

# ground cover



**NORTH CENTRAL**  
Catchment Management Authority  
*Connecting Rivers, Landscapes, People*

www.nccma.vic.gov.au

December 10

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

## THIS MONTH'S CONTENTS

NEWS.....page 2

COURSES  
& RESOURCES.....page 5

EVENTS.....page 6

FUNDING NEWS.....page 6

### *A message from the Regional Landcare Coordinator*

Hi everyone,

Summer is here; well kind of! The weather this year has been so up and down and summer thus far appears to be no exception to the rule with torrential rain and flooding again experienced throughout the region. The rain has definitely been a talking point. But for many throughout the region it has been a mixed blessing.

With the arrival of the warm weather you may have also seen a locust or two.... or perhaps a lot more. Adult locust numbers increased during November following the fledging of nymphs. Hopper banding has occurred and control activities have been undertaken by landholders, government biosecurity agencies and local government. The surviving locusts have been on the move with the odd one even making it all the way to Melbourne.

Locusts may be on the move but the mozzies seem to be making themselves quite at home with many commenting about how many there are this year. The rain experienced throughout the year has meant that there is a lot of still water lying around - optimal breeding conditions for mozzies!

In November I was put through my paces at the Northern United Forestry Group (NUFG) Kamarooka site taking part in a children's environmental education day. The impetus of the day came from a partnership between Eco-Schools and NUGF. Cass Davis, North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) Regional Waterwatch Coordinator, and I took up the challenge of explaining the rising water table to 170 grade 5 and 6 kids. Several schools took part in the day with the kids learning about salinity, biodiversity and cultural heritage.

This month a few groups throughout the region applied for Volunteer Action Project grants. I worked with some of the groups who have applied and the project ideas were fantastic. Applications will now be assessed by a panel against all projects from across the state. Groups will find out if they are successful in the New Year - here's hoping we get a few up!

Final reports for Second Generation Landcare Grants 2009-10 have been posted and I am sure you are all now busy completing them! Thank you to the groups that have already sent them in. If you are having trouble completing your report and you don't think you will be able submit it by 31 December, please contact the North Central CMA on 03 5448 7124.

Lastly, before we sign off for 2010, the Landcare team would like to wish you all a festive Christmas and a safe and Happy New Year. Personally I have enjoyed working with you over the last nine months and I look forward to working with you all in 2011. I will be on leave for the first three weeks of January, so if you have a Landcare question contact Ashley Beven, Regional Landcare Facilitator, on 03 5440 1864 or [ashley.beven@nccma.vic.gov.au](mailto:ashley.beven@nccma.vic.gov.au).

Until next time, have a great Christmas and I will see you in 2011!

*Jodie Odgers* Regional Landcare Coordinator



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## NEWS

### Everyone's talking about Blue-banded Bees...

With many of the beautiful flax lilies flowering at the moment, you may be fortunate enough to spot a native Blue-banded Bee (*Amegilla cingulata*) hanging around. These seriously cute native bees are about the size of a honey bee but have bright blue stripes on their abdomen. Blue-banded Bees are solitary creatures that seem to love blue flowers but may also be observed on white, red and yellow flowers. The female will dig nests in the mud of banks or burrow into open ground to lay her young. Over the cold months, the adults will die off, to be replaced by the pupae in the burrows, which hatch in the spring as the weather warms up.



Blue-banded Bee (*Amegilla cingulata*)  
Photo: Daphne Gonzalvez, Australian Native Bee Research Centre



Blue-banded Bee (*Amegilla cingulata*)  
Photo: Anne Dollin, Australian Native Bee Research Centre

After hovering and darting about Blue-banded bees will land, hold the flower and vibrate. This special technique of vibrating is known as buzz pollination and is essential for the pollination of some flower and crop species. For instance, the threatened Late Flowered Flax Lily (*Dianella tarda*) is 'buzz-tuned' to the frequency of the Blue-banded Bee's wings to allow maximum pollen expulsion. Other pollinators are not able to do this. Blue-banded Bees can sting but are not aggressive. You might like to consider planting some blue-flowered plants in your garden to attract Blue-banded Bees!

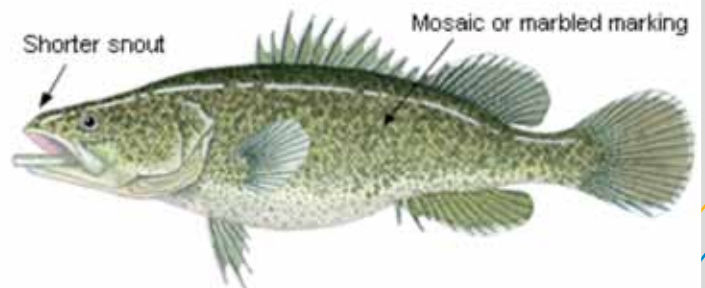
Check out [www.aussiebee.com.au](http://www.aussiebee.com.au) and search for Blue-banded Bees for more information.

### Adult locust activity on the rise

With the erratic weather conditions over the past few months there are now locusts at different development stages, from hoppers still on the ground to flying adults. The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) is expecting that the second generation hoppers will begin to hatch in the coming weeks. You are encouraged to report the locust activity in your area in order to assist the DPI plan and manage for this second generation of hoppers. Also, continue to monitor your property for locusts and target hoppers that remain on the ground for spraying. For more information or to report locust activity contact the DPI Locust Hotline on 1300 135 559 or visit [www.dpi.vic.gov.au/locusts](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/locusts).

### Murray Cod fishing season now open

The recreational fishing season for Murray Cod (*Maccullochella peelii*) is now open in Victoria, after a three month breeding period. Fisheries Victoria have stocked numerous rivers and lakes across the state, so to increase your chances of catching a Murray Cod head to one of the following waterways: Avoca River, Cairn Curran Reservoir, Greens Lake at Corop, Gunbower Creek, Lake Eildon, Lake Eppalock, Lake Nagambie, Little Murray River, Loddon River, Lower Goulburn River, Mitta Mitta River, Pyramid Creek and Taylor Lake. In Victoria, Murray Cod have a bag/possession limit of two, a minimum length of 60 cm and maximum length of 100 cm. To assist anglers in determining the size of their catch, Fisheries Victoria have produced a ruler that allows fish weight to be estimated without the need for scales. The ruler is one metre in length and can be adhered to the side your boat for easy use. Simply email your name and postal address to [go.fishing@dpi.vic.gov.au](mailto:go.fishing@dpi.vic.gov.au) to get your free ruler!



Distinguishing features of the Murray Cod.  
Picture: Fisheries Victoria

## Record weather and predictions for summer

The La Niña event of 2010 has contributed to Australia's wettest spring on record! This has definitely been the case in the North Central CMA region, as a number of towns received their highest spring rainfall on record. Amazingly, Boort received its highest spring rainfall since 1889, with 269 mm falling between September and November 2010. The table to the right lists the rainfall data for the record breaking towns, whilst the map shows the spring rainfall deciles for Victoria.

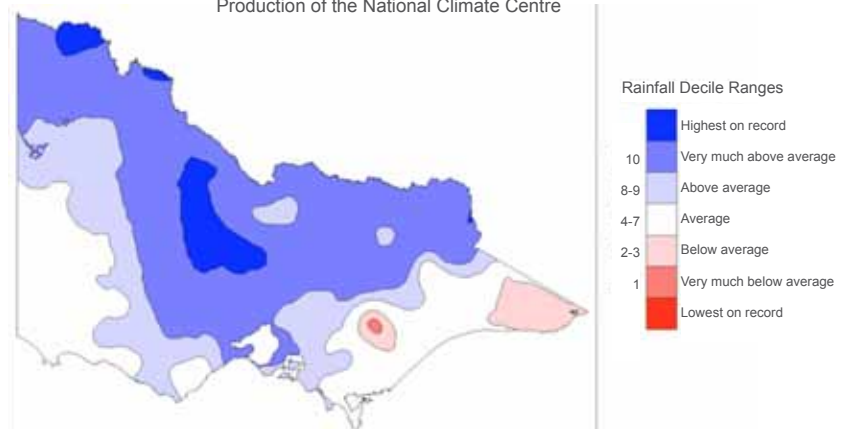
With all this record breaking rain, what's the prediction for summer? The Australian Bureau of Meteorology's long-range models suggest that the La Niña event will persist through the southern hemisphere during summer. La Niña periods are generally associated with above normal rainfall during winter, spring and early summer over much of Australia. Night time temperatures are also historically warmer during La Niña periods and the occurrence of tropical cyclones in northern Australia are typically higher. So it looks like it could be a wet and warm Christmas!

### Spring rainfall record breaking towns in the North Central CMA region. Source: Bureau of Meteorology

Town	Total Spring Rainfall 2010 (mm)	Previous Highest Spring Rainfall (mm)	Years of Record	Average for Spring
Maryborough	377.2	356.6 in 1975	133	141.8
Dunolly	402.8	361.2 in 1975	133	141.8
Inglewood	359.2	324.4 in 1973	128	133.4
Canary Island	261.2	243.3 in 1973	122	99.5
Boort	269.0	235.6 in 1889	112	111.0
Natte Yallock	333.4	294.6 in 1975	111	126.0
Ultima	255.7	242.4 in 1992	99	99.4
Redesdale	410.2	339.4 in 1906	97	149.9
Korong Vale	302.2	267.8 in 1992	68	119.4
Laibert	249.0	252.4 in 1992	65	103.6
Castlemaine Prison	413.8	367.4 in 1975	45	170.9
Eppalock Reservoir	328.4	315.6 in 1992	45	140.8
Kyneton	431.4	424.9 in 1975	41	213.0

Victorian Rainfall Deciles 1 September to 30 November 2010

Distribution Based on Gridded Data  
Production of the National Climate Centre



## 50<sup>th</sup> Issue of the Victorian Landcare & Catchment Management Magazine

The Victorian Landcare and Catchment Management magazine recently released its 50th issue, *Summer 2010: Biodiversity and Biolinks Feature*. Published since 1996 by the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE), the magazine's content is largely from community members and Landcare groups. It provides an opportunity for the community to share knowledge and communicate events. Authors of contributing articles also receive mentoring to build writing, editing and photography skills. To view the current issue or any of the back issues of the magazine visit [www.dse.vic.gov.au/victorianlandcaremagazine](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/victorianlandcaremagazine). Alternatively, contact the Farm Tree and Landcare Association on 0392 075 527 to be added to the mailing list.

## Open gardens protecting Victoria from weeds

The Australian Open Garden Scheme recently supported the inspection of 33 of its gardens for high risk invasive plants. The inspections were carried out by the DPI and targeted weeds considered to be a threat to Victoria's environmental, social and agricultural assets under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*. The inspection was considered an essential part of preparing the gardens for visitors. For further information on State Prohibited Weeds please contact the DPI Customer Service Centre on 136 186 or visit [www.dpi.vic.gov.au](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au). To discover the open gardens in your area visit [www.opengarden.org.au](http://www.opengarden.org.au).

## Mystery bus tour of Bayton - Barfold

By John W Baulch (Baynton Sidonia Landcare Group)

When the rest of the State were glued to the TV watching the replay of the AFL Grand Final, a group of 33 enthused people downed their cups of tea or coffee and boarded a bus for a mystery journey of the Bayton – Barfold area. We had just spent a spell binding hour listening to our local native plant “guru” Ian Higgins (Higgo), from Campbells Creek, outline the critical importance of native vegetation in the local landscape and how those plants relate to the environment, its aspect, geology, climate and other factors.

Our drive took us out past the Baynton Sidonia Landcare Group’s revegetation plot in the McHarg Range into Dead Dog Lane, where we stopped to look at some of the many remnant indigenous plants along the road. There were several different wattles - *Acacia paradoxa* (Hedge or Prickly Wattle), *A. genistifolia* (Spreading Wattle), *A. provincialis* formerly *A. retinodes* (Wirilda or Swamp Wattle), *A. pycnantha* (Golden wattle) - to name just a few; as well as the distinctive purple flowering *Hardenbergia violacea* (Purple Coral-pea) and *Indigofera australis* (Austral Indigo), through to many other small plants (many flowering) that are often overlooked, but our “guru” had a story for them all.

Then it was out through the Polmans Creek, past the indigenous garden out the front of the Rowanston on the Track winery, to the covenanted bushland of Clare Claydon and Win Westerhoff, so badly burnt by the Black Saturday fire. It was exciting to see how this land is starting to naturally regenerate and the many different species that are coming back – really amazing to see. It is also sobering to see the impact of weeds in this area, most of which were not present before the fire. Hopefully, with time and work, and as the regeneration continues, the indigenous plants will compete with the weeds and banish them from this beautiful piece of bushland.

After a nourishing lunch break provided by the Redesdale Hall catering group, it was onwards – into the regenerating bushland of the Barfold Common. Thanks to many sharp eyes and the encyclopaedic knowledge of our guru, many small native flowers were identified. This is despite the ferocity with which the common burnt during the Redesdale fire, and is testament to the resilience of the Australian bushland.

As was fitting for such a day of exploration, the weather was as good as spring can be – warm, windless and sunny, and everybody on the tour had a rewarding and educational day.

If your group wants to share their story simply email it through [jodie.odgers@nccma.vic.gov.au](mailto:jodie.odgers@nccma.vic.gov.au). We love hearing about what you have been up to and so too does the North Central Landcare community!

*‘Plant guru’, Ian Higgins enthuses the group with his finds on the covenanted block.  
Photo: Courtesy Louise Grills, Baynton Sidonia Landcare.*



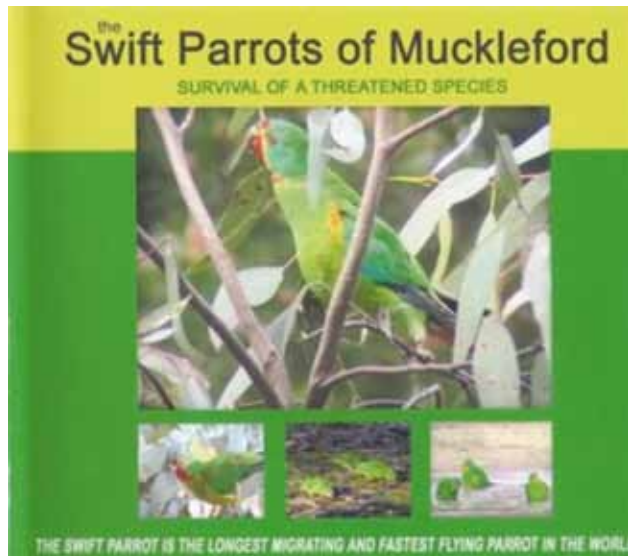
## Is your group an incorporated association?

Changes have been made to the legislation that regulates incorporated associations, the *Associations Incorporation Act*. These changes will take effect in 2011 with serious penalties for breaches to the Act. It is critical that members of incorporated associations familiarise themselves with the Act to avoid any breaches. Details of the changes can be found on the Volunteering Victoria website: <http://www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au/volunteering-victoria/position-papers/417-the-associations-incorporations-amendment-bill-2010-passed-by-parliament>.

## COURSES AND RESOURCES

### *Swift Parrots of Muckleford DVD*

The *Swift Parrots of Muckleford* DVD is now complete! To be launched in Castlemaine early next year, the film aims to help people identify Swift Parrots by sight and call. It also includes rare footage of the Swift Parrot's feeding habits compiled from over five years of recording by Debbie Worland, in the Muckleford area. Featuring Chris Tzaros from Birds Australia, narrated by Castlemaine's John Flaus and produced by Bill Irwin DVD production, the film runs for 25 minutes. For more information or to order a copy please visit <http://www.swiftparrotsofmuckleforddvd.com>. Alternatively, copies can be purchased from the Castlemaine Information Centre, Mostyn Street, Castlemaine VIC.



### *Print and design resources available to Landcare groups*

EnviroPrint now provides print and design resources to Landcare, Coastcare and Junior Landcare groups. Groups can use the resources to order printed materials and promote their volunteer work amongst the broader community. *EnviroPrint* products can be ordered online and are made from 100% recycled, Australian made, carbon neutral paper. For more information visit the resources section of the Landcare Australia website at: [www.landcareonline.com.au/?page\\_id=3032](http://www.landcareonline.com.au/?page_id=3032).

### *Considering a career in the Conservation and Land Management Industry?*

Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE offers Certificate III, IV and Diplomas in Conservation and Land Management. Students work closely with industry representatives to study a broad range of topics such as biodiversity, pest management, map reading/production, cultural studies, wild life management and revegetation works. Course work involves a mix of theory, industry projects, field trips and practical work. Courses commence in February 2011 at the Charleston Road campus. For further information regarding these courses please visit [www.britafe.vic.edu.au/index.php](http://www.britafe.vic.edu.au/index.php) or contact Tony Misson on (03) 5434 1759.

### *The Atlas of Living Australia has gone live*

The *Atlas of Living Australia* is a new online information portal developed to provide a better picture of Australian biodiversity and predict species distribution under climate change. The portal already contains information on the distribution of Australian fauna and flora, as well as maps, images and literature. Community members can also contribute local photographs and information to help build the database. Head to <http://www.ala.org.au/> to discover this exciting new resource.

### *DPI Climatedogs*

With the extremes in weather over recent years you may be wondering what's causing these climate fluctuations from wet seasons to dry. The DPI has recently launched the *Climatedogs Animation Series* to help explain the main factors driving climate in Victoria and how these drivers are changing over time. To watch the dogs round up the weather head to the DPI website: [www.new.dpi.vic.gov.au/agriculture/environment-and-community/climate/understanding-weather-and-climate](http://www.new.dpi.vic.gov.au/agriculture/environment-and-community/climate/understanding-weather-and-climate).



## EVENTS

### *Rabbit buster program*

The North Central CMA has secured funding to undertake rabbit control around internationally listed Ramsar sites for the next three years. The area spans 2,000 ha and includes Reedy Lakes and the Avoca Marshes. The North Central CMA will be working with other agencies to get the rabbits under control. However we can't do rabbit control on our own; we need you! *Rabbit Buster month* will be held in February 2011. We encourage everyone - public and private land managers - living and working around the Kerang Lakes and the Avoca Marshes, to get involved and undertake rabbit control activities in February so we can have a big impact and reduce rabbit numbers together.

You are invited to attend a dinner and information session to discuss the **Rabbit Buster program** in the Kerang Lakes area. The evening will start at 6.00 pm for dinner with a chance to catch up with project staff and each other. Following dinner, guest speakers will provide practical information on best practice rabbit management techniques, discuss what activities are to be delivered on public land and provide information in regards to cultural heritage considerations. We look forward to seeing you there.

- Date:** Wednesday 19 January 2011
- Time:** 6.00-8.30 pm (Dinner served at 6.15 pm)
- Location:** Royal Hotel, Kerang
- RSVP for catering:** Monday 17 January 2011
- Phone:** 03 5448 7124
- Email:** [info@nccma.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@nccma.vic.gov.au)

**This event is free!**

### *Victorian Women on Farms Gathering*

The 22nd Annual Victorian Women on Farms Gathering will be held from Friday 25 March to Sunday 27 March 2011 at Cohuna, in Northern Victoria. The gathering provides an opportunity for women to relax, make new friends and be inspired! Commencing on Friday evening, the weekend will involve a full program of local tours, women's stories, speakers, workshops, entertainment and fine food. Registration will be available from the 10 January 2011 and you are encouraged to bring a friend. Accommodation is available in Cohuna, Kerang, Barham and Koondrook. Billeting can also be arranged. For more information please contact Lorraine Learmonth by phoning 0429 103 180 or emailing [nhcohuna@bigpond.com](mailto:nhcohuna@bigpond.com).

## FUNDING NEWS

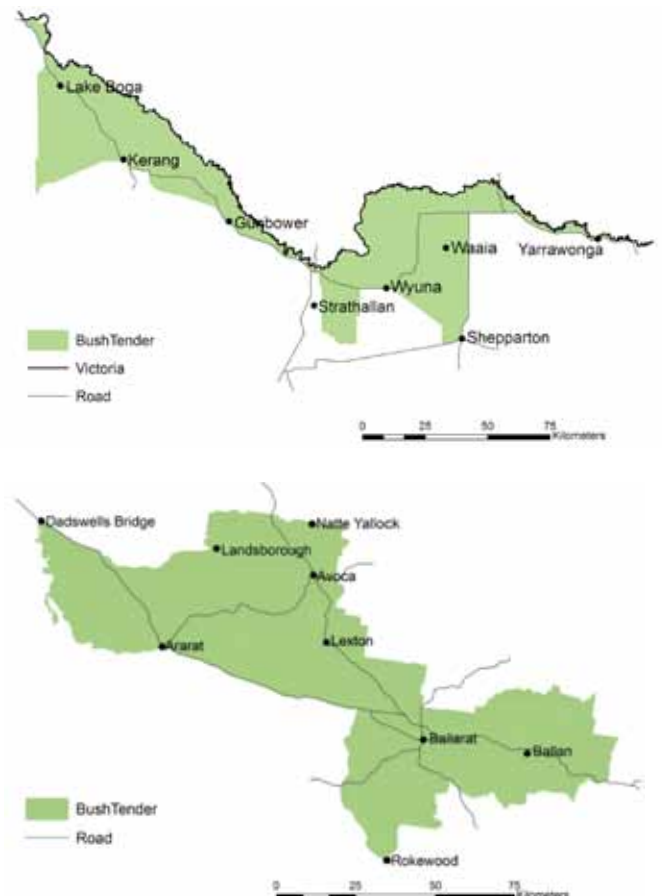
### *BushTender calling for expressions of interest*

BushTender is an incentive program designed to help improve management and protection of native vegetation for biodiversity on private land. The approach provides landholders with the freedom to choose management commitments that suit their individual circumstances. Participants may agree to a range of actions including fencing of native vegetation to exclude stock, weed and pest animal control and supplementary planting of native understorey.

To take part in BushTender, private landholders submit a bid in a competitive tender. Successful bids are not necessarily the cheapest bids, but those that offer the 'best value for money' in terms of native vegetation outcomes. Successful landholders receive periodic payments under Management Agreements signed with the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE).

To register an expression of interest phone DSE on 136 186 between 8am-6pm, Monday to Friday. For further information on BushTender call 136 186 or visit [www.dse.vic.gov.au/nativevegetation](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/nativevegetation). There is approximately \$5 million available for landholder payments and places are limited, so be quick and register early!

Eligible areas for BushTender in central Victoria:





## Twelve successful Community Action Grants

The 2010-11 Community Action Grants were announced in mid-November, with community groups from across Australia sharing more than \$7.9 million through the Federal Government's Caring for our Country initiative and the National Landcare Program. The aims of the grants are to support a healthy Australian landscape by protecting the environment and adopting sustainable land management practices. The North Central CMA region had 12 successful applications:

2010-11 Community Action Grants in the North Central CMA region			
Funding Recipient	Community Group	Project Title	Approved Budget (GST Excl)
Campaspe River and Land management Group Friends of the Campaspe River	Community group is the funding recipient	Hand clearing of Poplar suckers from river bed and native plant revegetation of steep river bank – Campaspe River Kyneton - Apex Weir to Racecourse	\$19,500
Newstead Landcare Group	Community group is the funding recipient	Riparian protection and restoration in the Newstead area – Stage 2	\$14,700
Friends of Cornish Hill Inc	Community group is the funding recipient	Advancing Smiths Creek Revegetation	\$16,700
Mount Alexander Shire Council	Castlemaine Landcare Group	Happy Valley Restoration Stage Six – Spraying and ripping of weeds for revegetation works	\$9,350
VFF Farm Tree and Landcare Association Incorporated	Echuca Landcare Group	Banish Bridal Creeper	\$15,045
Nulla Vale Pyalong West Landcare	Community group is the funding recipient	Planting for the Environment 2011 – Extending existing corridors to increase habitat and provide wind breaks	\$19,945
Blampied-Kooroocheang Landcare Group	Community group is the funding recipient	South Central Cairn Curran Water Conservation Project (Stage Two)	\$20,000
VFF Farm Tree and Landcare Association Incorporated	St Arnaud Hills Landcare Group	St Arnaud Hills CAG Revegetation Project 2010-11	\$20,000
VFF Farm Tree and Landcare Association Incorporated	Winjallock Landcare Group	Pastures for perennality and productivity – Demonstrating pasture cropping techniques at six sites of different paddock and pasture types	\$20,000
VFF Farm Tree and Landcare Association Incorporated	Donald and District Landcare Group	Native grass revegetation works to protect soils and help biodiversity – Trial at three sites, different grass establishment techniques	\$20,000
VFF Farm Tree and Landcare Association Incorporated	Mt Pleasant Creek Catchment Landcare Group	Fencing and direct seeding to protect and enhance remnant Grey Box Woodland in the Mt Pleasant Creek catchment of Central Victoria.	\$10,000
Axe Creek Landcare Group	Community group is the recipient	Stock exclusion fencing in the riparian zone of Axe Creek to improve and protect biodiversity values and connectivity to work undertaken by local Landcare groups.	\$11,700

Further information and a complete list of the successful projects can be viewed at [www.nrm.gov.au](http://www.nrm.gov.au) or obtained by calling 1800 552 008.



## *Funding available for Environmental Best Management Practices Workshops*

The DPI is calling for expressions of interest from groups or networks to conduct workshops on *Environmental Best Management Practices (EBMP) on Farms*. Sponsored by the DPI's Farm Plan 21 Climate Change Initiative, \$500 is available to cover advertising, phone and labour costs of organising a workshop for 10-15 people. Venue hire and catering costs will also be met by the DPI. The offer is only available to workshops held before 30 June 2011. The aim is for two facilitated workshops of five hours duration (including lunch) to be held, one to two weeks apart, for groups interested in using an innovative EBMP in their local area. In addition, participants will receive a free copy of the EBMP workbook and computer program to enable them to complete their self assessment and action planning. For further information or to become involved in the program please contact Geoff McFarlane by phoning 0407 822 525 or emailing [glmcfarlane@netlink.com.au](mailto:glmcfarlane@netlink.com.au).

## *Coles School Garden Grants*

Since 2008, Coles has funded the *Coles School Garden Grants Program* in partnership with Junior Landcare. The program supports schools, kindergartens, daycare centres and youth groups (e.g. Scouts) in the education of young Australians about the environment. Previous projects include bush tucker and vegetable gardens, with a focus on sustainable gardening principles such as composting, water wise gardening and reducing food miles by growing your own food. Coles grants are for up to \$1 100 (Incl GST) and are available three to four times a year. The closing date for the next round is 25 February 2011 at 5pm. For further information refer to the Junior Landcare website: [www.juniorlandcare.com.au/grants-2/coles-grant](http://www.juniorlandcare.com.au/grants-2/coles-grant).

## *Connect to GrantsLINK for Government Funding*

GrantsLINK internet directory provides information on federal, state and local government funding opportunities that exist to help communities develop solutions to local and national problems, fund ideas and initiatives and get assistance in times of hardship. The directory aims to make it easier to find suitable and relevant grants for community projects. Check out the GrantsLINK directory at [www.grantslink.gov.au/](http://www.grantslink.gov.au/).

## *Get your 'Ground Cover' direct*

*The newsletter you are reading is for ALL members of Landcare and Friends groups in our region. If you would like to receive it directly, rather than via your group, jump on our direct email list. All you have to do is send an email request to [landcare@nccma.vic.gov.au](mailto:landcare@nccma.vic.gov.au) or phone reception on 03 5448 7124.*



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