

North Central Chat

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



August 2024

A message from the Regional Landcare Coordinator

Hi everyone,

It was exciting to attend the Victorian Landcare Awards in Melbourne on 18 July, where the North Central region was well represented. It was truly inspirational to learn about all award winners, all amazing volunteers across Victoria generously giving their time to restore the environment.

Congratulations to **Marie Jones** of Golden Point Landcare on being awarded the Joan Kirner Landcare Award. **Penny Roberts** of Neham and District Landcare Group was Highly Commended, and **John Walter** of Malmsbury Landcare was Commended.

Tavish Bloom of Chewton was awarded the Woolworths Junior Landcare Award for his work at Post Office Hill Reserve and his school.

Annalise Varker is the winner of the inaugural Horrie Poussard Prize, for the best story published in the Landcare Magazine.

Marney Durie was Highly Commended in the Women in Landcare Award and Commended for the NextGen Landcare Award.

The **Mount Alexander Regenerative Agriculture Group** was Commended for the Australian Government Sustainable Agriculture Award.

Congratulations to all nominees and award winners. The awardees will now represent Victoria at the National Landcare Awards in 2025. Read the stories about our Award winners in the News section of The Chat.

It was great to see so many National Tree Day events happening across our region. I enjoyed planting trees, shrubs, and grasses at the Huntly Streamside Reserve with some of the region's Girl Guides and the Northern Bendigo Landcare Group. I can't wait to see the results of these efforts and those of everyone else who got their hands dirty on the day.



Finally, Landcare Week is coming up on 5 to 11 August. Keep an eye on our socials for some Landcare Week stories. Remember, Landcare is For Everyone and if you're not involved in Landcare yet, find a group on the [Landcare Gateway](#) or reach out to me to find out how you can start your Landcare journey.

Remember to follow us on socials to stay up to date with events, stories and other opportunities between Chat editions.

Happy reading,

Belinda Pritchard

Regional Landcare Coordinator
North Central CMA

Phone: 03 5448 7124 or 0408 342 593

Email: Belinda.pritchard@nccma.vic.gov.au



Subscribe to the North Central Chat using this QR code or [link](#)



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...

Landcare Award winners

There were a record number of 146 nominations for the 2024 Victorian Landcare Awards. See the list of all nominees in the [Landcare Magazine](#).

The North Central region was well represented among the award winners, with each winner from the region described below.



Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Action Sheena Watt MLC, Marie Jones, and Lieutenant Governor of Victoria Professor James Angus AO. Photo: DEECA

Joan Kirner Landcare Award

Winner Marie Jones, Golden Point Landcare

Marie Jones is an exceptional grassroots environmental leader, who has been involved in Landcare for 30 years in the Mount Alexander Shire area. Marie was a founding member of Golden Point Landcare, Post Office Hill Action Group, and Friends of the Box-Ironbark Forests. She also played an instrumental role in the establishment of the Connecting Country network in 2007, which has 30 member Landcare and environmental volunteer groups. Marie has an impressive history of making things happen in Landcare through partnerships, advocacy, and delivery of on-ground projects, including at landscape scale. Marie is always looking for innovative ways to involve the community in Landcare. She has provided inspiration to many through her Landcare work, and has also mentored, encouraged, and supported many group and community members, and staff.

Read the full story in the winter 2024 issue of [Victorian Landcare magazine](#).



Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Action Sheena Watt MLC, Annalise Varker, Jim Poussard and Lieutenant Governor of Victoria Professor James Angus AO Photo: DEECA

Horrie Poussard Prize

Winner Annalise Varker

Annalise's story "My story working on Country" published in the spring 2022 issue of the Victorian Landcare magazine, was a personal story written with honesty and insight. Through this story, Annalise revealed much of herself while working as an Indigenous School Based Trainee at North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) and forging a career in natural resource management. Annalise had the opportunity to work on Country and to learn from Elders and Traditional Owners. Annalise's story also revealed her reflections about the importance for young people to embrace opportunities to work in natural resource management, and the need for Landcare to involve more young people. Read more about Annalise in the [Winter issue of the Landcare magazine](#).



Woolworths Group Manager Max Hampton, Tavish Bloom and Lieutenant Governor of Victoria Professor James Angus AO. Photo: DEECA

Woolworths Junior Landcare Award

Winner Tavish Bloom

Tavish is a 13-year-old nature enthusiast who's playing a significant role in the protection and restoration of the 22-hectare Post Office Hill Reserve, next to his home in Chewton. Tavish visits the reserve each day, and two years ago he joined the Post Office Hill Action Group, which have cleared the reserve of rubbish and weeds and planted local shrubs and trees to assist in its restoration.

Tavish is also part of a project installing and monitoring 28 nest boxes at the reserve. He has created comprehensive species lists for the reserve, records his observations to iNaturalist and eBird, and his meticulous data collection on wildlife feeds into the Atlas of Living Australia. Tavish also shares his skills at identifying birds and mammals by guiding bird walks of up to 50 people at Post Office Hill Reserve.

Tavish has initiated nature conservation programs at his school in Castlemaine, where he co-founded the Eco Club. Tavish has also been involved in projects to develop the school's wetland, install nest boxes and bird hides, and use motion sensor cameras to film the behaviour of wildlife in the school's bush and wetland areas.

Tavish's wildlife conservation efforts reflect his deep love for nature, and a desire to raise awareness and invoke in others the same sense of wonder and care for Australia's wildlife, so they can be enjoyed by future generations.

Read the full story on Tavish in the [Victorian Landcare magazine](#).



National Science Week events

National Science Week is Australia's annual celebration of science and technology. It features more than 1000 events around Australia, including those delivered by universities, schools, research institutions, libraries, museums, and science centres. Join in with free virtual events and local in person events during National Science Week. There are free webcasts about protecting species ecosystems, citizen science projects and virtual quizzes.

[Find out more here.](#)



Geoff Brown with a selection of indigenous grasses targeting a Healthy Coliban Catchment. Photo: Tylden Landcare Group

Tylden Landcare and landowners targeting a Healthy Coliban Catchment

Article by Tylden Landcare Group

During May, Tylden Landcare and landowners planted native vegetation along the Coliban River as part of the partnership project with the Victorian Government's 2023-24 Victorian Landcare program that involves rehabilitation of native vegetation along riparian areas of the Coliban River.

The primary objective of rehabilitation works is to improve the quality and extent of native vegetation along the Coliban River. Weed invasion, lack of native vegetation, and stock access have direct impacts on the water quality. This water flows to the Upper Coliban reservoir and is our drinking water.

The area has been planted with indigenous trees, shrubs and grasses. Once established, the vegetation will create a filter zone between the stream and its surrounding catchment area. The plantings will provide many ecosystem services including the filtering of nutrients, providing fauna habitat and will control streambank erosion inputs from reaching the reservoir.

Local landowner Geoff Brown helped with the planting and said riparian vegetation plays a vital role in filtering nutrient inflows so clean water enters our reservoirs- a biocentric solution to a conservation issue.

"There are many trees planted along this reach of the Coliban River. Tylden Landcare through the Healthy Coliban Catchment program aims to control blackberry regrowth and augment a depleted vegetation layer, the

bottom layer of grasses and sedges that do the bulk of the nutrient filtering,” he said.

A range of grass species were planted including poa tussock grass, carex swamp sedge, and lomandra mat rush to improve biodiversity along the Coliban River along the local reach. Some of the improvements, however, may be decades away such as the development of grass meadows.

Clearly, this is a long-term project! By having nature do the work of pre-filtering water inputs, there is less work and less cost for water authorities to clean drinking water before it reaches the taps.

“Participation in a landscape and river rehabilitation program such as this will help us to reduce our ecological footprint to more sustainable levels,” Geoff said.

“A Healthy Coliban Catchment will provide clean, healthy water for our rivers, reservoirs, environment, agriculture and communities”.

A Healthy Coliban Catchment is an innovative 20-year plan bringing together government agencies, councils and local communities to improve the health of the Coliban River and its tributaries upstream of Malmsbury Reservoir.

For the first time, Coliban Water, the North Central CMA and Djaara have joined forces to create a plan aimed at protecting water quality, the fauna and flora, and cultural history of the area.

Landcare in Focus magazine

Landcare in Focus is now a biannual online magazine that features case studies and science-based articles.

It has a focus on innovation in agricultural land management, excellence in sustainable farming, revegetation and habitat restoration, protection of waterways, and community participation in Landcare projects.

Landcare Australia welcomes content contributions, the next edition is November 2024, and the deadline for content submissions is September 1.

Submissions or queries should be sent to The Editor at enquiries@landcareaustralia.com.au

[Subscribe here](#) to receive the Landcare in Focus.



Victorian Environment
FRIENDS NETWORK

2024 Victorian Environment Friends Network Award nominations

The Victorian Environment Friends Network (VEFN) Awards recognise and reward the extraordinary voluntary members of friend groups perform.

The VEFN acknowledges the time, energy, and care that go into restoring and nurturing our beautiful environmental places. Whether they work along a coastline or beside a river or creek, in bushland in a regional park, or in an urban landscape, the network appreciates everything friends groups do and believe they should be celebrated.

The VEFN Awards are independently judged and awarded based on the information provided in the nomination form. Please read the criteria for each award carefully. The closing date for nominations is 5pm, Friday, 20 September.

If you have any questions about the VEFN Awards, please contact VEFN via awards@vefn.org.au or the [VEFN website](#).

Research into elusive rakali, or Australian water rat, prompts call for citizen scientists to log sightings

Community members are being asked to log sightings of rakali for a Charles Sturt University research project about the native Australian water rat.

Researchers are keen to gather as much information as they can about the mammals to create better population records.

Read this story in full and find out more on the [ABC News website](#).



WaterWatch Victoria

River Health SnapShot Reports

Each year we publish a suite of River Health Snapshot Reports, interpreting data collected by WaterWatch monitors and citizen scientists. We collate this information together with onground works program outcomes to tell the story of river health in that catchment.

Thanks to all the volunteers and agency staff who have contributed valuable data and information. Water quality monitoring, Pesticide Watch, waterbugs, and eDNA – we have more citizen science data to help improve our understanding of these systems.

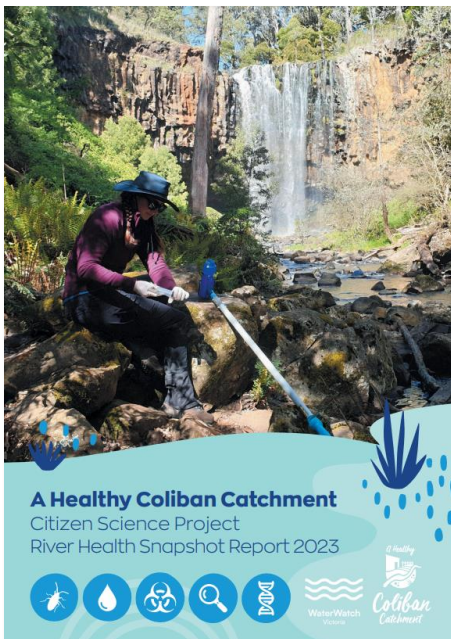
Click the links to learn more about those projects that interest you:

[A Healthy Coliban Catchment 2023](#)

[Tullaroop Catchment 2023](#)

[RiverScan 2023](#)

[Gunbower Forest Ramsar Site 2023/24](#)



Welcome new WaterWatch Volunteers

A warm welcome to our newest WaterWatch volunteers in the first half of 2024

- Amanda – McIvor Creek, Heathcote
- Julia and Leon - McIvor Creek, Heathcote
- Strath – Campaspe River, Kyneton
- Lizzy – Bendigo Creek, Epsom
- Mindy – Shepherds Hut Creek, Lauriston
- Clare – Bendigo Creek, Kangaroo Flat
- Thomas – Number 7 Frog Ponds, Kangaroo Flat
- Monica – Sheepwash Creek, Strathfieldsaye
- Heather – Sheepwash Creek, Strathfieldsaye

Thanks for getting onboard and helping to monitor the health of our precious waterways. We simply couldn't do it all without you!

Are you a WaterWatch monitor and need kit supplies?

Get in touch with Britt if you need a top-up of anything from your water-testing kits. Calibration solutions running low, batteries flat, re-agents out of date? Just let me know and I can either drop them off or post them out.

Britt Gregory
Project Officer – WaterWatch & Citizen Science
North Central CMA
Email: britt.gregory@nccma.vic.gov.au



Water Storages Update

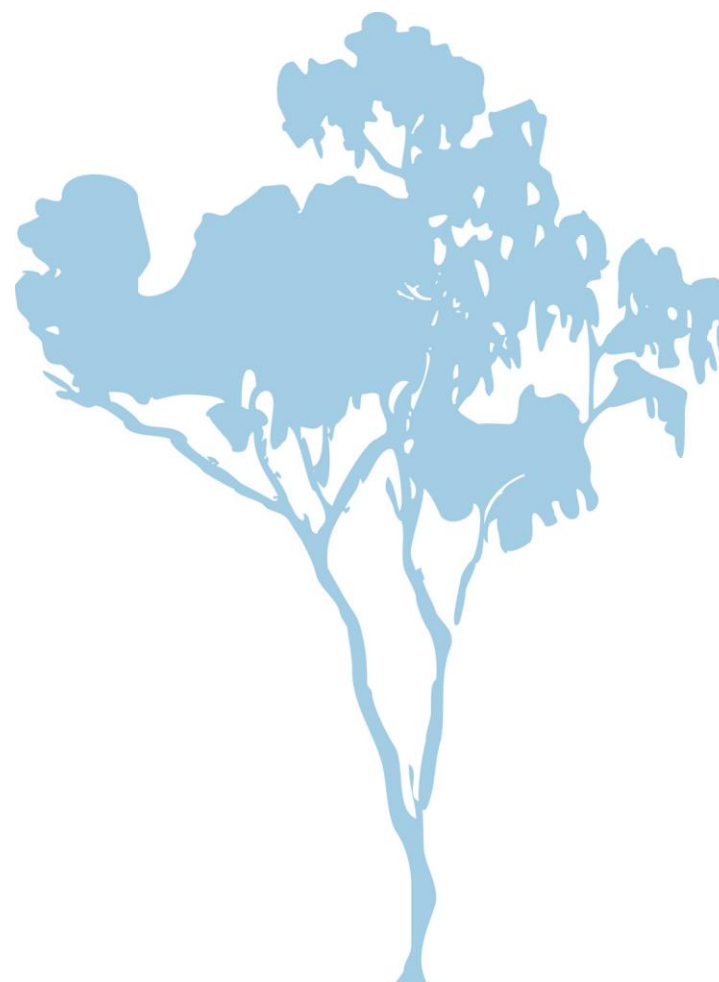
Region	Water Storage	% full Aug 2023	% full at 23 July 2024
Murray Storages	Dartmouth Dam	95.34	94.77
	Hume Dam	92.76	70.31
	Reedy/Middle Lk	91.25	87.28
	Kangaroo Lake	93.70	89.17
	Ghow Swamp	62.18	81.92
	Lake Boga	79.48	76.65
	Lake Charm	93.72	92.09
Loddon Storages	Cairn Curran Res	54.43	70.27
	Tullaroop Res	60.74	81.41
	Laanecoorie Res	43.50	42.31
Bullarook Storages	Newlyn Res	83.98	49.65
	Hepburns Lagoon	74.76	49.99
Goulburn Storages	Lake Eildon	83.16	87.81
	Waranga Basin	78.07	68.36
Campaspe	Lake Eppalock	48.89	89.82
Coliban Water Storages	Upper Coliban Res	NA	84
	Lauriston Res	NA	85
	Malmsbury Res	NA	33

Sources:
<https://www.g-mwater.com.au/water-operations/storage-levels>
<https://coliban.com.au/about-us/our-reservoirs>

Upcoming Events and Special Days

August	
<u>National Landcare week</u>	7-13 Aug
<u>National Science Week</u>	10-18 Aug
<u>Keep Australia Beautiful Week</u>	16-22 Aug
<u>World Humanitarian Day</u>	19 Aug

September	
<u>National Biodiversity Month</u>	1-30 Sep
<u>National Wattle Day</u>	1 Sep
<u>National Threatened Species Day</u>	7 Sep
<u>National Bilby Day</u>	12 Sep
<u>National Organic Week</u>	16-22 Sep
<u>World Rivers Day</u>	22 Sep
October	
<u>Buy Nothing New Month</u>	October
<u>World Habitat Day</u>	2 Oct
<u>World Migratory Bird Day</u>	12 Oct
<u>National Ride 2 Work Day</u>	16 Oct
<u>Aussie Backyard Bird Count</u>	18-24 Oct
<u>National Water Week</u>	21-27 Oct



Courses & Resources...



Short course - Develop a whole-farm (property) plan

Unlock your property's potential with Melbourne Polytechnic's short course. Suitable for aspiring growers, agricultural property owners, and land planning professionals, this course will equip you with essential skills and help navigate your property application to align with local government requirements.

Classes start 17 August 2024.

[Find out more and register here.](#)



Discussion Group: Multispecies Farm Walk / 3.30pm, August 30

Farming and Grazing Discussion Group – Using Multi-species

Are you interested in learning more about multi-species cropping and how it can work on your farm?

The Healthy Landscapes Project is running a farm walk/discussion group on a local farm in Woodstock West.

Come together with other regenerative farmers in the region to discuss and learn from each other about regenerative farming methods.

The farm address will be emailed out before the event to all registered participants.

Date: August 30, 2024

Time: 3:30pm to 5:30pm

Register: <https://events.humanitix.com/farm-walk-multi-species>

Landowners and Renewable Energy Developments: what you need to know webinar recording

The recording of the **Landowners and Renewable Energy Developments: what you need to know webinar** is now available.

The purpose of the webinar was to provide reliable information about the renewable energy transition and the processes involved with renewable energy developments.

In Hume and Loddon Mallee regions, landowners in suitable areas are being contacted by developers exploring potential locations for solar farms, wind farms or battery storage systems for connection to the electricity grid.

The 90-minute webinar featured presentations from the following organisations:

- Energy transition – **VicGrid (DEECA)**
- Farmers role in the energy transition – **Farmers for Climate Action**
- Best practice from developers – **Clean Energy Council**
- Landowner rights and avenues for complaints – **Office of the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner**
- Farmer experience – **a local farmer** who leases land for a solar farm
- Planning and approvals process – **Department of Transport and Planning.**

The recording, transcript, slides, and list of resources are now available on [Agriculture Victoria's Energy Smart Farming website](#)

Events...



Women Strengthening Towns

Come along to this casual gathering, hosted by Make a Change Australia with the Rochester Town Hall. Hear from local speakers and discuss ideas over a cuppa and cake

Local Presenters Include:

- **Amanda Logie**, Rochester Community House – Women leading in their communities, especially in exceptional circumstances such as natural disasters
- **Jo Postlethwaite**, local farmer, creator of Buloke Shire Council's award-winning Paddock Initiatives – Addressing community compassion fatigue by meeting the community where they are
- **Nicole Johnson and Karen Anderson**, Women's Health Loddon Mallee – Women Rising: Applying an intersectional gender lens to the 2022 flood

When: Friday 9 August, 5.30pm to 7pm

Where: Rochester Town Hall

Cost: Free

RSVP Please [register](#) for catering purposes.



Bush Broadcast – mapping buffel grass

Bush Heritage warmly invites you to join our second Bush Broadcast Deep Dive webinar, where host Matthew Taylor dives into a specific topic or project with one of our interns, PhD students, or researchers.

Join Matthew and Bush Heritage intern Ella Raymond to hear about her research project focussed on using remote sensing technology to map buffel grass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*) at our Ethabuka and Pilungah reserves in South West Queensland.

When: Wednesday 14 August noon to 12.30pm

Where: Online via Zoom

Cost: Free

Register to receive the Zoom link.



Volunteering opportunities with Biolinks Alliance

Citizen science expands the range of monitoring activities we can do within the [Spring Plains Watershed Repair project](#). Your involvement helps us to understand what impact our work is having on ecosystems and enables us to refine this process.

Volunteer opportunities are funded by the [Parks Victoria Volunteer Innovation Fund](#).

When: Nest box monitoring, Wednesday 14 August 9am to 4pm

Where: Spring Plains Nature Conservation Reserve, Heathcote

What to bring: Close-toed shoes, long sleeves, hat/sun protection, gaiters

RSVP For more information and to register head to the [Biolinks Alliance website](#).

Protecting Grasslands for National Threatened Species Day

Join us for a guided walk through the grassland and woodland area of Macedon Cemetery to celebrate National Threatened Species Day.

Learn about the vital role our threatened grasslands play in preserving biodiversity and protecting endangered species. We'll visit areas of grass that have previously been burnt as a weed control technique and to promote native grassland values.

Grasslands are often overlooked, yet they are home to a diverse range of flora and fauna, many of which are threatened or endangered.

When: Friday 6 September 1pm to 3pm

Where: Macedon Cemetery, 54 Bent Street Macedon

Cost: Free

What to bring: Appropriate clothing for an outdoor event

RSVP [Please register](#) as there are limited places available.



Save the date - Rewilding Central Victoria symposium

Presented by [Biolinks Alliance](#), the Rewilding Central Victoria Symposium brings together internationally recognised researchers from leading institutions, experts in their fields, and restoration practitioners working on exemplar nature repair projects. The symposium includes:

- Presentations by a variety of speakers
- Conference dinner with keynote speaker
- Rewilding project site visits, including to the [Spring Plains Watershed Repair Pilot Project](#)

Follow Biolinks Alliance on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#) or [subscribe](#) to get your tickets when they go on sale.

When: 13 and 14 September

Where: La Trobe University Bendigo



Working dog and farmer health check workshop

Join us for an exciting and informative day in collaboration with the Pyrenees Shire, Beaufort and Skipton Health Service, and fellow VFF subsidiary, Making Our Farms Safer.

Featuring:

- **Veteran dog trainer Vin Gedye.** Watch one of the best in the business as Vin demonstrates how dogs of different ages can work sheep. Vin will be available to answer all your dog training questions
- **Biosecurity Basics with Cathy Bunter, Agriculture Victoria.** Learn essential biosecurity

practices for your farm; get crucial insights on buying and selling livestock. Bring your questions for Cathy!

Free Farmer Health Checks available throughout the day, performed by Beaufort and Skipton Health Service, to ensure our farmers stay healthy and informed.

Admission is free with lunch provided so **registration** is essential.

When: Saturday 21 September 9.30am to 1.30pm

Where: 1750 Pyrenees Hwy, Amphitheatre

Cost: Free

RSVP Please [register here](#) for catering purposes

2024 National Insect Expo

The 2024 National Insect Expo is Australia's largest insect exhibition showcasing the entire science of entomology (Insects) to the public. Now in its third year, this spectacular exhibition promises visitors a unique and fascinating look into the world of insects.



Featuring entomologists, insect researchers, breeders, spider and scorpion keepers, insect educators and specialist insect retailers, the expo also brings together a large number of static entomological collections, live insect displays, spiders, scorpions and related invertebrates, children's workshops, entomological merchandise and the ongoing research work of the Central Victorian Regional Insect Collection (CVRIC). More than 100 exhibitors from Australia and New Zealand will feature spectacular displays, many of which have never been seen by the public.

When: 4 - 6 October 2024

Where: Woodend Buffalo Indoor Sports Stadium, 1-29 Forest Street, Woodend

Cost: \$10 children, \$25 adults, family pass and three-day family pass available

RSVP: [Register and purchase your tickets here](#)

Funding opportunities...

Tucker Foundation

The Tucker Foundation is offering grants of up to \$25,000 for Australian charitable organisations with ACNC registration to support projects addressing environmental sustainability, human rights, animal welfare, and arts. Priority is given to grassroots and volunteer-run organisations.

Applications close 31/08/24. [Home - Tucker Foundation Albert Tucker](#)

AgriFutures Australia

AgriFutures Agritech Event Sponsorship

Closes 11/08/2024

[AgriFutures Agritech Event Sponsorship Program |](#)

[AgriFutures Australia](#)

Eligible to Businesses

Funding: Total pool: \$625,000

Australian Communities Foundation

Hamer Sprout Fund

Closes 30/09/2024

[Apply for Funding — The Hamer Sprout Fund](#)

Eligible to unincorporated groups, individuals and not-for-profits

Funding: Amount (max): \$10,000, Total pool: \$25,000

Bendigo Bank, Community Enterprise Foundation

Community Bank Rushworth Open Sponsorship Program

Closes 31/12/2024

[Community Bank Rushworth & District | Bendigo Bank](#)

Eligible to not-for-profits and schools

City of Greater Bendigo

Community Group Essentials grants and Small grants

Closes 30/06/2025

[Community grants | City of Greater Bendigo](#)

Eligible to unincorporated groups and not-for-profits

Funding amount (max): \$2,000

Community Enterprise Foundation

Heathcote & Nagambie Community Investment Program

Closes 31/12/2024

[Community grants \(bendigobank.com.au\)](#)

Eligible to TAFEs, state and territory governments, schools, unincorporated groups, not-for-profits, and local governments.

Community Enterprise Foundation

Community Bank Inglewood & District Grants Program

VIC

Closes 31/12/2024

[Grant - Foundation](#)

[\(communityenterprisefoundation.com.au\)](#)

Eligible to TAFEs, state and territory governments, schools, unincorporated groups, universities, not-for-profits, and local governments

Loddon Shire Council

Event Promotion Scheme

Closes 31/05/2025

[Council grants \(loddon.vic.gov.au\)](#)

Eligible to businesses and not-for-profits

Funding: Amount (max): \$1,000

Macedon Ranges Shire Council

Small Project Grants

Closes 30/06/2025

[Small Project Grants - Macedon Ranges Shire Council \(mrsc.vic.gov.au\)](#)

Eligible to schools, unincorporated groups, and not-for-profits

Funding: Amount (max): \$3,000, Total pool: \$30,000

Mount Alexander Shire Council

Events: Quick Response Grants

Closes 30/06/2025

[Grants, funding and awards | Mount Alexander Shire Council](#)

Eligible to unincorporated groups, individuals, and not-for-profits

Funding amount (max): \$500

Murray River Council (MRC)

Community Grants

Closes 01/10/2024

[Community Grants Program Murray River Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

Eligible to unincorporated groups and not-for-profits

Funding: Amount (max): \$3,000

Patagonia

Environmental Grants and Support

Closes 30/04/2025

[How we fund - Patagonia Australia](#)

Eligible to not-for-profits

Funding: Amount: \$5,000 to \$20,000

The Sidney Myer Fund, Australian Neighbourhood Houses & Centres Association (ANHCA)

Supporting Stronger Communities Grants

Closes 22/08/2024

[Supporting Stronger Communities Grant Program \(anhca.org\)](#)

Eligible to not-for-profits

Funding: Amount (max): \$10,000, Total pool: \$250,000