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NORTH CENTRAL
Catchment Management Authority
Connecting Rivers, Landscapes, People

www.nccma.vic.gov.au

October 09

Keeping you up-to-date with all the Landcare news

A message from the Acting Regional Landcare Coordinator

Welcome to the first issue of the North Central Catchment Management Authority's (CMA) 2009-10 Landcare newsletter. This initiative is one of our responses to the community's suggestions put forward at the consultation sessions held around the region in May and June this year, where we heard that the Landcare community wants to receive concise, relevant and timely information. This newsletter is being distributed as both an email document and paper copy. If you've received the paper version and there is any information you would like that's only available through the internet, please give me a ring and I'll try to help you. Alternatively, if you've received this newsletter through the post and would like to receive future issues via email, please contact us at landcare@nccma.vic.gov.au

We recently said goodbye to our Regional Landcare Coordinator, Jennelle Carlier, who has returned to Canada. Jennelle made a great contribution to both Waterwatch and Landcare during her time with the North Central CMA. Until we recruit permanently in the new year, I'll be acting in the Regional Landcare Coordinator role. Please don't hesitate to contact me at landcare@nccma.vic.gov.au or on 03 5448 7124 if you have any Landcare queries.

While spring is the time when we are all so busy with both Landcare projects and work on the farm, it's worth taking a little time to plan ahead to ensure you have funds for your next projects. We are currently developing a Community Grants Calendar to post to all groups in November. This will be packed full of information on the 'how to' of applying for successful grants, as well as being a comprehensive listing of grants, sponsorship programs and incentives available to groups. There's also the new Woolworths Landcare grants program – see page 4 for more details.

And finally, for those of you who haven't filled in your Landcare Census forms, I urge you to do so – all groups that have returned a Census will go in the draw to **WIN \$500 WORTH OF TOOLS** (of their choice) for their group – so get cracking! More information on the census is available on page 2 of the newsletter.

Wishing you all a happy and productive spring!

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Reviving Landcare Links

While this newsletter is a great way for us to get our information out to groups and individuals, we know that there are many great events being put on by Landcare groups and others. Many of you may remember North Central LandcareLinks, which has been in hibernation. Our plan is to get this service back up and running as a way of getting up-to-date and relevant information out to groups, and also between groups. Using the service is easy – if you have an item you'd like emailed out, then please send it to info@nccma.vic.gov.au in a simple word format (no attachments) and mark it attention 'NCLandcareLinks' in the subject header of the email.

You can also subscribe to the service by sending an email request to info@nccma.vic.gov.au

We will be emailing out LandcareLinks fortnightly from mid November and will be adding all of our Landcare contacts on our database automatically to the service. If you'd prefer not to be automatically subscribed to LandcareLinks, then please contact Landcare@nccma.vic.gov.au no later than **Friday 5th November**. Alternatively, if you think your other members would like to subscribe, then please pass this information on to them.



NEWS

That winning feeling

Warm congratulations to local Landcarers who returned from the 2009 Victorian Landcare Awards ceremony at Government House on 8 September with some of the big prizes.

The Department of Primary Industries Sustainable Farming Award for the North Central CMA region went to Andy Hay, whose interest in rehabilitating saline and degraded land led to the original project that kicked off the many achievements of the Northern United Forestry Group. Since offering that original plot for research and demonstration, Andy has been a tireless supporter of the work, and enthusiastically receives many visitors to his property.

North Central CMA knowledge broker Geoff Park won the Sir Sidney Plowman Travel and Study Award. Geoff is a trustee of the Norman Wettenhall Foundation, a member of the Newstead Landcare Group and one of the developers of the Investment Framework for Environmental Resources (INFER), an asset-based approach to environmental planning.

The Shire of Campaspe (which covers parts of both the North Central and Goulburn Broken CMA regions) was highly commended in the Local Government Landcare Partnerships Award.

As well, a Barapa Barapa Indigenous work crew, employed as part of the North Central CMA's Drought Employment Program, won an Australian Government Indigenous Landcare Award. The crew worked on a stretch of the Loddon River from Appin South to Kerang, assessing and recording cultural heritage sites as well as flora and fauna, river condition, fencing, erosion and weeds. The work crew is now a contender for the National Landcare Awards to be held in Canberra next year.

Congratulations to all the other nominees from our region. We acknowledge your achievements and commitment, and the Landcare community is proud of you all.

New Landcare policy and implementation plan

In June, the North Central CMA held a series of community consultation workshops across the region to give Landcare groups the opportunity to have input regarding future Landcare support following the reduction in Commonwealth funding.

Now the great input from these well-attended workshops has been used to inform the North Central CMA's Landcare Support Policy and an implementation plan for the next 12 months.

The North Central CMA intends to involve Landcare groups as partners in community engagement and project delivery, while supporting the community with projects that align with the Regional Catchment Strategy.

Elements of the support policy include: providing timely information to the Landcare community; supporting the development and maintenance of groups and networks; providing opportunities for sharing knowledge and skills development; and seeking additional opportunities for Landcare funding support wherever possible, including new investors.

In particular, North Central CMA is keen to engage Landcare groups as service and information providers to deliver components of its programs and projects, and to promote and advocate Landcare's environmental and social benefits and outcomes.

Initiatives planned for the next 12 months include a grants calendar, training forums, a comprehensive list of key contacts including agencies, more frequent updates for the North Central CMA website, and this newsletter.

A copy of the Landcare Support Policy and the Implementation Plan has been sent to all Landcare groups with the Second Generation Landcare grants package, and to workshop participants. To view these documents, please visit the North Central CMA website: www.nccma.vic.gov.au and click on 'Getting involved' then 'Landcare'.

Census time

Attention all groups – Landcare is changing so this year's community NRM census is even more important, as it will provide guidance to those organisations assessing group needs, and help to secure government and community support.

All Landcare, Friends groups and other community-based NRM groups should have received a census form. To obtain a form or for more information, contact Allison Long, State Landcare Facilitator on 9637 9023 or Professor Allan Curtis, Charles Sturt University, on 1800 605 187.

The census, which has been running since 1991, gathers information about group characteristics, activities, outcomes and issues of concern. Information will be analysed by Professor Curtis.

You will be able to access a summary of the report through North Central CMA in early 2010.

The return date for the census form has been extended to the **1st December 2009**, but please return your form as soon as possible.

Kit for new groups

New community Landcare groups are to be encouraged and supported, so if you know any people or communities just starting out, tell them about Landcare Australia's starter kit for new groups. It outlines the steps involved and the formal requirements. The kit can be downloaded free from the Landcare Australia Ltd. website. Go to www.landcareonline.com. Please note the Victorian State Landcare Team is working on a kit for groups in Victoria, which will be made available shortly.



Have your say on new framework

It has certainly been a topsy turvy 12 months for Landcare, with sweeping changes to Australian Government funding arrangements and coordination support.

Now the Landcare community has an opportunity to have input into a new Australian framework for Landcare, an initiative of the Australian Government, which will guide Landcare's direction over the next 20 years.

Have a look at the paper 'Community Landcare Speaks: Realising our Future – The Beginnings of an Australian Framework for Landcare' on the National Landcare Facilitator website (<http://www.landcarefacilitator.com.au>) where you will also find information on how to respond by email or post.

For all you bloggers out there, there is also a Landcare Speaks blog, which has been set up to encourage open discussion and comment on ideas. Go to <http://landcarespeaks.wordpress.com/about>

There will also be opportunities for community input at state and territory conferences and forums over the next few months. Dates and locations of these are also on the website.

The deadline for comments is Friday 13 November. Find your voice and go to www.landcarefacilitator.com.au

Championing biodiversity

Stay tuned for further reports on an interesting project starting up in the Hepburn, Pyrenees, Ballarat and Moorabool shires. 'Biodiversity Matters' - an initiative of Sustainability Victoria - will work with councils' planning departments to help them incorporate biodiversity issues into planning decisions.

The program will also train 'biodiversity champions' from local communities, who will link with new landholders. Likewise, local real estate agents will be asked to distribute an information kit. All good stuff.

Workshops are planned for early next year, and will be promoted in local media. Julie von Platen is running the project. Email JulievonPlaten@Ballarat.vic.gov.au

National network formed

An interim National Landcare Network has formed to champion the cause and future of grass roots Landcare. There are two representatives from each state and territory, and the new body has met three times.

The current focus is on public issues including communication to both grassroots Landcarers and policy makers. It is still considering organisational models. The next meeting will be in Melbourne on 1-2 November. Go to www.nln.org.au

Free booklets

Family Business Australia has produced a set of free booklets designed to assist families manage their businesses. To order a set of four booklets visit www.fambiz.org.au/FourBooklets.php

COURSES

Farm planning for horse owners

The Department of Primary Industries' Services and Information for New Landholders team, in conjunction with the FarmPlan 21 team, is developing a pilot program to assist horse property owners to manage their land in a sustainable manner.

Based on current whole farm planning courses, this will cover topics such as understanding and managing soils, pastures and weeds; biodiversity and catchment management; different horse keeping systems; and how horse owners can achieve their personal, financial, production and environmental goals in harmony with their horse interests.

The team is keen to hear from individuals and groups that would like the program presented in their areas. This could be a great opportunity for Landcare groups to initiate a program and engage horse owners, especially in small property areas.

Contact Louise Scott at the DPI on 5430 4690 or 0400 854 939.

Ready for action

The Australian Government's FarmReady initiative assists eligible farmers and Indigenous land managers to attend approved training courses through the Farm Ready Reimbursement Grants scheme. Up to \$1500 is available to individuals, who may also be eligible for additional support for travel, accommodation and child care expenses.

The range of approved courses is huge and includes business skills, planning and analysis; sustainable water and land use; farm planning; succession planning; grazing systems; soil management; water trading; ecology and biodiversity and even our own Box Ironbark Ecology Course. Approved providers include Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE.

Note: you need to apply BEFORE you attend the course. You then submit the claim for reimbursement within 30 days of completing the course. For application and claim forms, and the full lists of courses and providers, go to <http://www.farmready.gov.au/> or phone 1800 087 670.



EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

After the gold rush

The Royal Society of Victoria is holding its annual symposium in Bendigo this year and it has the enticing title 'North Central Victoria: a golden era, a changed ecosystem forever?'

Sponsored by the North Central CMA, the event features a variety of high profile speakers who will focus on many of the environmental issues that confront us today in the region, including land management and sustainability, and priorities for future management.

It looks like a great program and it's on 2–3 December. For more information or to register (there is a cost) go to <http://www.rsvmeetings.org/>

Forum at the island

This year's Victorian Landcare Network Forum will be held at Phillip Island on 27 – 30 October. It is targeted at all volunteer or funded Landcare coordinators and facilitators in Victoria, but is not limited to these roles only. For more information contact Kevin Spence, VLN Administration Officer, on vl@iinet.net.au

USEFUL WEB SITES

The North Central CMA website is constantly updated with funding news, events, publications and information. <http://www.nccma.vic.gov.au/>

The Victorian Landcare Gateway is a great spot for your group to host its own page, add events, publications of your won, news, etc. The North Central CMA will be providing training to Landcare groups on how to use the site in the future. To take a look at what others have been doing on the Gateway, please visit: www.landcarevic.net.au

Other useful sites for funding and program information:

www.landcareonline.com

www.grantslink.gov.au/

www.daffa.gov.au/about/grants_and_assistance

www.environment.gov.au/about/programs/index.html

www.frrr.org.au/currentprojects.asp

www.nrm.gov.au/funding/index.html

<http://www.communityinsurance.com.au/>

FUNDING NEWS

Woolworths has announced a new \$1 million Sustainable Farming program that is open to Landcare groups. They are seeking applications from farmer groups, farming organisations and Landcare groups who wish to undertake projects in any primary production industry.

These grants are aimed at supporting farmers develop or implement good ideas to improve the sustainability of farming practices. The projects should develop or support the adoption of improved farming practices, production techniques, technology or products. Projects could focus on issues such as climate change adaptation, crop or animal production, water or nutrient use efficiency, waste management or salinity. The projects should also provide results of interest and benefit to other farmers. Innovative ideas that will share information about successful strategies for adapting to climate change and managing under variable rainfall are most welcome.

Applications close **Monday 9 November.**

More information, including previously funded projects, guidelines and application forms, can be downloaded at www.landcareonline.com

Bushfire Recovery in North Central Victoria - freehold grants program

In partnership with the Australian Government's Caring for our Country Bushfire Recovery Program, the North Central CMA is currently seeking applications from individuals and registered community organisations to implement activities that assist in the protection and restoration of natural assets affected by fire in this region.

\$217,000 in grants is available to landholders and community groups in the fire-affected areas of Bendigo, Redesdale and Daylesford regions only.

Guidelines and application forms can be downloaded from North Central CMA website or obtained via email at info@nccma.vic.gov.au

For more information, contact North Central CMA on 5448 7124

Applications close **Friday 4 December.**