to the area suitable for establishing on the disposable field, I desired more diversity and felt there were many more species that could be used, so I began a trial of sorts.

Consistent with the permit requirements, the 315 square metre site was deep ripped to a depth of approximately 400mm and gypsum was applied to very heavy clay 'soil' at a rate of 1kg/m<sup>2</sup>. A 200mm layer of sandy loam was applied to build up the area.



I focussed on establishing a variety of small and large herbaceous and grass species, primarily because I wanted to maintain visibility across the area to the driveway but add colour and biodiversity to the ground layer that is significantly lacking after 150 years of sheep grazing. I was uncertain how some species would

tolerate higher concentration of phosphorus and near permanent moisture, but I was prepared to give it a go and sacrifice time and effort.

Working on the gradient of the site I planted 'less moisture' tolerant species at the top of the slope including Sticky Everlasting, *Xerochrysum viscosum* and clustered everlasting, *Chrysocephalum semipapposum* and 'more moisture' tolerant at the bottom such as tall sedge, *Carex appressa* and poongort, *C. teriticaulis*.

In between I then randomly planted a variety of other smaller statured plants including kangaroo grass, *Themeda triandra*, common wheat-grass, *Anthosachne scabra*, common tussock grass, *Poa labillardierei*, ruby saltbush, *Enchylaena tomentosa*, and common everlasting, *Chrysocephalum apiculatum*.



During summer the area was hit hard by the local kangaroo mob, attracted to the 'green site' due to the lack of feed in the surrounding landscape and as the site dried, so did some of the plants. Results varied but to my surprise most things survived and indeed flourished in the establishment phase including spectacularly drumsticks, *Pycnosorus globosus* up until the harsh summer when individual plants started to drop out. But as I write this following one of the best autumn breaks, some species are significantly re-establishing from both rootstock and seed shed from the original plants.

In time I'll probably fence the site from kangaroos.

This winter I will trial the introduction of some new species to the site and continue with the ongoing maintenance, which primarily involves removing weeds that came in with the topsoil, mainly paterson's curse, *Echium plantagineum* and to a lesser extent caltrop, *Tribulus terrestris* (hint never trust any topsoil from a 'reputable supplier'). But the small area and my vigilance

to search and destroy even the smallest weed germinant means it's manageable.

So, after nearly a year the effort and reward has been worth it. A splash of colour, seed production area and increased biodiversity.



### The LVI Committee of Management advised in April that the 2020 AGM had to be postponed until May 29.

Landcare Victoria Inc. is the independent, representative body for landcare in Victoria. They work for increased recognition, resourcing and support for resilient and productive landscapes and communities.

Vacancies in the North Central CMA region were open for positions on the LVI Committee of Management, a Professional Landcarer position and as well vacancies on the Members Council.

We look forward to welcoming the newly appointed representatives for our region. You can find out more about the representatives online via: <http://www.lvi.org.au/>.

Finally, on behalf of the north central Landcare community, we wish to warmly thank Christine Brooke and Asha Bannon for their wonderful work bringing LVI to its current position, keeping us informed through regular Landcare Network meetings and representing the North Central region so well, it's much appreciated by us all.

### Community input invited for inquiry into ecosystem decline

**The Legislative Council Environment and Planning Committee has commenced an inquiry into ecosystem decline in Victoria that will look at measures to restore habitats and populations of threatened and endangered species.**

"We want to hear from people with expertise in these issues, but we also want to ensure that community members with direct knowledge of ecosystem decline in their local areas can contribute their views and suggestions to us," Committee Chair Cesar Melhem said.

"At a time when we are focusing on the health of our population, we think it's also timely to look into the health

of our ecosystems and the diverse species that populate our rich environment."

Ecosystem decline can include catchment salinity, vegetation decline, weed proliferation, invasion of pest animals and stream decline.

Submissions to the inquiry are welcome until **31 July 2020**. Details on how to make a submission are available from the Committee's [website](#).

### Landcare Gateway update

**The Victorian Landcare Team has recently added a training schedule to the Gateway for the Landcare community's reference.**

Anyone should be able to view, edit and add upcoming events. The spreadsheet is available here → <https://www.landcarevic.org.au/resources/victorian-landcare-training/>

Now is also a great time to ensure your group contacts, purpose and information is up to date. This will ensure those looking for their local group have an easy introduction to Landcare, as the Gateway the first point of contact for online searches of Landcare.

For any gateway related enquiries or assistance updating your group's information, contact the [Regional Landcare Coordinator](#)



### The 2020 BirdLife Australia Photography Awards are open!

Birdlife Australia are proud to announce that Nikon Australia and Lake Cowal Foundation are sponsoring the 2020 awards, each category winner will receive a \$1,000 cash prize, with a whopping \$5,000 cash going to the portfolio winner courtesy of principal sponsor, Nikon Australia.

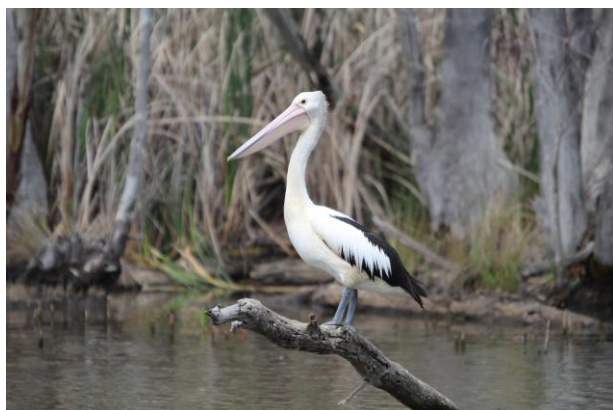
The categories this year are:

- Backyard Birds
- Birds in Flight
- Bird Portrait
- Bird Behaviour
- Landscapes and Habitat



- Human Impact
- Special Theme: Fairy-wrens, Emu-wrens, and Grasswrens
- Youth

Award entries close on August 3rd, for updates and more information, check out the awards website [here](#).



A reminder that when photographing wildlife, please ensure that you follow the BirdLife Photography ethics standards found [here](#).

### Investing in our smart farming future

**Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management, David Littleproud recently announced the successful Smart Farms Small Grants round 3.**

More than \$5 million is being invested in 113 projects funded through round three of Smart Farms Small Grants.

The recipients of the grants include Landcare, farming businesses, farm systems groups, community groups and indigenous organisations.

This program is developing and extending new tools and technologies to help farmers and regional communities adopt best practice land management.

“Our farmers have always looked after the land and we are giving them a helping hand to adopt best practice natural resource management methods,” Minister Littleproud said.

“It is a critical time for agriculture which is poised to lead Australia’s recovery out of COVID-19.

Congratulations to Birchip Cropping Group, Connecting Country (Mt Alexander Region), Perennial Pasture Systems and Upper Loddon & Avoca Regenerative Farmers Group who received funding through round 3.

Read the full list of grant recipients online [here](#).



*Upper Loddon & Avoca Regenerative Farmers Group viewing the soil profile in a soil pit whilst discussing features, problems and possible remedial approaches.*

### Charlie Arnott Regenerative Journey Podcast

**2018 Bob Hawke Landcare Award winner Charlie Arnott will launch his inaugural podcast series The Regenerative Journey next week.**

Listen to Charlie delve into the lives of some truly fascinating figureheads within the regenerative agricultural space. In the nine episode series, guests include Damon Gameau, Lorraine Gordan and Joel Salatin to name a few. The series opener will give anyone interested in Landcare a buzz, as the podcast kicks off with Charlie’s very own regenerative journey.



For further details and links go to <https://landcareaustralia.org.au/news/charlie-arnotts-the-regenerative-journey-podcast>



Hello all

We have had several key changes to the Waterwatch and River Detectives Programs over the last couple of months.

Firstly, I would like to announce Cass Davis will be acting in the role of Manager – Engagement and Evaluation for the next three months. Cass will slot into this role with ease I'm sure, she is a wonderful manager and passionate about people management. She will do a fantastic job leading our team and guiding the broader organisation during the challenging transition period to the new financial year.

While Cass is in this role, I am looking forward to acting as Regional Waterwatch Coordinator. Big shoes to fill! I'm sure you would all agree that Cass does a fantastic job; she is a real inspiration for me. I hope to keep the programs humming along nicely and to support our awesome Waterwatch volunteers with the same dedication as Cass has done so over the years.

We have Nicole Howie coming on board two days a week to help support the Waterwatch and River Detectives programs. I'm sure many of you have met Nicole by now and will know how lucky we are to have her on board in a greater capacity. Nicole comes with a wealth of knowledge of both programs, having been involved in both staff and volunteer capacities for many years now. She knows the projects in and out and will be a great help over the next few months.

Please stay safe and enjoy this edition of the North Central Chat.

**Britt Gregory**

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## Bendigo Creek Snapshot Report Launched

**We recently launched the first annual River Health Snapshot Report for the Bendigo Creek Citizen Science Project.**

The Bendigo Creek has had a long, rich and varied history. With the City of Greater Bendigo having plans in place for a Reimagined Bendigo Creek, this partnership citizen science project helps to monitor long-term transformative changes.

Our team of dedicated volunteers do a wonderful job at gathering the multitude of data required to produce our citizen science Snapshot reports, something we simply could not do without them.

The report will soon be made available on the North Central CMA website, while volunteers and project partners will receive a hard copy in the post.

Other annual Snapshot reports coming out soon include our RiverScan, Birchs Creek, Castlemaine Urban Waterways and Healthy Coliban Catchment citizen science projects. Well done and a huge THANKYOU to all our awesome Bendigo Creek volunteers!





## River Detectives Update

**With most students back at school by 9 June, we are pleased that many of our River Detectives schools will be able to start up their water quality monitoring again. While we don't endorse taking students out on site, teachers are able to collect a water sample from their registered testing site and bring it into the classroom for testing.**

We will continue to produce a monthly themed matrix of activities for teachers to use, but a return to water quality monitoring has been eagerly anticipated by some.

Many new resources have recently been added to the [River Detectives website](#); have a browse and feel free to use any of the resources with students or your own children at home

We are proud to have recently implemented an Acknowledgement of Country pop up on the [River Detectives website](#) when visitors first enter. The Waterwatch and River Detectives team are passionate about improving relationships with our First Nationals people and moving towards reconciliation.

This is a small but significant step and we are proud to display our official Acknowledgment of Country.

## COVID-19 Update for Waterwatch Volunteers

**We understand that many of our Waterwatch volunteers are keen to recommence their water quality monitoring activities, but we ask that you continue to hold off for now.**

Organisations are still required to implement actions to slow the spread of coronavirus. The North Central CMA is still working through a return to work plan for staff and similarly we are still working through a return volunteering activities for you.

As soon as we can, we will notify you that you are able to return to your site and your monitoring.

Thanks for your dedication and enthusiasm, but for now, if you can stay at home, you must stay at home.

Additional advice can be found at:

<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/information-community-services-coronavirus-disease-covid-19>.

<https://www.volunteer.vic.gov.au/covid19>

### Acknowledgement of Country

*The statewide River Detectives Program acknowledges the First Nations People across Victoria, their continued rich culture and spiritual connections to Country and Waterways.*

*We also recognise and acknowledge the contribution and interest of First Nations People and organisations in land, water, climate and biodiversity management.*



## Events...

### Change the Conversation with Values-based Messaging

**Goulburn Broken CMA is hosting a four-session webinar series for Victorian Landcare Facilitators and co-ordinators presented by Dr Trudi Ryan, Words for Change.**

Like most people passionate about social and environmental change, you've probably spent a lot of time wondering...

*'How can we cut through the noise and get people to care about our issue?'*

*'How can we grow our volunteer base and keep people engaged?'*

*'How can we inspire people through our work and drive positive behaviour change?'*

If you're seeking a fresh approach to these challenges, please join our community of Landcare Co-ordinators and Facilitators in a four-session values-based messaging webinar series starting Thursday 11 June.

The sessions should ideally be attended sequentially, however, if you can't go to a webinar they will be recorded (see details below).

Session	Content
9:30–10:30am Thurs 11 June	1. The facts on facts: understanding how people reason and what this means for your communications. 2. Critical message frames: hope over fear, 'here, now, together', connect and cross scales.
9:30–10:30am Thurs 18 June	3. Human values motivation: the heart of the matter. 4. Values are like muscles: how to activate 'greater good' values through messaging.
9:30–10:30am Thurs 25 June	5. More than words: are people getting the message? 6. The secret to strong messages: visual language, explanation, inevitability, plausibility and other tips.
9:30–10:30am Thurs 2 July	7. Set your messaging purpose: feel, know, do. 8. Bringing it all together: how to create your values-based message and make calls to action, actionable.

#### Webinar Access:

Please register with [kerstiel@gbcma.vic.gov.au](mailto:kerstiel@gbcma.vic.gov.au) or 0448 713 585 for the link to the event.

*These workshop series are designed specifically for Landcare Coordinators and Facilitators with funding from the Victorian Landcare Program.*

### Get down and dirty with Dung Beetles

**North Central CMA landcare is hosting a webinar with Dr Bernard Doube OAM on Friday June 5.**

Bernard is an ambassador for the benefits of the soil-enriching and pest-control qualities of dung beetles.

Bernard worked with CSIRO for 29 years, including 7 years as OIC of the CSIRO Dung Beetle Research Unit in Pretoria, South Africa. Since 2003 he has been the lead researcher and director of Dung Beetle Solutions International (DBSI) where he continues to be strongly involved in research and farmer education.

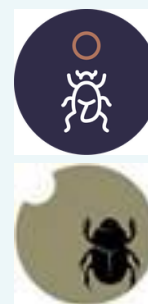
Join us in our first North Central Landcare webinar and learn how dung beetles can increase the profitability and sustainability of your property. The 1.5hr session will cover:

- which dung beetle species suit your property
- native and introduced species
- how to maintain your dung beetle populations
- which chemicals kill dung beetles
- farmer nurseries to breed the new spring species on-farm
- biochar to increase soil carbon and animal health.

**When:** Friday 5 June 2020

**Where:** [via this Microsoft Teams link](#)

*Please note:* You do not need the MS Teams App to join the webinar. Use this link and select the 'Join on the web' option when prompted.



**This webinar is free and open to everyone through funding from the Victorian Landcare Program.**



## Courses & Resources...

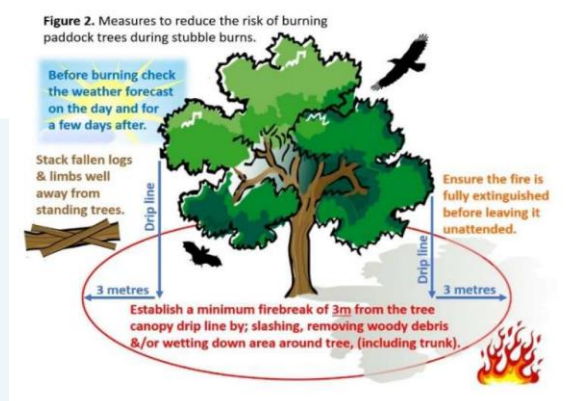
### Stubble Burning & Protecting Paddock Trees

**DELWP have collaborated with local governments, CFA, VFF and Birchip Cropping Group to update the stubble burning and paddock tree protection factsheet.**

Retention of crop stubble residues is preferred as it benefits soil health. While this is well supported by many farmers, burning stubble is a management choice.

The note explains;

- the value of paddock trees to agriculture,
- how to reduce impacts to paddock trees during stubble burns,
- Victorian laws that apply to paddock trees.



The factsheet can be found on the DELWP website or contact the CMA for a copy of the PDF version.

### How do you manage weeds and pests on your property?

**Agriculture Victoria is seeking support from private landholders, including farmers, to help combat pests and weeds which cost Victoria more than \$1 billion a year in management and control programs.**

Landholders are being invited to take part in a state-wide survey to better understand the social and behavioural factors that influence pest and weed management.

Agriculture Victoria is the lead agency in the delivery of programs to combat established invasive species which

is underpinned by the \$4.3 million Weeds and Rabbits Project funded by the Commonwealth Government.

The survey opened Monday 25 May and closes Sunday 24 June.

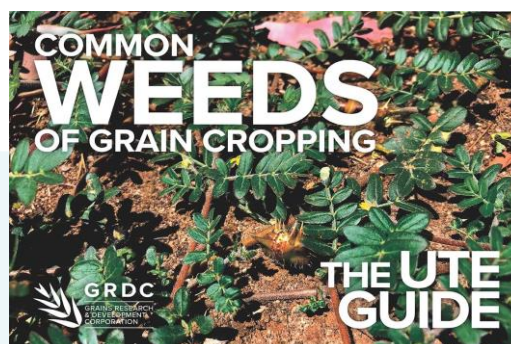
Complete the survey: [weedsandrabbits.com/survey](https://weedsandrabbits.com/survey)

### New and improved GRDC weed ute guide now available

**The GRDC has just released the first Common Weeds of Grain Cropping: The Ute Guide, available as a hard copy or digital manual, for the most key weeds impacting our farming systems.**

This national version replaces the former regional and seasonal weed ute guides.

GRDC Manager Weeds, Jason Emms said the new and improved national guide was developed in response to calls from industry for a practical, easy-to-access tool for weed identification in the paddock.



“Weed management is one of the toughest challenges facing Australian growers and costs them an estimated \$3.3 billion every year,” Dr Emms said.

Dr Emms said the guide was intended solely as an identification tool and that for control and management information growers should contact their local adviser or refer to the GRDC manual Integrated Weed Management in Australian Cropping systems.

Growers, advisers, students and researchers can order copies of the Common Weeds of Grain Cropping: The Ute Guide free of charge, although there are standard postage and handling charges of \$10 per copy. Where more than one copy or bulk quantities are ordered the postage and handling cost will reflect the weight of the order.

To order copies of this Ute Guide free-call 1800 11 00 44 or email: [ground-cover-direct@canprint.com.au](mailto:ground-cover-direct@canprint.com.au) and quote GRDC Order Code- GRDC1331.