

# ground cover



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

www.nccma.vic.gov.au

February 2011

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

## *A message from the Regional Landcare Coordinator*

Hi everyone,

Well it has been a while since the last newsletter just before Christmas and hopefully you have all managed to take a well deserved break. I was lucky enough to take a trip abroad for a couple of weeks after Christmas to Europe. The trip was somewhat of a whirl wind in which I saw five countries in three weeks! Home was never far from my thoughts though as everywhere I travelled the Queensland and Victorian floods were front page news.

In this issue of Groundcover there are a number of articles that have information about support and services available to those of you who may have been affected by the floods. It is important that you look after yourselves, family and friends.

Last week I attended a State Landcare Team workshop in Ballarat to discuss the role of the Regional Landcare Coordinators and explore opportunities for improvement. We had a very productive day discussing the role, how it continues to change and how we can effectively deliver the Victorian Landcare Program. While there, I was lucky enough to take part in the launch of the 'Landcare impressions - Sowing the seed of change in Corrangamite' booklet, a collection of Landcare stories in the Corrangamite Catchment.

The launch took place at Mt Elephant at Derrinallum, a mountain that funnily enough resembles an elephant! The mountain is a scoria cone that rises 240 metres above the surrounding Volcanic Plains and has a crater 90 metres deep. Remaining untouched for generations, the mountain became weed and rabbit infested. In 2000 the mountain became available for sale and the community and Trust for Nature raised \$200,000 to purchase the mountain and transform it into a tourist attraction. The Lismore Landcare Protection Group has since led the onground work, including pest plant and animal control, pasture management and tree planting, to make the mountain an enjoyable place to visit. I highly recommend the walk up around the rim- the view is amazing!

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*The State Landcare Team and representatives from the Mt Elephant Community of Management Committee on the top of Mt Elephant.  
Photo: Courtesy Tracey McRae, Corrangamite Catchment Management Authority (CMA).*

Mt Elephant is open to the public the first Sunday of each month from 1pm to 4pm; entry is by gold coin donation. It is a great example of how a community working together can achieve success.

Until next time, warm regards!

*Jodie Odgers*

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## NEWS

### *Flood assistance is available*

#### **DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS)**

Visit the DHS website for information and resources that can help you get through the flood crisis. They have services available that can assist with issues such as health and wellbeing, financial and material assistance, and household matters. Go to [www.dhs.vic.gov.au](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au) for more information.

**Emergency grant:** Individuals and families that have been affected by the flood and are yet to have the chance to apply for emergency grants due to isolation, water inundation or other extenuating circumstances are still able to apply for an emergency grant of up to \$1067 per household. The grant can provide temporary accommodation, clothing, food, personal requisites and one-off transport costs. The grant is 'needs based', is not means tested and is not affected by the insurance status of the applicant. Contact a grants officer on 1300 165 413.

#### **Re-establishment and temporary living grant:**

A temporary living and re-establishment grant is available to people whose principal place of residence has been made uninhabitable by floods. These grants are means tested. Fact sheets are available at [www.dhs.vic.gov.au](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au).

#### **CENTRELINK**

**Disaster Recovery Income Subsidy:** Launched by the Prime Minister on 10 January 2011, the subsidy is for up to 13 weeks for employees, small business owners and farmers who can demonstrate that they suffered loss of income as a direct result of flooding and severe weather which commenced on 29 November 2010. A claim form must be lodged with Centrelink by 28 February to be eligible for the subsidy. More information is available at [www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au).

#### **RURAL FINANCE**

**The Clean-up and Restoration Grant:** Up to \$25,000 (made as a single payment), the grant is for primary producers, small businesses and not-for-profit organisations who have suffered direct damage as a result of the floods between August 2010 and January 2011 or damage caused by hail during November 2010 in Victoria. The grants can be used for clean-up, removal of debris, animal welfare and business restoration.

Further applications can be considered for subsequent flood events that have caused additional direct damage.

The grant is not intended to replace the need for insurance or to provide compensation for losses. Any grant for clean-up work subject to evidence that is subsequently covered by an insurance claim is to be repaid.

All claims for assistance are assessed on an individual basis and must be accompanied by 30 day invoices to support the expenditure claimed. Further information is provided in the fact sheets found on the Rural Finance website ([www.ruralfinance.com.au](http://www.ruralfinance.com.au)).

Low interest loans of up to \$200,000 are also available. For further information and application forms contact Rural Finance on 03 5448 2600 or visit their website [www.ruralfinance.com.au](http://www.ruralfinance.com.au).

#### **OTHER SERVICES**

Other services that you can contact directly include:

**Lifeline** - 24 hour telephone service that offers confidential support and advice to deal with stress and personal challenges. Phone 131 114.

**Mental Health Assistance Line** - 24 hour telephone service to provide expert advice, information and referral on any mental health issue. Phone 1300 280 737.

**Beyondblue** - Information line that offers expert information on depression, how to recognise it, how to get help, how to help someone else and how to stay well. Phone 1300 224 636.

### *Putting rabbits on the map*

A new Rabbit mapping website has been released for landholders, community groups and pest controllers Australia-wide. RabbitScan (under the FeralScan program) is now available at [www.feralscan.org.au](http://www.feralscan.org.au) to help landholders map and manage rabbits in their local area.

Due to a resurgence of wild rabbits across Australia, the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre has re-released the RabbitScan website as a resource for landholders and community groups to map sightings, damage and

control information associated with rabbits. This will allow users to create a Rabbit Management Map for their local area. RabbitScan was first developed in 2009 by the Rabbit Management Advisory Group and it has been upgraded to be a more useful tool to land-holders and communities.

There are plans to release more websites for other pest animal species during 2011 (including foxes and wild dogs). If you have any questions (or feedback) regarding RabbitScan, head to the website [www.feralscan.org.au/rabbitscan](http://www.feralscan.org.au/rabbitscan).

## Dragonflies take flight...

It has definitely been the year of the insect! First it was locusts, then mosquitoes, then spiders and now dragonflies. The wet summer we have been experiencing has resulted in a boom in dragonfly numbers. You can barely walk around open water without having to dodge one.

The increase in plant growth and an abundance of still water in the landscape has provided optimum conditions for dragonflies. They are an ancient and successful group of insects that have been around for millions of years, long before the evolution of dinosaurs. One species that lived around 250 million years ago was the largest insect known to exist and had a wingspan of over 70 cm... now that is big!

Dragonflies are excellent hunters due to their fantastic flying abilities and well-developed eyes. Some people find them intimidating because of their size and the fact that they can fly at top speeds. But there is no need to fear them as they are harmless. In fact they do us a favour by eating the insects that bite us.



Tiger Dragonfly. Photo: Courtesy of Geoff Trease.

## Trailer and tool insurance for FTLA member groups

The VFF Farm Tree & Landcare Association (FTLA) has been talking to a number of insurance companies to negotiate a bulk deal for property insurance, to add to the current public liability, voluntary workers and association liability package.

FTLA are looking for fifty groups who might be interested in property insurance. The insurance would cover a trailer with a market value of up to \$3,000 plus contents of the same. The premium would be approximately \$250 per group, depending on how many groups are interested. If this sounds like something that would be of value to your group please email FTLA at [ftla@vff.org.au](mailto:ftla@vff.org.au).

## 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 [www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au](http://www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au).

## Landcare goes to the Bendigo Farmers Market

On Saturday 12 February, North Central Landcare, City of Greater Bendigo and Mid Loddon Landcare Network shared a marquee to showcase the great work Landcare does in the north central region. The February market was not only a produce market but a Sustainable Living Festival. It was a great opportunity to introduce Landcare to people that were not aware of the movement. It was also great opportunity for fellow Landcarers to catch up and talk about the work that they have been doing. The Bendigo Farmers Market is held on the 2nd Saturday of every month next to the Information Centre in Bendigo. If you are in the area it is highly recommended!



## Don't forget to return your 'Supporting your group survey' and 'Finding your group on the web'

With the December edition of the newsletter two documents were posted to a representative from your Landcare group. The first was the 'Supporting your group survey', the information we gather from this helps us keep track of your groups health and also what activities and support you need. By filling it in and returning it to us your group will go into the draw to win one of two \$200 vouchers for seed or seedlings from a nursery of your choice.

The other document you received was 'Finding your group on the web'. This document is to help you and your group become known to the wider community. The information that you provide on the form will be added to your groups site on the Victorian Landcare Gateway by us- how easy is that!

## Have your say on the future of Australia

The Commonwealth Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities has released an issues paper: A Sustainable Population Strategy for Australia. The paper outlines why Australia needs a sustainable population strategy and explores issues about changes in Australia's current and future population.

The paper is intended to facilitate the expression of community views about the challenges and opportunities created by changes in Australia's population. Submissions to the issues paper are now invited. Comments will help to inform the government as it develops a Sustainable Population Strategy in 2011. Submissions are due by 1 March 2011.

For a copy of the paper and more information on how to make a submission visit the Sustainable Population Strategy website [www.environment.gov.au/sustainability/population/index.html](http://www.environment.gov.au/sustainability/population/index.html).

## EVENTS

### What's up with the Weather? Where to now for agriculture...

Learn more about the weather patterns influencing agriculture in Victoria and strategies to manage climate variability on your farm. The North Central CMA, in partnership with the VFF, FarmReady and the Caring for Our Country program, will be holding a free public forum at the St Arnaud Sporting Club on Friday 25 February from 10am to 1.30pm. Guest speakers include Prof. Tim Reeves; Wimmera farmer and Grains Research and Development Corporation climate Champion Susan Findlay Tickner; and senior Department of Primary Industries climate specialists. For more information contact North Central CMA on 5448 7124 or [reception@nccma.vic.gov.au](mailto:reception@nccma.vic.gov.au).

### Victorian Women on Farms Gathering it's not too late to register

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 is open now and you are more than welcome to bring a friend or two. 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).



### *Kara Kara Conservation Management Network (CMN) launch - Is biodiversity conservation in the Western Goldfields a passion or interest of yours?*

The Kara Kara CMN launch, which was cancelled due to wet weather last November, has been rescheduled for 11am Sunday 27 February at Teddington Reservoir, Stuart Mill (VicRoads Country Street Directory Map 42 F7).

The CMN is committed to protecting and enhancing habitat critical to the survival of our woodland birds and other threatened fauna and flora species primarily through the creation and maintenance of well-managed bio-links. The CMN focuses on both public and private land: it extends from St Arnaud in the north; to Moonambel in the south; from Morrl Morrl in the west; to the Avoca River in the East. The St Arnaud Range National Park and adjacent reserves are core habitat areas.

If this is of interest to you, then come along!

### *Clean Up Australia Day!*

Every year thousands of Australians participate in Clean Up Australia Day to help clean up, fix up and conserve their local environment. This year the day will be held on Sunday 6 March 2011. To get involved just head to [www.cleanup.org.au](http://www.cleanup.org.au) or phone 1800 282 329 to find a site near you.



### *Call for Exhibitors*

The Northern United Forestry Group (NUFG) is hosting the Farm Forestry and Firewood Machinery Expo on Friday 8 April. There will be a large number of exhibitors to answer all of your questions and demonstrations with the latest farm forestry and firewood machinery. Ian Rankin, NUFG president, will be one of many exhibitors who will demonstrate farm-scale machinery for thinning and harvesting farm forestry plantations. The workshop program will include a discussion on bioenergy. Entry for the day will be \$5 per car.

The Expo still has room for more exhibitors. Sites are \$100 each (plus GST) and there are a limited number of powered sites available. Contact Mal Brown on 0419 108 817 or [brown.mal@bigpond.com](mailto:brown.mal@bigpond.com) for more information.

Supporters of the Expo include the City of Greater Bendigo, Victorian Department of Primary Industries, Australian Forest Growers, North Central Catchment Management Authority and Trees Victoria.

## COURSES & RESOURCES

### *2011 Loddon Murray Community Leadership Program*

Applications are still open for the 2011 Loddon Murray Community Leadership Program (LMCLP), which aims to develop leaders for vibrant and sustainable communities across central and north-west Victoria. The program is coordinated by the Community Leadership Loddon Murray (CLLM) and helps participants build leadership skills, explores the major issues facing the north central region of Victoria and facilitates positive change.

Applications are still being accepted despite the passing of the closing date. A few places (including some scholarship positions) are still available. For more information visit [www.lmclp.org.au](http://www.lmclp.org.au) or phone 03 5498 3270 or email [info@lmclp.org.au](mailto:info@lmclp.org.au).

## FUNDING NEWS

### *BushTender calling for expressions of interest*

BushTender is still calling for expressions of interest. The program is an opportunity for landholders in four areas of Victoria to generate an alternative income through improved native vegetation management. 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).

The two eligible areas for BushTender in the north central region are:



### *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](http://www.juniorlandcare.com.au).

### *International River Foundation - Riverprize*

Riverprize is open to individuals, organisations or agencies who can demonstrate outstanding achievements in river management and restoration. The international award is open to Australian and international applicants. The national award is exclusively for Australian entrants.

The main criteria for both prizes are to demonstrate outstanding results in river or catchment/watershed management and substantial progress towards sustainability. Submissions also need to show evidence of high levels of program delivery, inclusiveness, public accountability and innovation.

Applications can be submitted via email and close on Wednesday 30 March 2011. For more information go to [www.riverfoundation.org.au](http://www.riverfoundation.org.au) or contact Natalie Barker on 07 3123 7767.

### *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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