

# North Central Chat

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



October 2021

## A message from the Regional Landcare Coordinator

Hi everyone,

I write this month's edition just days after Victorians experience the largest earthquake on modern record. I, myself, was well and truly out of the loop, driving home from Port Fairy, the quake's affect not felt across much of western Victoria at all. I soon caught onto people's experiences, with stories coming to me from Bendigo, Castlemaine, Macedon Ranges and towards the CBD, of course. The ABC reported that, in total, seven quakes struck Victoria with tremors felt across the state, New South Wales, Canberra and as far away as Adelaide and Launceston on September 22. I think it's safe to say the word 'seismologist' will now be trending in weekend quizzes.

September was a brilliant month for celebrating biodiversity. The Victoria Nature Festival boasted more than 80 virtual events and experiences exploring Victoria's rich natural environment and wildlife. There was so much on offer it was a challenge to keep up, but I can say it was hard to go past the live streams from Phillip Island's penguin colony and Zoos Victoria 'Animals at Home' livestreaming series. So much of the incredible content is available anytime via the [event website](#). It's well worth a look if you have the chance.

The mascot for the Victoria Nature festival was the beloved Plains-wanderer. This quirky bird and the women working to protect and enhance their habitat are also the focus of the 2021 Chicks in the Sticks event. Our Landcare Program has partnered with the CMA Plains for Wanderer project team to put together an incredible line-up of speakers, visuals, photography and giveaways. See the Events section for more details, and pass on the info to those wonderful women in your life! It's a great introduction into Landcare, agriculture, and conservation.

Chicks in the Sticks is hosted in October each year to align with organisations around the world celebrating the International Day of Rural Women. In 2019, UN Women reported that globally, [one in three employed women](#)



Rural women and girls are leaders in agriculture, food security and nutrition, land, and managing natural resource management. On October 15, the International Day of Rural Women, UN Women is calling for action to support rural women and girls and grow their capacities to respond to climate change through agricultural production, food security, and natural resources management.

Photo: Courtesy of Kia Hooke, Serpentine.

[worked in agriculture](#). Women also collect biomass fuels, manually process food materials, and pump water; [80 per cent of households without piped water rely on women and girls](#) for water collection. In Australia, women have only been able to define themselves as farmers since 1994. Encouragingly, first-generation female farmers have been the subject of recent study and a few of their stories were shared in this [Sydney Morning Herald article](#).

I'd like to take a moment to thank Britt for leading the Chat these past few months and to everyone who contributed to this month's unexpected bumper edition.

Enjoy the read,

Tess Grieves

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North Central CMA

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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](http://www.nccma.vic.gov.au)



## News...

### International Day of Rural Women



**Celebrated annually on October 15, the International Day of Rural Women recognizes rural women's importance in enhancing agricultural and rural development worldwide.**

Events will be popping up all over Australia, but one that caught my eye was a partnership with Rural Aid and the GRO Events group, who invite you to join in the 2021 event to celebrate **The International Day of Rural Women: GRIT – a virtual morning tea with Catherine Marriott.**

The most recent statistics from the Australian Government census in 2016 indicated that 32 per cent of the Australian agriculture workforce are women. Following years of drought, flood, fire, and now COVID-19, Australian women across the rural and agricultural landscape have acted as pillars of strength. Not only have they contributed to on- and off-farm income, they have managed households (completing 13 per cent more work than other women in Australia), supported friends and family, juggled kids and work, and given extensively to their communities, all often unrecognised.

What do we think is the key ingredient here? Grit.

You can read more about the speakers and [register your interest via Facebook](#). Join in online at 10.30am via Zoom on Friday 15 October to celebrate the International Day of Rural Women.



### Collaborate, Innovate and Invest with the North Central CMA

**The North Central CMA introduces you to a new initiative that is encouraging and enabling further NRM investment in north central Victoria – it's called our *Business Development Program*.**

Our ***Business Development Program*** is about turning ideas into action by working together to identify, develop, and deliver on new projects for the region.

It's an exciting initiative as it provides an opportunity to leverage our collective regional capability, so together we can create natural resource management projects and programs that deliver lasting change.

We already have a framework to work from. The [North Central Regional Catchment Strategy \(RCS\)](#) sets the long-term vision for NRM within the North Central CMA region. While the RCS provides the vision, the *Business Development Program* (with your help) will be the vehicle that turns this collective vision into more action.

An important aspect of the *Business Development Program* will be further developing our [NRM Regional Prospectus](#). This prospectus is a collaborative document with our Catchment Partners Forum, including members from state government agencies, water corporations, Traditional Owners, local government, and the North Central Catchment Management Authority. It identifies key priority projects for the region and aims to link these projects with funding through government, philanthropic or private sector investment. We would like to add more ideas to this document and are inviting your input.

- Do you have an idea to improve or enhance the natural environment or build community capacity but don't know where to start?
- Are you part of an organisation that has Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) objectives and are looking for an environmental project to support?

Click [here](#) to be taken through to our submission page or click below to read more. **Submissions are due by Friday 29 October 2021.**

Key project themes to consider when submitting ideas:

**Carbon offsets** – How could we assist government agencies, government departments and corporations to progress toward net zero emissions?

**Connected Nature** – How could we connect our natural places across the landscape? Could revegetation activities and the carbon sequestration value of regional wetlands generate income via carbon credits?

**Soil Health** – How could we improve soil health across the region by supporting farmers to adopt more sustainable land management practices and increase the resilience of agriculture industries to climate and market changes? How can stewardship assist in this process?

**Sustainable Farming Model** – How could we farm in a way that protects assets identified in the North Central Regional Catchment Strategy? Could we source funds from ethically aligned (or neutral) investors to purchase land and apply a holistic farming model approach that integrates productive agriculture with priority environmental asset protection and increased community well-being?

**Traditional Owner Engagement** – How could we recognise and support Aboriginal cultural values and economic inclusion to care for Country?

As a first step, a working group will be established to review all submissions and to shortlist five or six for inclusion in our [NRM Regional Prospectus](#) document, with an initial response provided to all submissions received by the end of November 2021. Obviously not all ideas will be shortlisted, but it is our intention to record these ideas and to develop these projects over time where and when an opportunity arises.

Any questions can be referred to email address [bdp@nccma.vic.gov.au](mailto:bdp@nccma.vic.gov.au) or contact Matthew Dawson (Business Development Manager) on 0417 470 567.



## Do you need plants for your 2022 revegetation season?

**TreeProject gets urban and rural communities working together to put trees back on the land.**

Their network of trained volunteers grows 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. If seedlings can't be picked up TreeProject use volunteers to minimise the cost of delivery.

They have been working with a number of Landcare groups (Deep Creek, Malmsbury, Upper Maribyrnong, Arawata order seedlings annually). These Landcare groups determine which 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.

They have a lot of volunteer growers ready to grow this summer [so get your order in](#), on the new fully integrated online ordering system, by 30 September 2021.

## Get paid to protect and enhance native remnant vegetation on your property

**The Enhancing Remnant Vegetation Pilot is trialling approaches to pay farmers for improving biodiversity on farms under the Australian Governments Agriculture Stewardship Package.**

Together with the Carbon + Biodiversity Pilot, the Enhancing Remnant Vegetation Pilot is trialling mechanisms to pay farmers for improving biodiversity on farms under the Agriculture Stewardship Package. This pilot aims to improve existing native vegetation on farms through locally adapted management protocols developed by the Australian National University in consultation with Natural Resource Management organisations in six trial regions, of which North Central CMA is one.

Successful farmers could be eligible to receive payments to manage and enhance existing remnant native vegetation on-farm.

[The Enhancing Remnant Vegetation Pilot](#) is part of the wider \$66.1 million Agriculture Stewardship Package, an Australian Government commitment to improve biodiversity stewardship on farms. The 2021–22 Budget delivers \$32.1 million over four years in funding.

**Applications for the Enhancing Remnant Vegetation Pilot are expected to open late September 2021.**

Enquiries about the program can be directed to [agstewardship@awe.gov.au](mailto:agstewardship@awe.gov.au) or call 1800 329 055.



The screenshot shows a YouTube video player with a presentation slide. The slide features a dark brown background with a circular pattern of yellow dots. The text on the slide is as follows:

- Loddon Plains Future Farming Regenerative Agriculture Group**
- Understanding your Soils Part One**
- Rebecca Mitchell, Agriculture Victoria**
- September 2021**

The YouTube interface includes a search bar at the top, a play button at the bottom left, and a progress bar at the bottom. The video title is "Understanding your Soils Part One" and the channel name is "Agriculture Victoria".

Download on the  
**App Store**

GET IT ON  
**Google Play**

## Have Your Say on The Future of Victoria's Parks

**The Victorian Government has launched a new Parks Victoria Land Management Strategy (LMS) and is inviting Victorians to give feedback on how our parks will be managed into the future.**

The draft Land Management Strategy (LMS) is a state-wide document that sets out long-term strategies for the protection, management, and use of Parks Victoria land for the next decade.

The LMS will help Parks Victoria respond to the complex social, cultural, and environmental challenges, including working alongside Traditional Owners, increasing demand for visitor experiences, a growing population and climate change.

Once finalised, the Land Management Strategy will be an important guide for developing and reviewing park management plans and set out priorities for partners, stakeholders and community.

Along with the draft LMS, Parks Victoria has developed a draft Outcomes Reporting Framework providing clear measures to track the strategy's implementation over time.

Parks Victoria, with DELWP, supported the development of the Cultural Landscapes Strategy facilitated by the Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations. The objectives identified in the Cultural Landscapes Strategy will complement the outcomes and priorities of the LMS.

People can share their feedback online and read the draft LMS and the draft Outcomes Reporting Framework via Engage Victoria at [engage.vic.gov.au/lms](https://engage.vic.gov.au/lms).

**Consultation on the draft strategy is open from 16 September until 17 October 2021.**

## New Local Law for Weed Control in Mount Alexander Shire

Article by Lee Mead, Tarrangower Cactus Control Group

**Springtime is full of glorious growth and colour, but alas this also includes some species that don't belong. Some introduced plants have invaded our native landscapes and cause enormous problems to our native wildlife and our local farmers.**

Wheel cactus (*Opuntia robusta*), from Mexico, is one of these introduced plants. Uncontrolled infestations of this cactus prevent growth of our indigenous plants, which causes an imbalance in the native ecosystem and lack of food source for native insects, birds etc.

Mount Alexander Shire Council has recently released a revised version of its relevant local law, which includes a new bylaw specific to the Control of Noxious Weeds (Clause 19). This new law makes it easier for Bylaw Officers to impose landholders noxious weed management obligations and will help reduce the spread of weeds. This will be especially effective for problem weed infestations on properties with absent owners, who are sometimes oblivious of their noxious weed responsibilities.

If there's a wheel cactus infestation on a neighbouring property but you cannot connect with the landowner, don't hesitate to contact the Mount Alexander Shire Bylaw Officer for assistance.



If you need any help and/or advice on how to control your wheel cactus infestation, then please [contact the group](#).

## Endangered butterfly finds new hope in central Victoria.

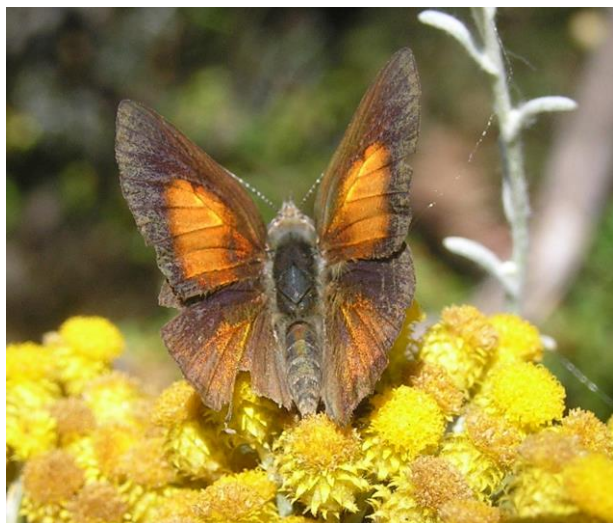
Article by Ivan Carter –Engagement Coordinator.  
Connecting Country (Mount Alexander region) Inc.

**The nationally endangered Eltham copper butterfly (*Paralucia pyrodiscus lucida*) represents one of the most fascinating stories both due to its co-dependency in nature and how the community have rallied for this species.**

This is a rare, good news story within the extinction crisis across Australia of how we can save species, with enough care and resources anything is possible.

It is a story of lost and found and lost and found again. It was formally described in 1951 having been collected from a number of sites around Eltham in 1923-56. Subsequent lack of records over the next 37 years combined with housing development clearing them from areas where they once thrived (Tallarook, Murtoa, Dimboola, Keilor, Broadmeadows and Yarrambat) resulted in the belief that they had become extinct.

They were rediscovered at Eltham in 1987 on a property about to be subdivided. Community campaigning for this tiny insect resulted in eight hectares around Eltham/Greensborough being purchased and protected. The 1987 discovery also triggered and funded a state-wide search, and nine colonies were discovered in 1988, including in two new regions: Castlemaine and Kiata/Salisbury area.



The glorious colours of the Eltham copper butterfly (photo by Elaine Bayes)

Finding where a rare species lives is the first step in conserving it, but protecting it from threats is the next.

Sadly, since 1988 three known populations were lost through housing development (Montorency, Lower Eltham Hills) and from grazing/weed invasion (Salisbury). An unknown number have been lost from areas where they had yet to be discovered.

However, bursts of effort over the decades have led to the discovery of new populations, mostly in North Central Victoria. In 2011, a 3000ha search resulted in eight new populations found around Bendigo and Castlemaine. All new populations are very localised within a larger area of what appears to be suitable to the human eye, but the butterfly only occurs in 3-25% of habitat. Numbers of butterflies within these areas are also very small, with populations around 50, but peppered through a larger area. Currently, what makes good habitat for a truly interconnected species is very complex.



An Eltham copper butterfly caterpillar being attended by ants (photo by Elaine Bayes)

The Eltham copper butterfly, like many of the blue butterfly family, has a fascinating ecological dependency with two species— a *Notoncus* ant species and the sole larval food plant, sweet bursaria (*Bursaria spinosa*). Not to mention an unknown array of environmental factors including food for the ants, relationships with predators, aspect, soil type etc. It is a small attractive butterfly with bright copper colouring on the tops of its wings and lives in dry open woodlands.

The relationship works like this. The adult Eltham copper butterflies lay their eggs on or at the base of sweet bursaria plants. The eggs hatch and the larvae make their way to the ant nest where they are tended and guarded by *Notoncus* ants. This amazing service is achieved through a mixture of trickery and treats.



Trickery in that the larvae of this family of blue butterflies are believed to give off chemicals and make noises that can pacify ant aggression, mimic ant brood hormones, and attract and alert ants if larvae is alarmed. The larvae produces sugary secretions from its body in proportion to how many ants they need to guard them.

These nocturnal ants then lead the larvae out at night to browse on the sweet bursaria leaves and defend them from the many nocturnal predators that see them as a juicy snack. Larvae pupate in or near the ant nest, with adult butterflies emerging from October to March each year, peaking from November to January. The adults then feed on nectar of sweet bursaria flowers, before they lay their eggs at the base of the plant, and on the cycle begins again.

Elaine Bayes is one of the leading ecologists championing the future survival of the eltham copper butterfly in Northern Victoria. Elaine has conducted numerous surveys for the butterfly and its preferred habitat over the past decade, along with her colleague ecologist Karl Just and a team of citizen scientists, uncovering new populations along the way.

Elaine recently obtained funding through the Victorian Government's Biodiversity Ongoing Action Program to map and monitor current known populations and conduct further surveys for suitable habitat across central and western Victoria, and is excited about the chance of finding further populations of the special butterfly.

*"We have the opportunity to conduct surveys in locations that we have not previously surveyed, but we know have great habitat potential," she said.*

*"The next six months will see our team survey locations around Castlemaine, Chewton and Kiata, with the hope of discovering new populations, which is very exciting and vital to the survival of this endangered species."*

Sightings of this elusive butterfly can be reported on the new and amazing Butterfly Australia App: [butterflies.org.au](https://butterflies.org.au)

For more information or a copy of an [extended version of this article](#) contact Ivan on 0422 605 953 or [ivan@connectingcountry.org.au](mailto:ivan@connectingcountry.org.au)

## Sustainable Ag Snippet...

### The importance of community

Many farmers are involved in community groups. It provides a sense of belonging. It can be a geographical place where people meet, or a virtual space on social media. It usually brings like-minded people together with a common interest such as Landcare, livestock, or sheep.

There are many positives that come out of being involved with community, like learning from each other, providing peer support and encouragement. Supporting others helps people feel good about themselves, helps their community, and improves mental and physical wellbeing. During the current lockdowns this has been particularly important to stay connected to your community.

Being able to share your thoughts creates new ideas and innovation. This can lead to a community that builds and fosters the next generation of community leaders, willing to build on these ideas and create new ones. Connecting with people in your community can build valuable relationships and gives us a sense belonging.

We all have a story to share or knowledge that can be passed on through the community that can be utilised many times. It is a valuable resource that is inexpensive but an important part of any community.



Community groups have a feeling of passion, they are a people who share their passion with each other and their communities. They build trust and confidence and encourage each other with their aspirations.

There are many community groups in our region, with most being the backbone of the community. The recent lockdowns have had an impact on getting together, so we all need to make an effort to keep engaged. If you are involved in a community group or farmer group, organise your next meeting to give your mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing a lift.



**Communities Caring for Catchments**

Hello everyone!

I am thrilled to be able to introduce you to our new Citizen Science Coordinator, Tania MacLeod.

Tania's background is in urban forestry with 15 years' experience working in tree management in local government. She spent a decade at the City of Melbourne before embarking on a tree change and relocating to Bendigo to develop the City of Greater Bendigo's Greening Greater Bendigo strategy – a plan to drastically increase vegetation health and cover in urban areas.

She holds a Bachelor of Horticulture and a Master of Forest Ecosystem Science and is passionate about supporting the natural environment to create liveable places for people. Her most recent research focussed on the importance of urban greenspace on mental and physical health and the tensions between green urban settlements and bushfire safety.

Her interests cover anything outdoors. She tells me her happy place is very much in the bush with her dog Toby or exploring new landscapes, countries, and cultures (in a pre-Covid life!).



Her favourite tree is the buya pine (*Araucaria bidwillii*) but she is yet to try eating the delicious and nutritious cone seed. Learn more about Tania's favourite tree species here <https://theconversation.com/bunya-pines-are-ancient-delicious-and-possibly-deadly-96003>

*"Bendigo is now very much home, and I am extremely lucky to be working in a role that combines my love of the environment with the wider North Central community".*

Welcome aboard Tania, we can't wait to further develop our citizen science programs with you!

Enjoy the read.

Britt Gregory

Project Officer – Waterwatch & Citizen Science  
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# Spring..



## into Citizen Science

**Spring is the perfect time to get outside and observe what is happening in nature. The birds are busy, reptiles are waking up and flowers are showing off.**

The North Central CMA is celebrating the arrival of Spring and Nation Water Week by supporting several online events that aim to connect the community to nature. In doing so we hope to gather important information to help researchers and the wider community understand the health of our natural world.

Get involved and check them out on our website:  
[Spring into Citizen Science](#)



## How River Detectives can shape your life!

**Looking for a good news story to lift your spirits? This 30-minute recorded webinar is sure to inspire . . .**

Recently we filmed a webinar for our River Detectives schools across the state to highlight the positive impact that experiences during school years can have on your life.

We were thrilled to be joined by Tess Williamson, a current Waterwatch volunteer who monitors Five Mile Creek in Woodend and is completing her honours year of a Bachelor of Advanced Science majoring in environmental science at Monash University.

Tess is an ex-River Detective who participated in the program as a Grade Four student in 2009 at the Carlsruhe annexe of Woodend Primary School. She identified that some of the experiences she enjoyed at school as part of the River Detectives program stayed with her and influenced the journey she has taken.

I was also joined by two incredible Year 4 Woodend PS students, Lacie and Hannah, who helped me interview



Tess with their articulate questions and share their passion for the River Detectives program.

The half hour recorded webinar is an uplifting watch and available now.

[River Detectives Virtual Learning Session - Ask the Expert: How River Detectives Can Shape Your Life - YouTube](#)

If you're a nature lover (and no doubt you are if you're reading this newsletter) you'll find comfort and inspiration from this story and the reflection it will no doubt prompt about the way that fun times in nature as a child has shaped your life in ways big and small.

Make sure you watch till the end for a special surprise!



Nicole Howie

Waterwatch Project Officer

North Central CMA

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## Water Storages Update

Region	Water Storage	% full at 24 Aug	% full at 22 Sep
Murray Storages	Dartmouth Dam	72.69	↑78.01
	Hume Dam	91.83	↑97.00
	Third Lake	48.70	↓45.26
	Reedy/Middle Lk	96.81	↑97.45
	Kangaroo Lake	95.46	↓94.74
	Kow Swamp	92.63	↑92.84
	Lake Boga	73.62	↑83.73
	Lake Charm	92.99	↑93.42
Loddon Storages	Cairn Curran Res	59.05	↑64
	Tullaroop Res	64.12	↑72.94

	Laanecoorie Res	98.00	↓49.88
Bullarook Storages	Newlyn Res	100.88	↓100.65
	Hepburns Lagoon	102.91	↓102.24
Goulburn Storages	Lake Eildon	72.37	↑78.40
	Waranga Basin	92.41	↓92.16
Campaspe	Lake Eppalock	51.26	↑53.79
Coliban Water Storages	Upper Coliban Res	101.30	↓100.60
	Lauriston Res	96.30	↑98.80
	Malmsbury Res	108.2	↓103.30

[www.g-mwater.com.au/water-resources/catchments/storage-levels](http://www.g-mwater.com.au/water-resources/catchments/storage-levels)

[www.coliban.com.au/about-us/our-reservoirs](http://www.coliban.com.au/about-us/our-reservoirs)

## Upcoming Events and Special Days

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
November	
Australian Pollinator Week	7-14 Nov
National Recycling Week	8-14 Nov
World Science Day for Peace and Development	10 Nov
National Agriculture Day	19 Nov
World Fisheries Day	21 Nov

December	
World Soil Day	5 Dec
International Volunteer Day	5 Dec
Coastcare Week	6-12 Dec
International Mountain Day	11 Dec

## Courses & Resources...



### Holistic Grazing short course

#### The Practical Regenerative Agricultural Communities project is hosting a holistic grazing management short course.

The course has been designed to assist land managers to increase the health of agricultural grasslands and livestock.

It is structured for big and small landholders to improve skills and knowledge about grazing livestock, resulting in an increase in perennial pasture species (including natives) and soil carbon. The course will be delivered by Jason McAinch and Sam White in a combination of online and on-farm format, and supplemented by guest speakers.

The cost is \$100. Places are limited. See the [course outline](#) for more details.

Register your interest online via: [Healthy Landscapes: Practical Regenerative Agricultural Communities \(openforms.com\)](#).

**Also available is the opportunity for a free property visit from Land Conservation Officer Jason McAinch.**

Sign up for a one-to-one land management assessment, where Jason assists landholders with taking the first steps to farm regeneratively.

The program is available to residents of the City of Greater Bendigo, Hepburn Shire and Macedon Ranges Shire. This program is being delivered in partnership with Macedon Ranges Shire Council, the City of Greater Bendigo, Hepburn Shire Council, A Healthy Coliban Catchment project (North Central Catchment Management Authority, Dja Dja Wurrung, and Coliban

Water), Melbourne Water, and the Upper Campaspe Landcare Network.

For further information, please contact Jason McAinch, Private Land Conservation Officer:

Email: [jmcainch@mrsc.vic.gov.au](mailto:jmcainch@mrsc.vic.gov.au)

Phone: 0455 210 436

**Forests are a key feature for the survival of a local fluffy favourite, the brush-tailed phascogale.**

**Local scientist, PhD Candidate at La Trobe University and Monitoring Coordinator at Connecting Country Jess Lawton has released her new paper.**

Jess has been questing 'What determines the distribution of a threatened species, the brush-tailed phascogale, in a highly modified region?'

Jess's abstract explains: "Phascogales have undergone range contractions and regional extinctions in Australia and fall within the critical weight range of mammal species with high risk of decline. Yet, in some regions, it persists despite marked habitat loss and disturbance. We investigated the distribution of the brush-tailed phascogale in a highly modified region in central Victoria where it is a flagship for community conservation."



*Brush-tailed phascogale (Phascogale tapoatafa) . Photo Jess Lawton.*

The study is published in [Austral Ecology](#) and recently received some great media attention with a feature in The Age: [Mysterious marsupial with bushy tail caught on camera \(theage.com.au\)](#)

## 2021 National Landcare Conference & Awards Survey

### Landcare Australia is seeking help to make improvements to the next conference program format, content, and logistics.

If you haven't already taken the survey, they'd would appreciate your feedback via [this survey link](#).

Let's keep the conversation going! Connect with each other and explore the innovations, technologies and tangible ideas shared at the conference. Be sure to visit the Education Resource Hub to watch the recorded sessions, download the speaker presentations, and connect with speakers and delegates via [Landcarer](#).

## Supporting the Next Generation of Farmers to Succeed

### The Victorian Government is calling on young farmers to take their careers to the next level, with expressions of interest open for the 2022 Young Farmer and New Entrant Mentoring Program.

Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas has announced eight positions are available in the 2022 program which pairs young farmers with experienced farmers in a mentorship, overseen by a skilled farm business consultant.

The program is open to farmers aged 18 to 35 years to develop the skills they need to better manage their farm businesses, identify risks and develop strategies to build resilience and achieve their business goals.

During the 12-month program, the mentor and mentee will meet regularly to assist the young farmer in building professional networks, using trusted sources of advice and information, and setting business goals.

Samantha Mitchell, a mixed grain and sheep farmer from Watchupga in northern Victoria, took over the family business from her father this year. She is one of 12 mentees involved in the 2021 program.

Samantha applied to the mentoring program to support the transition of her family business, build relationships in the industry and gain a better understanding of business operations, such as employing and managing staff.

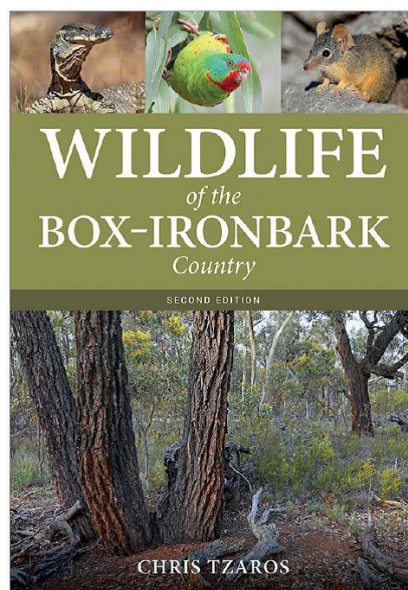
The Young Farmer and New Entrant Mentoring Program is funded by the Government's \$20 million Smarter, Safer Farms initiative, which includes targeted training support to build capability in financial literacy, risk

management, farm planning and adaption to climate change.

Eol's for mentees for the 2022 Young Farmer and New Entrant Mentoring Program are now open. For more information, and to apply, visit [vic.gov.au/youngfarmers](https://vic.gov.au/youngfarmers).

To hear more about Samantha's story in the latest podcast episode of 'AgVic Talk', go to [agriculture.vic.gov.au/agvictalk](https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agvictalk).

## Wildlife of the Box-Ironbark Country ... 2nd Edition



### The hugely popular author, ecologist, twitcher, and all-round nice guy, Chris Tzaros has republished Wildlife of the Box Ironbark Country, first published in 2005.

This is an essential resource for anyone living in or interested in Victoria's box-ironbark region. [Natural Newstead](#) blogger Geoff Park said "Wildlife of the Box-Ironbark Country gives a comprehensive overview of the ecology of the box-ironbark habitats and their wildlife, and how climate change is having a major influence. This extensively revised second edition covers all of the mammals, birds, reptiles and frogs that occur in the region, with a brief description of their distribution, status, ecology and identification, together with a detailed distribution map and superb colour photograph for each species"

The book will be available from all good bookstores in October, 2021, for \$49.99. Further details here [Wildlife of the Box-Ironbark Country, Chris Tzaros](#).



## Events...

### Leaky Landscapes symposium



### The Biolinks Alliance invite you our upcoming Leaky Landscapes symposium.

The one-day online symposium via Zoom is looking at practical approaches to fixing the damaged landscapes of central Victoria, making them more absorbent (less leaky), and more biologically productive and better able to withstand the impacts of climate change.

This forum showcases 21<sup>st</sup>-century strategies and practical case studies that have been largely missing from policy debates about local climate change mitigation.

**When:** Friday 8th October

**Where:** Online via Zoom

**RSVP:** Register via [Eventbrite](#)

### Planning and planting to maximise the potential of farm dams



**Sustainable Farms invites you to join in a lunch-time webinar to hear about the latest research on the biodiversity and productivity benefits of enhancing farm dams, what to plant where, and other practical planning tips.**

### What's on?

- Sustainable Farms Ecologist Dave Smith will discuss current research on the multiple benefits of enhancing farm dams
- Sustainable Farms Ecologist Angelina Siegrist will introduce our new *Enhancing farm dams: What to plant in and around your dam* guide, including the different zones of a dam and species selection
- Greta Valley Landcare Project Officer Sally Day will share her experiences of why farmers choose to enhance their dams and practical aspects of planning a farm dam project

**When:** Thursday 14th October, 12 - 1pm

**Where:** ONLINE

**RSVP:** RSVP is essential via [Eventbrite](#).



**Are you inspired by opportunity and the stories of others?**

**Keen to connect with like-minded women who share a connection to agriculture and the environment?**

Grab your gumboots, don your favourite frock, and add your own native flora accessory. It's time for the 2021 Chicks in the Sticks event, hosted by North Central CMA.

Now in our ninth year, we're showcasing Grasslands for Good ~ Celebrating Farming and Conservation. Invite along your best friend, mother, sister, or colleague to what will be another incredible event.

This year's event is proudly sponsored by the North Central CMA's Plains for Wanderers project.

Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation board member Rebecca Phillips will be our generous MC for the day. Presenters will include:

- Deanna Marshall and Kirsten Hutchinson of Trust for Nature
- Local farmer and Northern Plains Conservation Management Network President Faye Bail
- Yvette Pauligk from Werribee Open Range Zoo

Book your tickets NOW via Eventbrite for an inspiring event showcasing the wonderful women working to protect and promote the regions unique Northern Plains Grasslands.

## A look at LOOC-C, Carbon Abatement Calculator

### Landscape Opportunity and Options for Carbon abatement Calculator

With increasing interest in carbon abatement in agriculture, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) has developed a landscape options and opportunities for carbon abatement calculator.

Agriculture Victoria and CSIRO are hosting this upcoming webinar. LOOC-C team member Dr Stephen Roxburgh will provide an introduction to this tool and explain some of the background to it.

LOOC-C estimates carbon abatement via an emission factor database, giving producers information to assess potential changes to carbon by undertaking various tree or soil carbon activities on their land.

By visiting <https://looc-c.farm/> you can use the map interface to select a potential project area and help start the conversation of carbon abatement options for your farm business.

**When:** Tuesday 12 October

**Where:** ONLINE via Zoom. 12 pm (AEST)

**RSVP:** Go online to register your attendance on Zoom.



## Thank you, Asha!



**It's always a sad time when one of our Landcare Facilitators moves on to a new role. Darren and I wanted to take a moment to thank and congratulate Asha Bannon for her exceptional work as Landcare Facilitator at Connecting Country.**

Since 2016, Asha's smiling face and warm, generous personality has been enjoyed by the 30+ Landcare groups and citizen science volunteers she supported, as well as the staff and board of Connecting Country.

Asha was instrumental in the establishment of our region's very first Intrepid Landcare Group and I was always excited by her leadership to innovate events like Camp out on the Mount and Landcare link ups. Connecting people from different groups and experiences in very purposeful ways within the Mount Alexander region will no doubt be a lasting legacy of Asha's time in the role.

While this is a huge hole to fill, it's not all sad news, as Asha has taken on a new role here at North Central CMA as Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Programs Approval Project Officer within the Major Projects Team.

While Asha is moving on from career Landcare, she will well and truly remain on the scene saying: "I am intending to remain active in our local community as a volunteer but will now be working as a project officer at North Central CMA. I am so grateful for all I have learned in my Landcare Facilitator role and will carry the passion for Landcare volunteering with me."

***Congratulations on your new role Asha and thank you for your contribution to Landcare in Victoria.***

## Funding opportunities...

Aboriginal Community Initiatives Fund



### Aboriginal Community Initiatives Fund

**Funding is available to Victorian Aboriginal not-for-profit organisations or Aboriginal community groups whose work supports Aboriginal families and/or communities in Victoria.**

Another round of the Community Initiative Fund (CIF) for 2021-2022 is open and closes on the 13 October 2021 at 5pm. No late applications will be accepted.

The one-off funding will be made available for local and/or regional based Aboriginal-led projects that educate, prevent, reduce, and respond to family violence in Aboriginal communities across Victoria. Only Aboriginal-led organisations and/or community groups can apply.

#### Where do I obtain further information?

The Aboriginal Community Initiatives Fund Guidelines and Application Form can be downloaded from the [Aboriginal Community Initiatives Fund webpage](https://www.vic.gov.au/aboriginal-cif) <<https://www.vic.gov.au/aboriginal-cif>

Please contact your local Dhelk Dja Coordinator if you require further information. If you are interested in further information, email Ann Spittles (Indigenous Family Violence Regional Coordinator, Loddon Campaspe Region) [ann.spittles@dffh.vic.gov.au](mailto:ann.spittles@dffh.vic.gov.au)

### Smart Farms Small Grants: Soil Extension Activities grant round now open

**The final grant round of the National Landcare Program - Smart Farms Small Grants: Soil Extension Activities, is now open with applications closing on 12 October 2021.**

Grants are available for between \$100,000 to \$250,000 per activity and are available to fund projects that help improve the protection, resilience and productive capacity of our soils. Applicants may apply for a maximum of \$2 million per application.

Soil extension activities will support farmers and land managers to understand the benefits of soil testing and take practical action to improve the management of their soil and land. This may include working with farmers and land managers to participate in the National Soil Monitoring and Incentives Pilot Program, assist them to interpret results, and help them to take action to improve their soil health.

Smart Farms Small Grants: Soil Extension Activities will support the Smart Farms Small Grants program outcomes as well as the National Soil Strategy objectives.

The application form can be accessed through the following link:

<https://www.communitygrants.gov.au/grants/smart-farms-small-grants>

If you would like to discuss the program further, please get in touch with Darren Bain Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator, North Central CMA.

P: (03) 5440 1893

M: +61 419 560 348

E: [darren.bain@nccma.vic.gov.au](mailto:darren.bain@nccma.vic.gov.au)

### 2021-22 Wildlife Rehabilitator Grants

**The 2021-22 Wildlife Rehabilitator Grants program that is now open provides funding to support Victoria's wildlife rehabilitators including authorised wildlife shelters and foster carers.**

The program aims to help wildlife rehabilitators to:

- Increase their knowledge and skills in the care of wildlife
- Improve their facilities to treat, house and rehabilitate wildlife for release
- Enhance the standard of care provided for native species

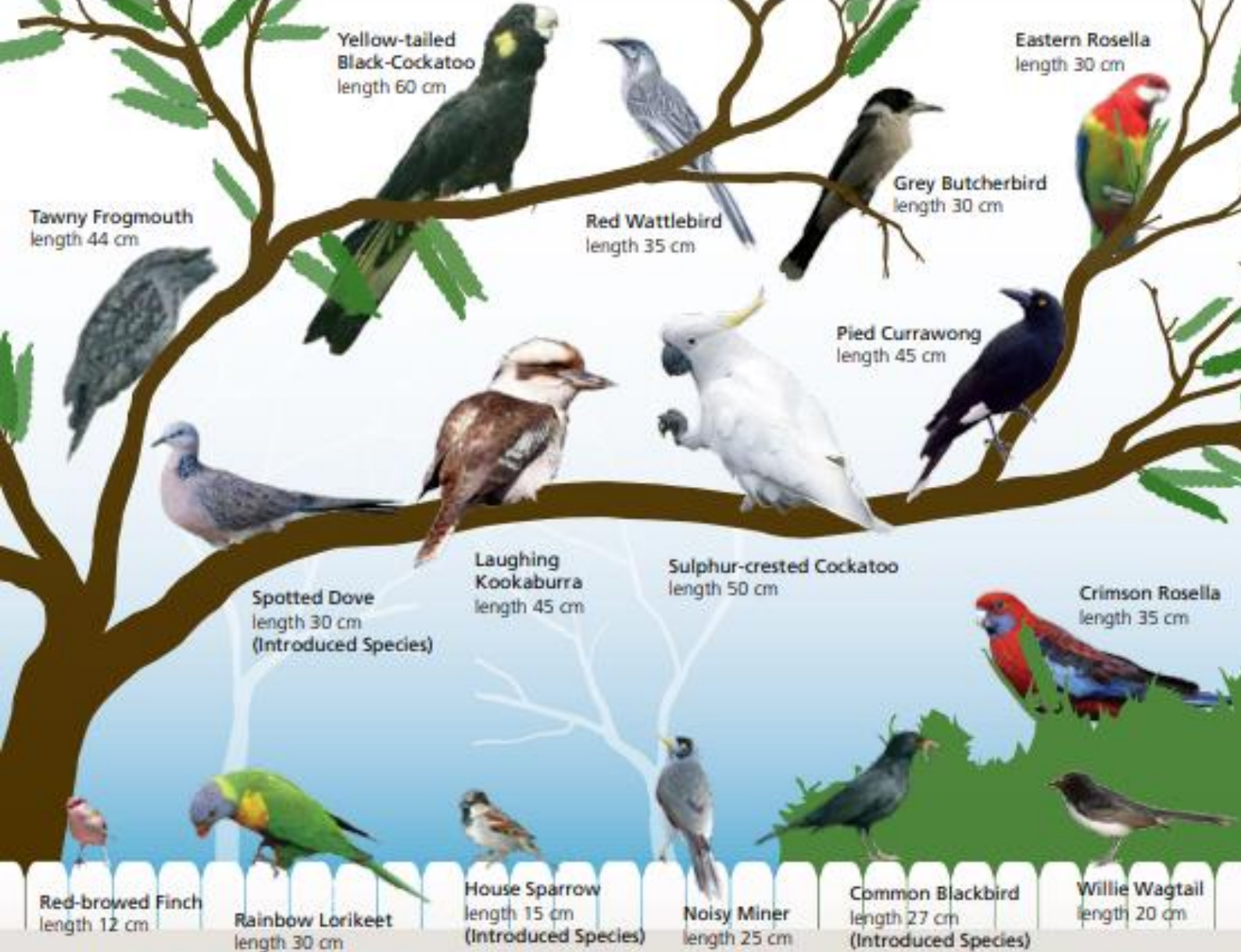
**Total funding available:** the Victorian Government is providing \$230,000 for the 2021-22 Wildlife Rehabilitator Grants round.

**Grants:** of up to \$3,000 are available to authorised wildlife shelter operators and foster carers for equipment, infrastructure, **consumables, education and training.**

**Applications** close: 3.30pm on Wednesday 13 October 2021.

**Guidelines, Frequently Asked Questions, & How to Apply:** <https://www.wildlife.vic.gov.au/grants/wildlife-rehabilitator-grants>. Please read the Guidelines and FAQs before you apply.





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