

# ground cover



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*Connecting Rivers, Landscapes, People*

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

October 2011

## A message from the Regional Landcare Coordinator

Hello everyone,

It has been a great month to get out and about, especially with the weather warming up!

On Sunday 16 October the North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) launched the Frogs Field Guide at Anderson's Mill in Smeaton. More than 55 people braved the rather windy conditions to hear all about the frogs that call the north central Victoria region home. Ray Draper, from Central Highlands Environmental Consultancy, was a wealth of knowledge and had the crowd's full attention as he talked about the twelve frogs featured in the guide and played each of their calls. Ray also talked about the threats to frogs in the region which include habitat loss, water quality, mosquito fish and Chytrid fungus.



For those who haven't heard of Chytrid fungus (*Batrachochytrium*) it is believed to have been introduced into the Australian environment a few decades ago and is a lethal disease in many frog species. The fungus affects the frog's skin. This means that they can't "drink" water and absorb important salts like sodium and potassium, which they do through their skin.

So everyone needs to be careful when we visit sites where frogs are known to be present - we don't want to spread the spores that form the fungus. To reduce the risk of spreading Chytrid fungus it is important to take precautions and remember to clean and disinfect boots and equipment before moving from one location that has Amphibians to another.

Each Landcare group will be sent a copy of the guide with this edition of the newsletter. For more information, or an electronic copy of the guide, visit the North Central CMA website [www.nccma.vic.gov.au](http://www.nccma.vic.gov.au). The frog calls for the twelve species in the guide are also available for download on the website.

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The North Central CMA Landcare and Waterwatch team attended and manned a marquee at the Castlemaine Family Fun Nature Day on Sunday 25 September. The theme was 'discovering macroinvertebrates'. Kelly Dunn and I set up microscopes and trays with water samples that contained macroinvertebrates so that the children could find macros and then identify them. It was a fantastic day and it was great to see so many children excited about some of the smaller bugs that inhabit our waterways! It is very possible we have stumbled upon some future passionate Waterwatchers.

Before I sign off I just want to remind all of the groups that received a 2010-11 Second Generation Landcare Grant for either a Major Integrated Project or a Small Grant. Your final reports are now overdue!

This year the final reports were emailed to the project manager identified in the original applications, or groups were mailed a hard copy. Thank you to all of the groups that met the deadline and those that have formally requested an extension. If you need an extension please put it in writing - **reporting on your projects is essential.**

Warm regards,

*Jodie Odgers*

Regional Landcare Coordinator

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## NEWS

### Find that frog

Written by Evelyn Maack

Have you ever thought about how often you hear frogs in a dam or stream, paddock or garden?

Most frogs go quiet when they sense humans or other large, potential predators approaching. Even if you have been very quiet, or if your target frog is one of those that keeps croaking anyway, it can still be hard to determine just where the song is coming from. A loud sound may actually be from far away while a quieter one could be quite close.

All too hard? Well, there is a technique you can use to locate your frog. It is called triangulation, and on Saturday evening, 15 October, 40 members and friends of the Baynton Sidonia Landcare group learnt all about it and put their new knowledge into practice. Retired academic, Dr Graeme Watson from Castlemaine, spoke to the group about creating a frog-friendly garden or farm environment.



**Dr Graeme Watson addressing the group.** Photo courtesy of Emma Jimson.

Triangulation requires two people with good ears and a torch each. Each person points their torch beam to where they believe the frog sound came from. The point where the beams meet is where the frog is very likely to be, even though it can still be hard to actually spot them. At the frog workshop, the younger members of the audience were noticeably more successful than the adults at actually seeing the frogs in amongst the long, wet vegetation.

People attending the workshop also received a copy of the brand new booklet, North Central Frogs Field Guide, put out by North Central Waterwatch. Four of the frogs described in the guide were identified by Dr Watson when the group walked around the wetland on John Baulch's Pastoria property.

Dr Watson congratulated John on the excellent environmental values of his wetland: it is well planted up with a diversity of grasses, shrubs and trees right up to and overhanging the dam as well as being fenced out from stock. Certainly, the frog calls were constant and deafening so that you had to raise your voice to talk to the person next to you. Shining a torch into the

water showed a myriad of tadpoles of various sizes milling about.

Baynton Sidonia Landcare group's next seminar in the Post Bushfire Series, funded by the North Central Catchment Management Authority, will be on identifying local birds, and will be held in February 2012.

### walking amongst the wildflowers

Written by Mike Jones, Campaspe Valley Landcare Group

The Campaspe Valley Landcare Group held a very successful spring wildflower walk on 16 October, at Mike Jones' 40 acre property in Barfold. Nearly 40 people attended and after a hot breakfast the group headed off to look for the many and varied wildflowers.

Mike's property has been under a Trust for Nature conservation covenant since 1996. The covenant assists in the protection of the indigenous flora and fauna by, amongst other things, restricting the felling of trees and grazing of animals. The property backs onto the Barfold Common and was completely burnt out in the Black Saturday bushfires in February 2009.

One thing that amazed the visitors was the extent of the regeneration since the fire, especially in the parts of the property that burnt at a lower temperature. In the hottest parts of the fire, some indigenous plants have not returned whereas in other areas, regrowth has been prolific.



**The group looking at the exclusion fencing.** Photo courtesy of Mike Jones, Campaspe Valley Landcare Group.

This year fences have been erected around a number of small areas to protect specific plants from grazing by rabbits, hares, wallabies and kangaroos. There is not much difference at the moment between inside and outside these exclusion areas because of the rainfall this year and the prolific growth, but it will be interesting to see in years to come (especially after another dry spell) how marked this difference becomes.

There were many wildflowers to be seen on the walk – the most common being Daphne Heath, Shiny Everlasting, Billy's Buttons, Milkmaids, Narrow-leafed Bitter-pea, Chocolate Lily, Wax-lip Orchid, Guinea Flower, Yam-daisy, Rice Flower, Golden Moths and Creamy Stackhousia. Some of the less common finds were Grey Parrot Pea, Leopard Orchid, Pink Bells, Purplish Beard Orchid, Dotted Sun Orchid, Crimson Sun Orchid, Twining Fringe Lily and Beard-heath.



**Dotted Sun Orchid.** Photo courtesy of Mike Jones, Campaspe Valley Landcare Group.

Another very rare orchid, the Crimson Spider Orchid (*Caladenia clavescens*), has been found on the property. This orchid is only found in a few locations and only in the goldfields area. A fenced exclusion area protects the orchid – the only one ever to be found in this part of the goldfields. Unfortunately, it doesn't appear every year and hasn't since the fire; we are hopeful it will appear this spring.

## Victorian Landcare Network (VLN) Annual General Meeting

The Victorian Landcare Network Annual General Meeting will be held at the 25th Anniversary Landcare Conference on Tuesday 15th November 2011 starting at 4 pm. The AGM will be held during Session 3 of the workshops, the meeting room will be identified on the day.

If you would like to put in an apology please notify Karen Brisbane at karenb@gbcm.vic.gov.au or 5820 1134.

If you have questions about the resolution please contact Trevor Barker on 0488 773 459.

## Fox bounty collection points open

**Article featured in AgScene Thursday 20 October 2011**

Loddon Mallee fox bounty collection points will open from Monday 24 October.

Farmers and hunters in the Ballarat region were the first to cash in on the Victorian Coalition Government's Fox and Wild Dog Bounty Scheme, with the first collection centre opening last Monday.

Minister for Agriculture and Food Security Peter Walsh said the \$4 million bounty was a key election commitment to help stop foxes and wild dogs from preying on livestock and native animals.

"The Victorian Coalition Government's fox and wild dog bounty rewards Victorian hunters for their contribution to fox and wild dog control," Minister Walsh said.

"Victorian farmers and hunters will receive \$10 for each fox killed and \$50 for each wild dog killed.

We have had a lot of positive feedback from hunters since the bounty opened on 1 October and I am hopeful we'll see a large number of fox scalps submitted, as collection centres open across western Victoria this week," Minister Walsh concluded.

Member for Western Region David O'Brien said to be eligible for the reward hunters needed to submit body parts collected during the bounty period. "Hunters must submit an entire fox scalp including both ears, the skin surrounding both eyes and the nose," Mr O'Brien said.

For the wild dog bounty, eligible applicants will need to submit a skin piece consisting of a single piece of skin and fur running from the snout, incorporating the ears, along the animal's back and including the tail.

There are 21 collection points across regional Victoria for fox scalps and eight collection centres for wild dogs. They will be open two hours per session once every four weeks, excepting major holiday periods.

Loddon Mallee monthly collection points, opening next week, are fox-only bounty collection and are scheduled as follows:

- Bendigo:** Cnr Midland Hwy and Taylor St, Epsom  
Monday, October 24: 10.30am-12.30pm
- Swan Hill:** 7 Quinn Drive  
Tuesday, October 25: 8.30am-10.30am
- Ouyen:** Gregory Street  
Tuesday, October 25: 2.00pm-4.00pm
- St Arnaud:** Cnr Willis St and Saw Bench Lane  
Thursday, October 27: 10.30am-12.30pm

For opening times and full details of the terms and conditions for the fox and wild dog bounty, visit [www.dpi.vic.gov.au/bounty](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/bounty) or contact the DPI Customer Service Centre on 136 186.

## Family Nature Day

**Written by Bronwyn Silver, Connecting Country**

A huge crowd of over 700 people gathered at Victory Park in Castlemaine on Sunday 25 September to celebrate nature in our backyards.

Children enjoyed the huge range of activities including face painting, jumping castle, badge making, butterfly wing creating and Waterwatch. They filled out nature passports, danced with Swifty the Parrot and Tilly the Platypus and collected nature cards from the Connies. The biggest hit of the day was the live native animal display by Tooko which included Dingos, a Cape Barren Goose, Possums, Turtles and a 2 m long Python.

The nature information stalls gave away a huge amount of information about local environment groups including Trust for Nature, Parks Victoria, Connecting Country and local Landcare Groups.



**The many stalls at the Family Fun Nature Day.** Photo courtesy of Darroch Donald from Trust for Nature.

Connecting Country would like to thank Victoria Naturally, Trust for Nature, the Norman Wettenhall Foundation, bankmecu, IGA, Bakers Delight and KR Castlemaine for helping to sponsor the event as well as the many volunteers who helped to make the day such a success.

## Gunbower Community Planting Day

*Written by Britt Gregory, North Central CMA*

On the lovely and sunny Thursday morning of 9 September the Gunbower Primary School, plus a handful of dedicated parents and teachers, came along to help with enhancing the Gunbower Creek within the Recreation Reserve.

The Gunbower Forest is listed under Ramsar as a Wetland of International Significance. This includes the Gunbower Forest, the Gunbower Creek and associated water bodies.



**The kids from Gunbower Primary School.** Photo courtesy of North Central CMA.

The 'Enhancing Values of the Gunbower Ramsar Site' project is federally funded through the *Caring for Our Country* initiative and aims to maintain and improve the ecological character of this special site. Project activities include invasive weed control; pest animal control; fencing; revegetation; conservation of threatened wetland plants; and a range of community and indigenous engagement activities.

Both aquatic and terrestrial weeds pose a high threat to the Gunbower Forest. As the Gunbower Creek is the major

waterway into the forest, the reduction of invasive weeds in and around this waterway is a major priority - with willow control being a key activity.

Following removal of willows along the riparian zone within the Gunbower Recreation Reserve in 2010, the Gunbower Enhancement Project team, in conjunction with the Recreation Reserve Committee, commenced planning for revegetation in the area. It was decided this would also be a good location for an indigenous 'demonstration' garden; to beautify the reserve as well as promote local native plants to gardeners living in the area.

The community planting day was a hit - the whole Gunbower Primary School came along to lend a hand and they were rewarded for their efforts with a delicious sausage sizzle lunch prepared by the Gunbower Recreation Reserve Committee. Two gardens were established, as well as a larger revegetation area along the creek. In total 280 plants went in, and a sign was installed to allow identification of the garden plants for anyone interested in growing indigenous plants in their own gardens.

By the end of the day, many of the kids had memorised their favourite plant names and were keen to see the gardens grow well into the future.

## Submit a poster in the Suregro Exhibition

As part of the 25 Years of Landcare Conference a poster exhibition is also being held at the event to help showcase the work of Landcare across the state.

Groups and networks are encouraged to submit a poster that showcases their work and contribution to Landcare. If you are intending to submit a poster please complete an expression of interest and a 200 word abstract (maximum) that outlines the content of your poster. The abstract will be included in the conference proceedings. Posters should be laminated and A2 (594 x 420 mm) or A1 (594mm x 841mm) in size.

The deadline for sending your poster is **Friday 4 November**. For more information go to the Landcare Conference page on the Victorian Landcare Gateway [www.landcarevic.net.au](http://www.landcarevic.net.au).



## Roadside weeds and pest report released

The Government has now released the report of the Roadside Weeds and Pests Working Party. The report makes a series of recommendations to improve the management of roadside pests and weeds, including clarifying the roles of State and local government and private landholders.

In particular the report recommends that the management of regionally controlled weeds and rabbits on roadsides should be the responsibility of local government, and that the costs of management should be shared between local and State government.

For the full report visit the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) website, look under the Agriculture tab and select the 'Pest, diseases and weeds' tab.

## Fancy winning a water tank

Article provided by WaterStore Poly Tanks

WaterStore Poly Tanks regularly sponsor and donate for various events and clubs; it's our way of giving support to our community. Below is a list of some of the different things we have been involved with over the years.

WaterStore Poly Tanks is looking for a Watersmart school or community organisation from regional or rural Australia to win a 5,000 litre WaterStore Poly Tank to promote smart water saving. If you are a non-profit organisation, you could win a water tank for your community!

Upload a photo on Facebook for your school, club or organisation and get friends and family to vote for your entry.

For more details visit our website [www.waterstore.com.au/sponsorship](http://www.waterstore.com.au/sponsorship).

## Are Bitterns booming?

Now is the time to check out your local wetlands for our newest nationally threatened species, the Australasian Bittern. Many wetlands in south east Australia is in prime condition for breeding Bitterns and birds should be calling, making them relatively easy to detect.

Recent reports suggest that Bitterns are very vocal at the moment. The best times to listen for them are at dawn and dusk (ideally half an hour before dawn or half an hour after dusk), although calls are sometimes heard during the day. If more than one Bittern is calling at a wetland, record the bearing and distance to each calling bird to try and calculate the number of calling birds present.

**What they sound like:** The Australasian Bittern has an extraordinary deep bass booming call, which can carry for up to one kilometre or more. The call usually occurs in sequences of between three to five booms, preceded by quieter gasps (which are usually only heard when the bird is close by). To familiarise yourself with their call, go to the Birds Australia website [www.birdsaustralia.com.au](http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au).

**Where to find them:** Medium to large wetlands with tallish wetland vegetation. Species favoured are Reeds (*Phragmites*), Cumbungi (*Typha*), Water Ribbons (*Triglochin*), Sedges, Rushes, etc.

**Weather conditions:** Calling is affected by the weather. Still, warm days are most favoured. Windy days should be avoided.

If you visit a wetland looking for Bitterns, please complete a survey form, even if no birds were detected. Survey forms can be accessed from the Birds Australia website or emailed to you.

For more information on the Bittern Project (including information on how to survey for the Australasian Little Bittern), go to: <http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au/our-projects/bittern-survey.html> - survey forms, identification kits, bittern calls as well as our latest newsletter, can all be downloaded from this site.

## EVENTS

### Can you ID Chilean Needle Grass?

Written by Ian Grenda, Tarrengower Cactus Control Committee

The Tarrengower Cactus Control Committee is hosting a Chilean Needle Grass ID event along with our monthly Wheel Cactus Community Control event.

The star of the day is a healthy flowering weed contained in a sealed Perspex box, so we can compare it with our native plants in the park.

Chilean Needle Grass is one of Australia's worst weeds. It invades native grasslands, agricultural land, roadsides and urban parks, gardens and recreational reserves. Chilean Needle Grass displaces palatable pasture species and can reduce productivity by up to 50% over summer. The panicle seed readily attaches to stock, particularly sheep, and can cause injury by burrowing into the skin and sometimes muscle. Its presence in wool reduces quality and can be a major cause of downgrading.

In native grasslands Chilean Needle Grass will out-compete and displace native grass species.

So come along and join with the group in some cactus control or just drop in and spend some time doing the first step in weed control 'identification' and stop this weed turning into the next 'curse'.

The field day will be held on 30 October at the corner of Back Mount Rd and Watersons Rd, Maldon. Starting at 10.30 am and finish about 12.30 pm with a free sausage sizzle and cuppa. Come along and enjoy the great outdoors and good company while helping to control a major threat to our natural environment.

Dress for the occasion in warm clothes and sturdy footwear.

Further information contact Ian on 0412015807 or [iangrenda@live.com](mailto:iangrenda@live.com).

## Are there Platypus in your local creeks?

The North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) Landcare and Waterwatch teams, in partnership with the Glenlyon and Newstead Landcare Groups, would like to invite you to a night all about Platypus.

The Australian Platypus Conservancy will present an illustrated talk about these amazing creatures and how you can help monitor them in the Loddon River system.

### Glenlyon

**Date:** Monday 14 November 2011  
**Time:** 6.30pm – 8pm (including a light supper)  
**Venue:** Glenlyon Community Hall, Glenlyon

### Newstead

**Date:** Tuesday November 2011  
**Time:** 6.30pm – 8pm (including a light supper)  
**Venue:** Newstead Mechanics Institute, Newstead

This is a great opportunity not to be missed! So come along and learn more about the habitat and biology of this unique animal. The event is free to attend and everyone is welcome.



**Platypus.** Photo courtesy of Australian Platypus Conservancy.

Please RSVP by 5 pm Friday 4 November 2011 to [info@nccma.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@nccma.vic.gov.au) or telephone (03) 5448 7124. Please ensure that you indicate which Platypus information session you would like to attend and outline any dietary requirements.

This information night is presented as part of the North Central CMA's Upper Loddon and Campaspe project, Victorian Landcare Program and North Central Waterwatch Program.

## Have you registered for the Landcare conference?

The *Growing sustainable communities – 25 years of Landcare 1986-2011* conference will be held at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Tuesday 15 November.

Registrations open at 9.00 am and the day will conclude with a networking event at 5.30 pm.

The conference invites Landcarers and supporters to come together for a day of exciting presentations and interactive sessions.

Guest speakers include John Williams, Andrew Campbell, Kate Auty, Alexandra Gartmann and Landcare co-founder Joan Kirner.

There is a registration fee for the conference.

You can register online at the Landcare Gateway [www.landcarevic.net.au/](http://www.landcarevic.net.au/) or download the registration form from the website. Conference organisers recommend the online registration as it is quick and easy to use.

For more information contact David Rooks on 03 5952 3331 or email [enquiries@eventsupport.com.au](mailto:enquiries@eventsupport.com.au).

## Lentil as Anything: Food, Culture, Community

Shanaka Fernando, the founder of Lentil as Anything, would like to invite you to the launch of *Lentil as Anything: Food, Culture, Community*.

**Date:** Saturday, 12 November 2011  
**Time:** 2pm - 4pm  
**Venue:** Abbotsford Convent (Community & Linen Rooms)  
 1 Saint Heliers Street  
 Abbotsford  
**Host:** Andrew Gill – MC Extraordinaire  
**Guest speaker:** Arnold Zable – renowned storyteller and author

Lentil as Anything has helped shape our cultural identity for over a decade. Now, with support from the National Australia Bank and the Australia Council for the Arts, a culturally significant publication has been created. *Lentil as Anything: Food, Culture, Community* provides a snapshot of the lives, struggles, and triumphs of many wonderful people, capturing the essence of community in a fascinating cultural and culinary work.

RSVP by 31 October to [enquiries@ilurapress.com](mailto:enquiries@ilurapress.com).



## Elphinstone are looking for recruits

The Elphinstone Land Management Association (ELMA) has received a grant through Victorian Governments Landcare Volunteer Action Project Grants and is having an information session and recruitment drive for their local community.

However, non-Elphinstone residents are also welcome to come as we present an evening with legendary Australian performer and ex-Goanna Front man, Shane Howard. The gig is Saturday 19 November at the Elphinstone Hotel, kicking off at 5.30 pm with support from Two Feet of Tofu.

Entry is by gold coin donation, food will be available, as well as free face painting for the kids. For more information please contact the Elphinstone pub on 03 5473 3199 or Beth on 0431 219980.

## 25 Years of Landcare - Let's meet again

To celebrate the successes of our volunteers and reflect on years gone by you are cordially invited to the North Central 25 Years of Landcare event.



Catch up with old friends and listen to guest speaker Shanaka Fernando (business entrepreneur of 'Lentil as Anything', a-pay-as-you-feel cafe in Melbourne). Also enjoy the mesmerising sounds of Kinja, local violin and didgeridoo duo.

**When:** Friday 25 November 2011  
**Time:** 6pm - 9 pm  
**Where:** Bress Winery  
3894 Calder Hwy, Harcourt VIC  
**Dress:** Smart Casual with a touch of Green  
**RSVP:** Friday 18 November 2011.  
*RSVP is essential, please contact North Central CMA reception on 03 5448 7124.*

Numbers are limited due to the venue's capacity, so make sure you book in early.

We look forward to celebrating 25 years of volunteerism that continues to benefit our community and our environment, for the enjoyment of generations to come.

This event is proudly supported by:

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## COURSES & RESOURCES

### What Eucalypt is that?

Ever wondered what Eucalypts you have growing on your land? Or couldn't tell two trees apart from each other? Connecting Country can help.

In November, Connecting Country will be running a Eucalypt identification workshop in four locations across the Mount Alexander region. The sessions aim to provide participants with the skills needed to identify some of the common Eucalypt species to be found in the region, and to provide them with a greater understanding of the life history of this group of iconic local trees.

Presented by Greg Guy, a botanist and lecturer from Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE, there will be a classroom-based discussion on the biology and ecology of our local Eucalypts, with a special emphasis on our rare and endangered species. This will be followed by a 'walk and talk' session to identify some local Eucalypts in their natural habitat. Participants will be provided with an identification workbook and also a copy of Leon Costermans 'Trees of Victoria and Adjoining Areas 6<sup>th</sup> Edition Field Guide'.

The workshops, funded through the Bjarne K Dahl Trust, are to be held from 1 pm – 5 pm at:

**Maldon – Sunday 6 November**

**Castlemaine – Sunday 13 November**

**Sutton Grange – Saturday 26 November**

**Newstead – Sunday 27 November**

Please note that the cost for the workshop is \$5 per person and afternoon tea will be provided.

For more information visit [www.connectingcountry.org.au](http://www.connectingcountry.org.au).

Bookings are essential as places are limited so be quick to reserve a spot! To reserve your place, contact [info@connectingcountry.org.au](mailto:info@connectingcountry.org.au) or call 03 5472 1594.

## FUNDING NEWS

### Box-Gum Grassy Woodlands grants now open

The North Central CMA is seeking landholders in the mid-Loddon Catchment area (that's roughly from Serpentine to Ravenswood) interested in caring for Grey Box, Yellow Box or White Box Grassy Woodlands on their properties under the Box-Gum Grassy Woodlands project.

Financial assistance is available through a devolved grants program for on-ground works of fencing and revegetation on private land.

Revegetation works may include vegetation corridors to link remnant areas or the enhancement of existing vegetation.

**Applications close on 8 November.**

For more information contact Robyn McKay on 03 5448 7124 or see the notice board on the North Central CMA website [www.nccma.vic.gov.au/](http://www.nccma.vic.gov.au/) to download identification information or a copy of the guidelines and application form.

### Bjarne K Dahl Trust grants now open

The Bjarne K Dahl Trusts Small Grants Program is currently calling for applications of up to \$15,000. The principal purpose of this program is the protection and enhancement of Eucalypts as a significant aspect of the natural environment and the provision of information or education about Eucalypts.

Through small grants the Trust will provide support to the community for the undertaking of Eucalyptus education, promotion, cultivation, establishment and conservation.

Grants are capped at \$15,000 and are generally made for up to a 12-month period - timeframes may be flexible depending on grant seeker's needs and the approval of the Board of Managing Trustees.

The requested amount may be part of a project budget of any size - but for projects where only part of the budget is requested, the Trustees may decide to request proof that other funds have been secured before funding is released.

**Applications close 4 November 2011.**

Further information can be found on their website <http://dahltrust.org.au/grants> or contact 03 8648 6510.

### Communities for Nature Grants are now open

The first round of the Communities for Nature Grants is now open. The Communities for Nature Grants is a new \$20 million program over four years, funded by the Victorian State Government in fulfilment of an election promise regarding environmental grants for community groups.

Communities for Nature grants are for local community groups and organisations looking to improve their natural environment and conserve local biodiversity values. Activities that will be funded include biodiversity and habitat preservation, revegetation, cleaning up of waterways and control of pests and weeds.

This year, two streams of funding are being offered; small grants of up to \$10,000 and large grants for \$10,000 to \$150,000.

For more information on the assessment criteria and application process, visit [www.dse.vic.gov.au/communitiesfornature](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/communitiesfornature) or contact the Grants Information Line on 1300 366 356.

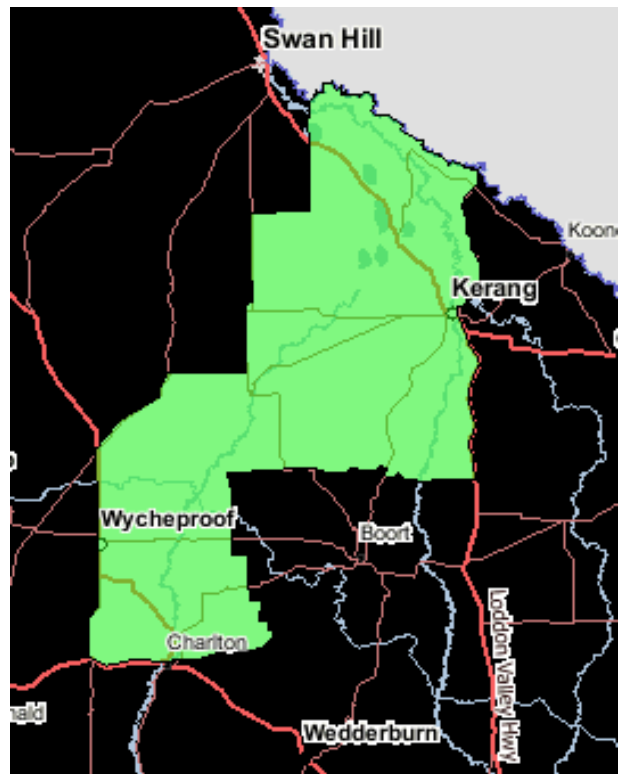
**Applications close on Monday 19 December 2011.**

### BushTender Avoca Plains - Expressions of Interest Now Open

BushTender allows landholders to nominate their own price in a competitive tender in return for providing services to better protect and improve their native vegetation.

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.

The price is submitted as a bid. Successful landholders receive periodic payments under management agreements for the five year period.



All landholders who register an expression of interest will be contacted by the BushTender Regional Implementation Manager to arrange an obligation-free site visit. The purpose of the site visit is to assess the significance and quality of the native vegetation on the property and discuss potential management commitments with the landholder. The field officer will help the landholder prepare an agreed management plan as the basis of the landholders bid.

BushTender benefits the landholder, the environment and the Victorian public.

Landholders across the area covering the lower reaches of the Avoca and Loddon Rivers can register for BushTender by calling the Department of Sustainability and Environment's Customer Service Centre on 136 186 or email [customer.service@dse.vic.gov.au](mailto:customer.service@dse.vic.gov.au).