

North Central Chat

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



North Central CMA



May 2021

A message from the Regional Landcare Coordinator

Hi everyone,

This past month has been all about the 2021 Victorian Landcare Grants. The Victorian Landcare Team was thrilled to see the round open on April 30, and every Landcare, Friends of and CMN on the North Central CMA mailing list have been emailed details of the grant opportunity.

I welcome all enquiries, questions and assistance of any kind you may need to plan for your project or complete the online application. Of course, a Support Grant (\$500) may be just what your groups needs at this time, to reconvene, cover insurance costs and gather people together to bounce back into action.

If a grant writing workshop (1.5 hr) would benefit your community group, let me know and we can arrange that during the next few weeks while applications are open. Read more details and funding guidelines on Page 10.

Alongside agency and Landcare support staff last week, I was very fortunate to participate in a Cultural Awareness training day hosted by Taungurung Land & Waters Council in Heathcote. The session was yet another opportunity to reflect upon and refresh myself on the incredible connection to Country, continuing practices of Traditional Owners and importance of trying to apply a cultural lens to look around the landscapes, paddocks, paddocks and places I get to go to as part of my role.

Every patch of ground we walked across on our field trip was littered with artefacts, features, and stories of the Taungurung people. The experience and knowledge of protecting and documenting Aboriginal Cultural Heritage, as told to us by proud Taungurung man Shane Monk, was an absolute highlight. The North Central CMA Reconciliation Action Plan spells out our commitment to working with our region's Traditional Owners, and building our capacity to do so through ongoing cultural learning.



It's that time of year... the 2021 Victorian Landcare Grants are NOW OPEN

Photo: Mid-Loddon Sub-Catchment Management Group 2019

Looking ahead, the North Central CMA Landcare team is working with Nalderun, a Castlemaine-based service that supports the Aboriginal community, led by Aboriginal people, to run a Reconciliation Week event around the local creeks. National Reconciliation Week runs from May 27 to June 3 with events, a film festival and discussions being hosted nationwide. Get more info and get involved via [National Reconciliation Week 2021](#).



Enjoy the read,

Tess Grieves

Regional Landcare Coordinator

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



News...

Works on Waterways - Help us do better

North Central CMA has legal statutory authority and responsibility to protect our waterways. Within the scope of this role we monitor, administer and enforce control over all works which may impact upon designated waterways across the north central region.

Anyone planning on undertaking works within a designated waterway must obtain a Works on Waterway Permit from North Central CMA. There is no cost to obtain a permit and obtaining a permit will help ensure the proposed works are designed appropriately.

To protect our rivers and creeks it is important new activities or works undertaken do not adversely affect the health of our waterways. Unfortunately, at times works are undertaken without the necessary approval and North Central CMA is working to address unauthorised works through our compliance process.

Our catchment is large, and it is hard to always know when and where unauthorised works are occurring without help from the public. So, if you see any suspicious or potentially unauthorised works occurring in or around our waterways (i.e. machinery in a waterway, vegetation clearing, a dam being built on a waterway) please contact us via phone at (03) 5440 1890 or email floodplain@nccma.vic.gov.au. You can remain anonymous. If you can take photos and/or provide a detailed description of what's occurring and where that would be great as it makes our investigations much easier. We have only 12 months from when the unauthorised works occur to act, so it is important if you see something happening you let us know straight away so we can do something about it.



More information about Works on Waterways is available on our [website](#).

Linking the Landscape - the Cobaw Biolink video



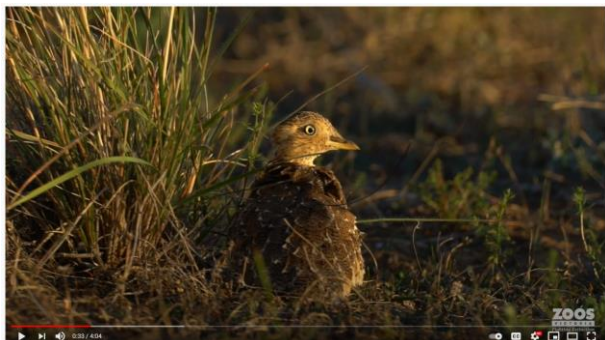
Newham & District Landcare Group has produced a video to share which you may be interested in: *Linking the Landscape- the Cobaw Biolink*.

Group Secretary Helen Scott said; “The video aims to engage landholders and residents and make them aware that their contribution, no matter how big or small, is environmentally vital. Landholders can help contribute to the biolink through enhancing waterways, undertaking weed and pest control, protecting remnant vegetation and revegetation and encouraging native grasslands on their properties”.

The video promotes the important role of the Cobaw Biolink in enhancing the connections between Mount Macedon and the Cobaw Range on both private and public land. Protecting existing high quality vegetation and creating connectivity in the biolink will help native plants and animals adapt to climate change. Spotlight surveys on habitat-rich roadsides round Newham found more animals present in the Cobaw Biolink than during similar surveys on Mount Macedon.

Plains-wanderers release

Zoos Victoria announced the successful release of eight Plains wanderers into the Northern Plains grasslands.



Zoos Victoria said; “After years of working behind the scenes, we’ve been waiting for this moment! One of the world’s most critically endangered and genetically distinct species, the Plains-wanderer, has been released into the wild for the very first time embarking on a vital journey to help save the species from extinction.

In a collaborative research trial led by Zoos Victoria, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Parks Victoria, Taronga Zoo Sydney, Trust for Nature, and Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, four pairs of tiny, ground-dwelling Plains-wanderers are now roaming on public and privately owned land in Victoria’s Northern Plains, while being closely tracked by a team of conservationists. We can’t wait to keep you updated on their progress. “

Watch the gorgeous chicks, grown adults and release footage via: [Plains-wanderers release - YouTube](#)

Critically endangered and at risk of imminent extinction, the North Central CMA is working in partnership with Trust for Nature and Australia’s National Recovery Team for the Plains-wanderer.

The Plains for Wanderers project with funding from the National Landcare Program aims to permanently protect and enhance Plains-wanderer habitat on the northern plains grasslands in Victoria that is home to one of two core populations nationally.



If you think you have suitable habitat or would like to know more about what you can do to provide habitat for Plains-wanderers contact Trust for Nature on (03) 8631 5888.



‘I care for Landcare’
Article and images by Margie Thomas, Friends of Cornish Hill

On April 27, after a few hiccups due to COVID, 45 students from Bullarto and Yandoit Primary schools plus the Dharma schools attended “I care for Landcare” event on the Hill.

The Friends were delighted to welcome the students back to the Hill and had worked diligently to provide a workshop which would not only be engaging but would provide real educational opportunities for all who attended.

John Caldwor of Bug Blitz provided a wonderful hands-on session for the students where they were able to learn more about some fascinating spiders and ‘bugs’. John shared his love of these creatures by first introducing Teddy, the Mountain Huntsman, followed by other spiders, a scorpion and leaf insects. Students had an opportunity to hold many of the bugs and observe them closely.

Louis Caldwor also of Bugblitz had brought a selection of animal skulls, pointing out the individual characteristics. Students had to decide on whether they were marsupial, feral or domesticated, predator or prey, carnivore, herbivore or omnivore, common, stable, threatened or extinct. Louis was such an enthusiastic source of information and the children were all engrossed with the subject also having an opportunity to share some of their own animal encounters. Louis’ has inherited his father’s flare for working and engaging with kids in biodiversity education.

A fun hands-on and informative learning session about fungi was led by Ema Coro of Fungi Map, supported by Gayle Osborne of Wombat Forestcare. Each session was spent examining a variety of wild fungi, slime mould and lichen through digital microscopes provided by Fungi Map with Ema and Gayle explaining the different parts of the fungus (mycelium, fruiting body, spores, etc) and the role they play in the environment.



Ceramic art has been a feature of these workshops with noted ceramicist Ann Ferguson and Kaori Fujimoto leading the way. Using coloured photographs to demonstrate the parts, shapes and construction of a variety of fungi, the students then spent some time examining real specimens brought for the event, after which they then constructed their own model to be fired and exhibited in the local Bendigo Community Bank before being returned to each school.

Using the CSIRO produced book *The Forest in The Tree – How Fungi Shape the Earth*, Nicole Howie led the students on a journey of discovery with stops along the way to dramatise, illustrate, classify, experiment and reflect. Students took the roles of the various microbes and learned how they symbiotically cooperated with the trees. This proved to be a fascinating session for the students linking in very well and balancing well with the fungi rotation.

Victorian Landcare Grants have supported the projects of the Friends over the past five years and the Friends are grateful for the belief in the work they do with local schools.

John Caldwell has returned annually to empower the students within the group "From my way of thinking – our society should consider providing environmental education events as a form of direct action for our environment's future sustainability. We are helping to collectively build our students and teachers ecological literacy. Those kids received a fantastic, engaging and memorable range of learning experiences," he said.



Nominate a Landcare Champion for a 2021 State and Territory Landcare Award

Landcarers have been locally active rebuilding communities with on-ground projects including habitat restoration for threatened species, bushland regeneration, wellbeing and mental health activities, as well as engaging volunteers who want to contribute.

The 2021 State and Territory Landcare Awards are an opportunity to celebrate and honour individual and group Landcare champions from urban and rural communities excelling in sustainable agricultural practices, environmental protection, conservation of land and waterways, coastlines, and biodiversity.

Winners from the 2021 State and Territory Landcare Awards will go forward as 2022 National Landcare Award nominees, with winners to be announced at the 2022 National Landcare Conference. [Nominate yourself or another Landcarer, today!](#)

Landcare Australia advise that the Victorian nomination period is as follows:

- Opens Apr 26, 2021
- Closes Jun 30, 2021

Eight national award categories are now open for nominations:

- Australian Government Individual Landcarer Award
- Australian Government Partnerships for Landcare Award
- Australian Government Landcare Farming Award
- Coastcare Award
- Landcare Community Group Award
- Woolworths Junior Landcare Team Award
- KPMG Indigenous Land Management Award
- Young Landcare Leadership Award

Carbon + Biodiversity Pilot

North Central CMA is working with the Federal Government and ANU on the Agriculture Stewardship Carbon + Biodiversity Pilot.

The North Central CMA has been chosen as one of six pilot regions across Australia for the Federal Government's **Agriculture Stewardship Carbon + Biodiversity Pilot**. The pilot forms part of the Federal Government's \$34 million Agriculture Stewardship Package and aims to pay farmers for biodiversity in combination with planting trees for carbon gains.

To be eligible, you must satisfy the following:

1. Your property must be in the North Central CMA region
2. Your property must be predominantly used for agricultural purposes.
3. You must be willing and able to undertake a new ERF environmental plantings project.
4. You must be an individual or body corporate who owns the land on which the project will be undertaken, in the sense of holding the freehold title.
5. You must meet the participant obligations under the ERF as outlined on the CER's website.
6. You must not have begun the project.
7. You must provide a commitment to act with the utmost good faith in your engagements with the program.

More information can be found at [Carbon + Biodiversity Pilot - Department of Agriculture](#).

Applications are now open and can be submitted through the Agriculture Stewardship portal at [Agriculture Stewardship C+B Pilot \(agsteward.com.au\)](#). Applications close at midnight on the **June 11**.

Any questions regarding the application portal should be directed to the Agriculture Stewardship Program by email at: agstewardship@awe.gov.au or phone 1800 900 090.

For general enquiries on the program the contact at the North Central CMA is Matthew Dawson (Business Development Manager) on phone 03 5440 1858 or email matthew.dawson@nccma.vic.gov.au.



Communities Caring for Catchments

Hello all,

A big shout out and a special thank you to all our wonderful Waterwatch Volunteers.

We will be in touch with volunteers to thank them as we celebrate:

NATIONAL 17-23 MAY 2021
VOLUNTEER
WEEK
RECOGNISE. RECONNECT. REIMAGINE.

Keep up the great work to help monitor and protect our precious waterways. With such a large and varied catchment, we simply could not do it without you.

In May we also conduct the annual:



Saltwatch is an environmental monitoring program that helps communities understand the salinity problem in our waterways. Saltwatch began in 1987 and is Australia's longest-running community monitoring program.

During Saltwatch Week each year, schools and community members from all over Victoria can learn about the effects of salinity on water quality in their local catchment by collecting local water sources and testing with a salinity meter to determine salt content.

This snapshot monitoring provides a great opportunity to assess the condition of our waterways at a particular point in time. The collaborative effort creates a picture of

salinity across the state and can show changes in salinity hot spots over time, illustrate the effects of climatic changes such as drought, and may even pick up long-term trends.

For Waterwatch volunteers, it's never been easier to get involved in Saltwatch. All you need to do is conduct your usual water quality monitoring, including electrical conductivity for salinity, and enter your results in the Waterwatch data portal as usual. Waterwatch Victoria will extract all salinity results for the May and contribute to the Saltwatch database.

More details and results coming soon!

Stay safe and enjoy the last of this beautiful autumn weather before winter sets in.

Britt Gregory

Acting Regional Waterwatch Coordinator

North Central CMA

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All 31 of our north central region River Detectives schools participated in introductory professional development sessions during March either face to face, via live online sessions or by accessing a recorded online session. They are now beginning the Term two full of enthusiasm to start exploring the program and are undertaking their first set of monthly water quality tests.

We are receiving great feedback from schools about how they are embedding the program into the curriculum; using historical water quality data to make graphs in maths and getting in touch with North Central CMA staff to find out more about environmental flows in the Loddon River.

Bookings are now open for school incursions during Term two and three. River Detectives staff will be visiting each school during this time to deliver a one-hour incursion tailored to the school's unique needs, collaborating with school staff to plan the incursion date,

time, location, topic, and audience. We are looking forward to getting out and about and seeing the program in action across the region.

We are continually updating the River Detectives website and have recently added instructional videos demonstrating the process of testing all five parameters; temperature, electrical conductivity, pH, turbidity and reactive phosphorus. These were fun to produce and have been well received by teachers who will use them to revise their own skills, to induct colleagues and as a teaching resource with students.

To celebrate Saltwatch Week we are also hoping to offer a live online incursion for River Detective schools during May with a focus on salinity. We have all become very comfortable with online platforms and this is a great way for us to interact with students in between face to face visits.

Upcoming events and special days

May	
International Composting Awareness Week	2-8 May
World Migratory Bird Day	8 May
Hairy-Nosed (Wombat) Day	11 May
National Volunteer Week	17-23 May
World Bee Day	20 May
International Day for Biological Diversity	22 May
World Turtle Day	23 May
June	
World Environment Day	5 June
International Day for the Fight against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing	5 June
World Oceans Day	8 June
World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought	17 June
July	
Plastic Free July	July
Schools Tree Day	30 July
World Ranger Day	31 July

Water Storages update

Region	Water Storage	% full at 22 Mar	% full at 27 Apr
Murray Storages	Dartmouth Dam	63.45	↑63.76
	Hume Dam	47.46	↓43.08
	Third Lake	82.74	↓49.03
	Reedy/Middle Lk	97.20	↓95.93
	Kangaroo Lake	96.98	↓96.42
	Kow Swamp	85.02	↓76.16
	Lake Boga	72.52	↓69.48
	Lake Charm	89.12	↓88.77
Loddon Storages	Cairn Curran Res	39.93	↓38.53
	Tullaroop Res	46.59	↓41.80
	Laanecoorie Res	40.75	↑41.00
Bullarook Storages	Newlyn Res	76.56	↓71.95
	Hepburns Lagoon	65.52	↓64.69
Goulburn Storages	Lake Eildon	60.74	↓57.24
	Waranga Basin	48.35	↓33.53
Campaspe	Lake Eppalock	37.26	↓35.82
Coliban Water Storages	Upper Coliban Res	94.30	↓83.40
	Lauriston Res	84.30	↑88.00
	Malmsbury Res	24.10	↓21.5

Source:

www.g-mwater.com.au/water-resources/catchments/storage-levels
www.coliban.com.au/about-us/reservoir-levels

Courses & Resources...

Climate Ready Communities conversations

ADAPT Loddon Mallee wants to support communities in the region to build resilience, be ready to face the challenges and embrace the opportunities of a changing climate.

Local conversations are really important when it comes to addressing climate change. Whether you talk to your friends, colleagues and family members for information-sharing, advice-giving or just to express your concerns, talking things through can help put things into perspective which helps build relationships and resilience.

Conversations can lead communities to gaining a greater understanding and preparedness for their response to climate change. In other words, a Climate Ready Community.

For more details the toolkit and information about hosting your own climate ready conversation, with \$200 per conversation funding available to support your event and remunerate facilitator time, visit the ADAPT Loddon Mallee website via: [Climate Ready Communities - ADAPT Loddon Mallee](#)

More exciting news from the ADAPT Loddon Mallee team...

It has just been announced that the draft Climate Ready Plan is open for comment.

ADAPT Loddon Mallee has been working away for many months across the region collecting input and climate adaptation stories from business, community, and locally-based government organisations. They want to share with you what they've have heard so far and get your feedback on our visions, goals and objectives as well as identifying any future actions to meet those objectives.



To view the DRAFT plan and leave feedback visit the ADAPT Loddon Mallee [website](#).

Certificate III in Agriculture

Loddon Plains Landcare Network invites people to register for an information session for Certificate III in Agriculture (inc. Conservation and Land Management) with Bendigo TAFE and Loddon Plains Landcare Network to be based in Inglewood.



The next steps for this course are as follows:

Wednesday May 5, 2021: Information evening via video session

Week of May 10, 2021: Enrolment session/s

Monday May 24, 2021: Course commencement

The course will be delivered over eight months and be structured as:

- One day of contact per week plus field sessions
- Up to three two-week intensive blocks

Internet or online-based sessions to complement course work

This course will be delivered as part of the Free TAFE system but there will be a consumables charge of approximately \$550. This charge is to cover excursions, trials and specialised modules such as chemical handling, soils, fencing, aerial monitoring and mapping etc.

If you have others that may be interested in this course, please share this email widely.

Please indicate your interest in attending via [this link](#) provided to fill out a short registration form.

Any questions can be directed to Danny Pettingill, Loddon Plains Landcare Network; 0490 412 430 or facilitator@lpln.org

Events...



Earth Canvas is about reconnecting people with the farming landscape and using the eye of the artist to express what they see. It is about empowering people to be part of the solution to make earth a better place.

On May 8, they are hosting a regenerative farm tour + art talk + local food lunch, involving the wonderful team at Mallee Organic Farms.

[Download the flyer](#) for all the details. You won't want to miss this event.

When: Saturday May 8, 2021 at 10am- 3:30pm

Where: Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery Horseshoe Bend

Cost: \$35 per adult. \$75 family of 4. \$25 student. \$15 under 16. Free under 5.

RSVP: [Book at TryBooking.com/BQCAK](https://www.trybooking.com/BQCAK)

Webinar: Landcare outside Australia - what's been achieved, and what can we learn?

Rob Youl, Vice Chair Global Landcare and Tony Bartlett, former Forestry Research Program Manager will share the incredible work occurring in Landcare outside of Australian borders, what we can learn from it, and where it is all headed.

Hosted by Landcare Australia, the Landcare Webinar Series is helping to bring people together to showcase the rich diversity of knowledge, passion and expertise within the landcare community.

When: Thursday May 6, at 1:00PM

Where: Online and via Landcarer

Register: [Landcare Webinar Series | Conservation experts | Landcare Australia Landcare Australia](#)

2021 Women of Wool Lunch



Tickets to the 2021 Australian Sheep and Wool Show luncheon The Women of Wool are now on sale, and this year's event promises more great speakers, fantastic company, fashion and a return to comedy.

With the final line-up of special guests and presenters to be announced in coming weeks, organisers can't wait to host this event again, and you're invited to join in at the Bendigo Showgrounds.

Tickets include gate entry to the show, a two-course luncheon with beverages included, inspiring presenters and entertainment, plus access to all of the show's vendors, fashion parades, the Festival of Lamb and craft areas

When: Friday July 16, 2021, 12pm - 2.30pm

Where: Bendigo Exhibition Centre at the Bendigo Showgrounds

Cost: \$120 per person

RSVP: online via [Women in Wool lunch](#)



Clunes Booktown – Turn The Page

Clunes Booktown presents *Turn The Page* – a new month-long celebration of the book filled with author talks, presentations and thought-provoking conversations in the beloved historic Victorian township of Clunes this May.

May 29-30: For the love of Book Clubs

This is the first national weekend for book clubs with opportunities for members to meet other clubs, discover tactics and programs around building and boosting their own book-loving community.

For more event info and to book your tickets visit: [Events Info – Clunes Booktown Festival](#)

Free online events to assist rural residents

The City of Greater Bendigo is running a series of free, online workshops from late March until June 2021 tailored specifically for rural residents who may have experienced significant impacts on their health and wellbeing due to a range of factors over the past few years.

The online workshops funded by the Department of Health and Human Services are to raise community awareness of mental health issues and help the development of resilience in rural communities during uncertain times.

Grounded Thinking – a healthy mindset for profitable and enjoyable farming

A workshop tailored specifically for farming families to help them feel more in control of their own destiny, worry less, and capture the profit opportunity each farming season presents.

Facilitator: Dr Kate Burke from Think Agri
May 25.

Bookings at <https://www.trybooking.com/BOEPV>

Occasional counsellor webinars

The focus of these 2-hour online webinars is on teaching the participants simple, practical strategies for assisting individuals who are sad, upset, bewildered, angry or confused.

Facilitator: David Cherry
May 13 and 20.

Bookings <https://www.trybooking.com/BOSTU>

Rural Minds Briefing

A Rural Minds Workshop is a relaxed way to learn about mental wellbeing and resilience for your community, family, friends, and yourself.

Facilitator: Deb Smith
May 6, and June 1.

Bookings at <https://www.trybooking.com/BOXLB>

Funding opportunities...

2021 Victorian Landcare Grants

The 2021 Victorian Landcare Grants are now open 

The Victorian Government is providing \$2.55 million funding to support Landcare and environmental volunteering groups and networks for on-ground works, education, and capacity building projects that protect, enhance, and restore our land and natural environment.

Groups and networks can apply for up to \$30,000 for projects that protect, enhance, and restore Victoria's land and environment. Support grants of up to \$500 are available to help with administration and running costs.

The annual group health survey is part of the application process for the 2021 Victorian Landcare Grants, but groups who are not applying for a grant are also strongly encouraged to complete the survey.

The information provided by this annual survey is vital for understanding the health of groups across Victoria and is used in Catchment Management Authority and Victorian Government planning, reporting and communications.

For everything related to the VLG process, contact Regional Landcare Coordinator, Tess Grieves: 0438 357 874 or tess.grieves@nccma.vic.gov.au

Applications close Wednesday 16 June. Go to [Landcare | North Central CMA](#)



Applications close: 16 June 2021



Victorian Gorse Taskforce 2021-22 Small Community Grants now open

The Victorian Gorse Taskforce (VGT) is calling for grant applications.

Small grants up to \$5,000 available to help combat gorse in your local area.

The VGT is interested in supporting groups, starting from just two landholders, who are genuinely willing to control gorse and stay on top of it.

Visit the VGT website: www.vicgorsetaskforce.com.au for a copy of the project guidelines, eligibility criteria and application template. Or contact the Executive Officer on 0417 593 250.

Key Dates

- Grant applications open Monday April 12, 2021.
- Grant Applications close Friday May 28, 2021.

2021 Young Farmers Scholarships



Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas has announced the 2021 Upskill and Invest - Young Farmers Scholarships open for applications.

Each scholarship recipient is eligible to receive up to \$5,000 for training and study (Upskill), followed by up to \$5,000 to put their new skills into practice (Invest).

If you are aged 35 years or younger, and have at least two years' experience on-farm, you could be eligible to apply. To find out more visit vic.gov.au/youngfarmers