

North Central chat

APRIL 2017

A message from the Regional Landcare Coordinator

Hi everyone,

What a wonderful collaborative month I've had. During March, Goulburn Broken and North Central CMA's held the inaugural 'Northern Rivers Round-up' in Nagambie. The two-day event was a networking and professional development workshop for the local Landcare Facilitators.

The facilitators came together to share learnings of the job, resources and ideas for Landcare now and into the future. The group also engaged with facilitation and event development specialist Andrew Huffer. Andrew delivered sessions looking at cross-generational engagement (Gen Z through to Traditionalists) and designing effective events.

There was plenty of time for networking and regional project discussions as well as long term, strategic ideas including rebranding Landcare ("We're more than tree planters"), marketing the Landcare brand on sustainably grown produce ("Think a Landcare 'heart tick' type campaign") and offsets for land under the management of Landcare members and groups. That certainly gets you thinking!

In early March, Catchment Restoration Officer Emma Wolters and I toured the Campaspe River with Filipino Rotary Group Vocational Exchange participant Mafe Dapito. Mafe works with Pure Earth, a company in the Philippines where she collects water pollutant data for Government agencies. After work chats were out of the way, we took great delight in sharing recipes, volcano experiences, exotic fauna of the Philippines and discussing the cultural landscapes of our countries. It was wonderful to have Mafe out in the field and she remarked on just how "cute and amazing" squirrel gliders are.

Whilst recipients of 2016-17 Community Grant funding are busily implementing their projects, it is

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time for all Landcare groups to start thinking about submissions for the 2017-18 program. Grants will again be submitted and assessed online through SmartyGrants and the guidelines and online process remain relatively unchanged.

Applicants are encouraged to begin thinking about their projects purpose, budget and land manager approvals, in preparation for the application period, likely to open in May 2017. All groups will be made aware when applications open, and you can read more about the upcoming Community Grants program in the News section,

Enjoy the read,

Tess Grieves

Regional Landcare Coordinator

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News...

2017-18 Community Grants

The North Central CMA's Community Grants program is likely to open in May 2017, so planning your projects now is a great idea.

The program will again be a competitive process combining streams of funding from the Australian Governments National Landcare Programme and Victorian Government's Victorian Landcare Grants program and Regional Riparian Action Plan.

Priorities and application guidance remain consistent with previous years; Landcare networks, groups and individual landholders are welcome to submit applications that are in line with eligible land management and engagement activities.

Agricultural landscape improvements, riparian restoration, biodiversity and threatened species protection and community engagement initiatives remain key priorities for the grants program.

If I may be so bold as to provide advice from assessing applications in recent years, some key tips are:

- **Be project ready:** Know your projects purpose, the partners you need to involve, approvals you need and how will the project will generate on-ground and community benefits.
- **Demonstrate the project is technically feasible:** Explain why you're doing things in a certain way e.g., why have you chosen a specific method of weed control? What type and ratio of chemical will you use? What advice/experience have you sought for your revegetation techniques? Why will your group use a contractor over member labour? What contingencies do you have in place to reduce the likelihood of failure?
- **Clearly define your budget and costs:** Be explicit and define the quantity of your proposed works. Detail the specific costs and your in-kind contribution within the budget. *A grant that rounds to \$10,000 is typically not accurately costed.*

I am on-hand throughout the application period to visit Landcare networks and groups to assist as many groups as possible. I will be available on the phone and via email, so please seek support early.

K5 has hit the airwaves

The K5 Calici virus strain is hitting rabbits across the country, slowly but surely.

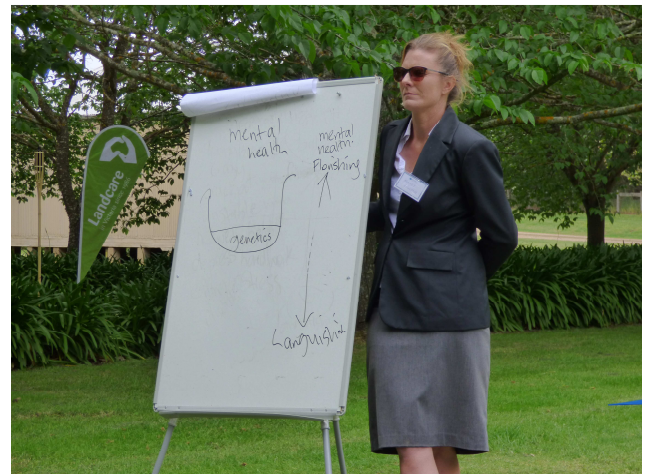
Daily inspections of Rabbit Scan demonstrate where the disease is currently spreading, with 11 confirmed outbreaks in Victoria as of March 29th.

Landholders have been reporting that whilst they have released the virus, they have not seen any dead bunnies on the surface so it is worth checking in on their burrows if possible, to access your free virus bomb and share with your neighbours.

The virus can remain viable within the rabbit carcass for several weeks, dropping them around to your neighbours might seem a bit grim, but I am getting plenty of calls from landholders willing and wanting to spread the virus around their patch.

Keep up to date using [Rabbit Scan](#), and get your conventional control options in place as soon as practical once the virus arrives.

Farewell to Mandy Coulson



It is with much sadness that that Mandy Coulson is leaving the North Central CMA as Regional Landcare Facilitator.

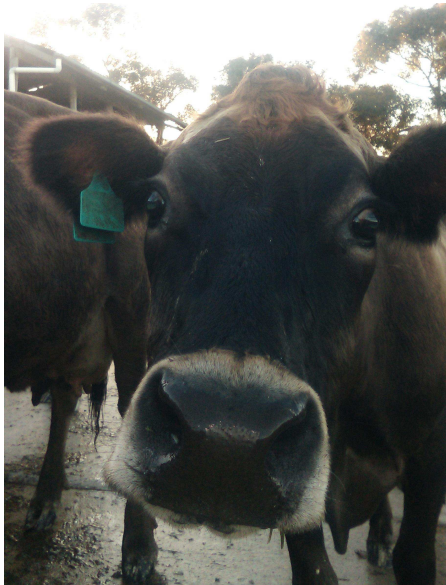
Mandy joined us in 2015, and has made a number of significant contributions to the role, the organisation and the region. Key outcomes include; developing the Soils Guide and presenting it at the Australian New Zealand Soils Conference, contributions supporting numerous projects and delivering her project activities in a partnership and feedback driven manner, to a high standard.

Mandy was integral to advancing the Inspiring



Women in Agriculture course and delivering the Action on the Ground partnership project.

The lure of a job down the road from her dairy farm in Tongala was too good to resist and Mandy is off to work as an agronomist and researcher for SLTEC Fertilizers.



We wish Mandy all the best for her future in Sustainable Agriculture in our region and beyond, she will certainly be missed.



Above: A blackwood plant in Huntly Fire Brigade's fire ready demonstration garden with its explanatory sign.

Right: Sandy Young (Bendigo and District Community Enterprise), Trevor Strauch (Huntly Fire Brigade), and Nicole Howie (Bendigo Northern Landcare Group) inspect the fire resistant demonstration garden.

FIRE READY DEMONSTRATION NATIVE GARDEN AT HUNTLY

Northern Bendigo Landcare Group (NBLG) and Huntly Fire Brigade have collaborated on an innovative project, developing a demonstration garden with fire resistant and fire retardant native plants to complement the new Huntly Fire Station. The plants in the demonstration garden are rated as fire resistant or fire retardant by the Australian Plants Society (Victoria).

The demonstration garden was developed as a community initiative, with Northern Bendigo Landcare Group assisting with the selection of plant species and establishment of the garden.

Firefighter Trevor Strauch coordinated the project for the Brigade and said "all plants in the demonstration garden are indigenous to the Bendigo area, and it provides people with an opportunity to view and compare fire ready plants".

Fire resistant plants are those that will not burn in the face of continued flame, while fire retardant plants are those that will not burn in the first pass of flame, but which may burn once they dry out.

Signs with photos clearly identify the plants, their common and botanical names, their growth habit and growing requirements, and their fire rating.

NBLG secretary Nicole Howie said "we are always trying to think outside the square and generate creative ways to raise awareness of indigenous vegetation and encourage connections between people and their local environment. This project was an ideal chance to do both, as well as a building positive relationship with another community group."

The demonstration garden is readily accessible, and will allow residents to see fire resistant and fire retardant plants growing, and to work out which plants may be suitable for their own gardens.

Huntly Fire Brigade's fire ready demonstration garden is located in Buckley's Lane, Huntly and is open all hours.





Wax Garden revived

The North Central CMA Drought Employment Program crew has been working with the St Arnaud Field Naturalists and Dja Dja Wurrung Rangers to remove historical and age damaged fencing and installing replacement fencing for the St Arnaud “Wax Garden” site.

Anne Hughes from the St Arnaud Field Naturalists is passionate about protecting the native vegetation of this site, saying, “The Field Nats have the passion and the drive but most group members are in an older age bracket and physically completing the on ground works such as fencing is quite difficult”. The North Central CMA Drought Crew has enjoyed being able to assist with these type of local projects.

This is the second fencing project the Drought Employment Crew has assisted the St Arnaud Field Naturalists, previously completing the Grey Grass Tree Recovery Project which was a priority site visited during the CMA’s ‘30 years of Landcare’ celebration event.



Upon completion, Anne noted how professional and competent the work crew is and made note of how much fun they had together. Anne now affectionately refers to the Drought Employment Crew as her A team!

The landscape architect with a Landcare ethos

Landcare enthusiast, Rob Youl passed on an article that was published recently in the Sydney Morning Herald featuring landscape architect Thomas Woltz and his principle that horticulture can help save our natural and agricultural systems.

The fulfilment that comes with being connected to a place through familiarity with its plants is echoed by Woltz, who says in the article, “I think it’s really important to our emotional wellbeing to have contact with plants. The more dense and alienating our cities become, the more we crave and need that contact with horticulture.”

Read the full article at:

<http://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/home/thomas-woltz-landscape-architect-on-how-horticulture-might-just-save-the-world-20170310-quvoiw.html>

Fox and wild dog bounty resumes

Agriculture Victoria collection teams are back on the road with the Victorian Fox and Wild Dog Bounty resuming.

This program rewards eligible Victorian hunters with a \$10 bounty reward for each fox killed, and \$120 bounty for each wild dog killed, subject to the Victorian Fox and Wild Dog Bounty Terms and Conditions.

For full details on collection times and locations, terms and conditions and frequently asked questions, please visit the [website](#) or call 136 186.

Kooyoora Connections project update

The North Central CMA’s Kooyoora Connections project is supporting local landholders and community groups to improve the condition and increase the area of native vegetation between Kooyoora State Park, Wychitella and Mount Korong Nature Conservation Reserves.

The [project](#) has a focus on building landscape resilience and connectivity by protecting, improving and extending native vegetation, including three nationally significant *EPBC Act* listed ecological vegetation communities:

- Buloke woodlands
- Yellow box / Blakely’s red gum / white box woodlands

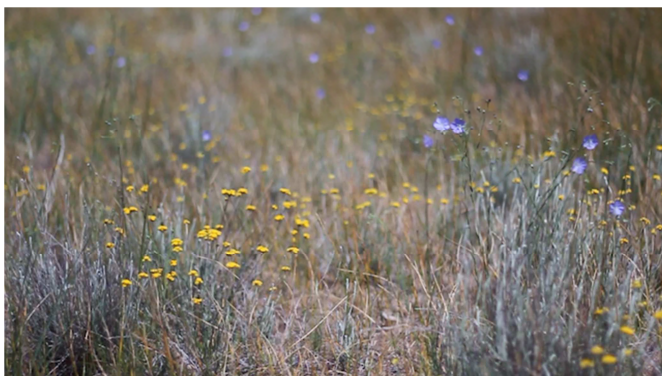


- Grey box woodlands

This area is recognised as a biodiversity hotspot. Improving connections between these areas will improve available habitat for threatened species, such as the malleefowl

Project achievements to date; completed 1 July 2013 to 28 February 2017

- Four TfN conservation covenants established, totalling 372 hectares.
- One cultural heritage assessment undertaken.
- 627 participants attended 13 community engagement events.
- 100 participants attended 10 working group meetings.
- 14.2 kilometres of fencing has been completed, protecting 483 hectares of vegetation from stock grazing.
- 417 foxes have been killed in an ongoing baiting program across the Wychitella NCR
- 275 yellow-lip spider orchid's successfully established in the wild*.
- Mapping, surveys, and site selection undertaken for planned reintroductions of Robust Greenhood and Candy Spider Orchid*.
- 243 hectares of revegetation completed over six sites with 1,390 seedlings planted and 170 kilograms of seed sown.
- 1,380 hectares of priority weed control (Wheel Cactus and African Lovegrass).



The project continues through to 30 June 2018 through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme.



Hello everyone,

I hope you are enjoying this edition of the North Central Chat as you catch up on all the wonderful things happening around the catchment.

We have had a great time in March with lots of events on; we have run three River Detectives professional development training workshops with teachers and volunteers from across the region. The focus for this PD was 'water science' activities, helping teachers understand the principles behind monitoring water quality and understanding what the measurements mean. We have received some great feedback from schools about the training and the program and we are excited about the journey ahead.

We have also been out and about chasing waterbugs! Last week we hosted a whole bunch of waterbug workshops across the region in partnership with Bendigo TAFE and the Native Fish Recovery Project. Over 50 people registered in the workshops and they are now well on their way to receiving accreditation for the bugs they have been able to identify.

In April I will be meeting up with Anne and Marylin from Castlemaine Landcare Group. The aim is to undertake an assessment along Forest Creek using the old Waterwatch Habitat Assessment methodology. We will be testing what still works and if things need to change within the assessment tool. We will also be looking at methods for establishing photopoints at a water quality monitoring sites to complement our monitoring activities.

If this is something you would be interested in learning more about, please feel free to come along and join us for the day, details below.

What's happening in April?

Habitat Assessment Training - TRIAL

When: Wednesday 5th April 2017

Time: 10.30am – 2.30pm

Where: Castlemaine, IGA Car Park, Forest Street, Castlemaine.



Cass Davis

Regional Waterwatch Coordinator
North Central Catchment Management
Authority
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Email: cass.davis@nccma.vic.gov.au

River Detectives state-wide program

Wow what a busy month it was! The new River Detectives website is now live – please jump on and check www.riverdetectives.net.au.

You will be able to see ‘what is happening’, explore the resource river bank (which will be added to in coming weeks and months) and the billabong banter chat forum. To access other aspects of the website you will need to be participating in the program (to record data, explore activities and the state interactive map).

All of the regions are starting to work with teachers, to help guide them in using their water quality monitoring kit that they have borrowed for the year. These sessions have been very positive and we are lucky to have many enthusiastic teachers across the state.

We have over 100 schools planning to monitor a local waterway this year, meaning 1000s of students learning more about river health and building a connection with their local waterway. We will continue to support these schools with more online resources.

As part of the program we have Landcare and community members working with schools to help them engage with their waterway. If you are interested in supporting a local school, please contact us to find out if there is group monitoring near you that you could connect with.

Any questions about the state-wide project can be directed to sophie.pritchard@nccma.vic.gov.au



Teachers learning how to use the equipment in their water quality testing kits. Image: Deirdre Murphy

Bugging around!

Over the past week, I have been just about everywhere with Peter Rose, project officer for the Native Fish Recovery Project (NFRP) and John Gooderham, *The Waterbug Company*.

We met with students from Bendigo TAFE on the Loddon River and in the following session, we meet with some wonderful community volunteers who are working with Peter Rose on NFRP at Gunbower. Over the weekend we had the pleasure of meeting with another group of enthusiastic Waterwatch volunteers and staff from North East CMA who all jumped on a bus and headed off on an adventure to Werribee Gorge.



The Waterbug Company in partnership with Waterwatch is currently training volunteers in the Agreed Level Taxonomy (ALT) method; ‘this is a way to assess river health without microscopes, laboratories, jargonor even scientists’ said Mr Gooderham.

The aim of the waterbug monitoring program in north central Victoria is to build on the North Central Waterwatch’s Citizen Science Program. By engaging with community volunteers and training them to undertake important aquatic ecological monitoring of waterways within the region, we can build on our current knowledge of river and streams and use this data to help make important waterway management decisions whilst building a database for future research.

John provided the ALT accredited training to participants so they can gain an insight into the wonderful world of waterbugs. Participants learnt how to collect and identify waterbugs in the field.



By participating in a series of ALT Waterbug workshops, participants are accredited for the data they collect. This process for accreditation provides credibility to the data, so that it can be used widely and with confidence. After each workshop, participants are assigned a colour to represent their identification level.

ALT accreditation levels:

Colour	Use	Description of skill
Yellow	Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can identify all habitats present Can sample correctly and safely Can correctly pick bugs and use the ALT key
Brown	Data collection in urban environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can identify all taxa common to their urban waterway Will always clarify unknown taxa before recording its presence
Orange	Basic data collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can identify damaged or immature taxa Can identify stoneflies, mayflies and caddisflies with 80% accuracy Can identify 60% of all taxa collected correctly
Green	Data collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can identify all taxa to order level without assistance Can identify 80% of all taxa collected correctly
Blue	Data collection and assisting others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can identify 100% of taxa correctly (minimum 20 taxa collected).
Black	Data collection and training others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has maintained Blue level for three consecutive assessments

River Detectives in North Central!

We have been busy meeting teachers from across the region who are using the water quality monitoring kit, river detective resources and preparing to head out to monitor their local waterway.

It was great to meet lots of new teachers and have new schools engaging with their local waterway. Thanks to Boort District P-12 College and Doxa Youth Camp for hosting the sessions and to all the teachers who came along.

We now have 30 schools who are participating in the program and we are looking forward to them sharing information about the health of their local waterway and other learnings along the journey through the new version of the River Detectives website.

FUN FACT:

The *Micronecta scoltzi* (only 2mm) also known as the lesser water boatman is the loudest animal on earth!

This tiny little creature of the underwater world is known to make sounds of up to 99.2 decibels - wow that's loud (relative to its body size)! In comparison, it could be described as sitting in the front row listening to a very loud orchestra!



The lesser water boatman makes this sound by rubbing his penis against its abdomen in a process known as "stridulation". Researchers say the song is a courtship display performed to attract a mate.

Events...

Cultural heritage & geology

The North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) invites the community along to an informative event about the Aboriginal cultural heritage and geology of the Redesdale area.



Presentations from Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation and geologist Dr Julian Hollis will captivate the audience.

When: Wednesday 26 April 2017, 3.30pm – 5pm

Where: Redesdale Hall, Kyneton-Redesdale Road, Redesdale

RSVP: To register before Friday 21 April go to <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/culturalheritage-geology-tickets-33108886571> or call the North Central CMA on (03) 5448 7124.

Cultural heritage & rivers

The North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) invites the community along to an informative event about the Campaspe River and the Aboriginal cultural heritage of the area.

Guest presenters will be sure to captivate the audience in an informative afternoon of presentations.

- Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation
- Dr Ian Rutherford, geomorphologist
- Darren White, North Central CMA Environmental Flows Project Manager

When: Thursday 27 April 2017, 4.30pm-6pm

Where: Rochester Racecourse Recreation Reserve, corner of Echuca Rd and Diggora Rd Rochester

RSVP: To register before Friday 21 April go to <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/culturalheritage-rivers-tickets-33108966811> or call the North Central CMA on (03) 5448 7124.

Protect your patch- Free forum

Do you own a bush block? Come along to a free information night and find out about financial incentives and support available to help protect native vegetation on your property.

Macedon Rangers Shire has engaged speakers from Trust for Nature, Land for Wildlife and the Victorian Government's Native Vegetation Offsets Department.

When: Tuesday 23 May 2017, 7pm-8.30pm

Where: Kyneton Mechanics Institute, 81 Mollison Street, Kyneton

RSVP: To book your place at this free forum visit www.mrsc.vic.gov.au/environment-events or call 5421 9660.



We are calling for the wonderful women of the western area of our catchment to nominate a location for the 2017 Chicks in the Sticks event.

Rural settings make the perfect backdrop for this event; think woolsheds, vineyards, historic farms & homesteads, wetlands, woodlands... it's up to you!

If you know a unique location or are wishing to assist with bringing this event to your local area, email your suggestions through to me tess.grieves@nccma.vic.gov.au

Courses and resources...

Young Farmer Farm Business Boot Camps are back!

Agriculture Victoria, with Meat and Livestock Australia and Australian Wool Innovation, is pleased to present the Young Farmer Farm Business Boot Camps, an exciting three-day program for young farmers or producers new to farming.

Delivered at various locations across Victoria, the Young Farmer Farm Business Boot Camps will assist producers to understand and manage business risk, develop a business plan to grow their business and to have confidence that there is a future in agriculture for them.

The total cost of program is \$100 per business, including meals and course materials.



Program locations are as follows:

Location	Session 1 <i>'What's driving your farm's profit?'</i>	Session 2 <i>"Farming – It's Business"</i>	Session 3 <i>"Farming – towards tomorrow"</i>
Hamilton DEDJTR, 915 Mt Napier Road, Hamilton	26 th April 10 am - 4 pm	9 th May 8.30 am - 5 pm	10 th May 8.30 am - 5 pm
Bairnsdale DELWP, 574 Main Street Bairnsdale	27 th April 10 am - 4 pm	16 th May 8.30 am - 5 pm	17 th May 8.30 am - 5 pm
Benalla Race Club, 5865 Midland Highway Benalla	3 rd May 10 am - 4 pm	23 rd May 8.30 am - 5 pm	24 th May 8.30 am - 5 pm
CFA Goldfields Group HQ, 82 Alma Street, Maryborough	1 st June 10 am - 4 pm	13 th June 8.30 am - 5 pm	14 th June 8.30 am - 5 pm
Horsham DEDJTR, 110 Natimuk Road, Horsham	14 th June 10 am - 4 pm	20 th June 8.30 am - 5 pm	21 st June 8.30 am - 5 pm



The National Carp Control Plan Factsheet

A National Carp Control Plan (NCCP) is being prepared to explore the release of the carp virus cyprinid herpesvirus-3, or CyHV-3.

The Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) is leading the \$15 million planning process, on behalf of the Australian Government, over two years.

The new factsheet is a wonderful resource to share around your community groups to increase understanding of the scale of the issue, the virus itself and the national response plan.

Contact the CMA for a PDF copy or visit the FRDC website for more information:
<http://frdc.com.au/carp/Pages/default.aspx>



For more information and to register go to www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/bootcamp or contact Sarah Wallis, on (03) 5761 1573 or sarah.wallis@ecodev.vic.gov.au

Interpretation Australia

The IA National Conference 2017 will be a conference with a difference, one that will travel in its venues from Launceston to Hobart via key natural and cultural heritage places throughout Tasmania!

Theme: "Travelling Stories: connecting people and landscapes" aims to pull folk together with the ultimate aim of creating a greater understanding for all of the environments in which we live.

When: Early-mid October 2017

Dates and publish the conference program in the next few weeks.

[Interpretation Australia](#) members receive discounted registration, as well as ongoing professional development, networking and resource benefits..



Landcare Gateway & Social media

Would you like to know more about what is happening with your Landcare peers across the state?

For those of you on social media, you can keep up to date with statewide Landcare events and information via the Landcare Victoria Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/landcarevictoria/>

I continue to receive weekly enquiries from non-landcarers asking, "Where is my local group?", so I encourage you to check out your gateway page to ensure information is active and up to date.

You never know who is out there looking to enjoy Landcare! <https://www.landcarevic.org.au/>

Love the Loddon these school holidays!

The Bendigo Advertiser recently promoted the new series of canoe trails created for locals and visitors to explore the natural beauty and history of the Loddon Shire's waterways.

Three canoe trails have been created for the Loddon River - at Laanecoorie, Serpentine and Bridgewater - and one on the Serpentine Creek at Durham Ox.



Students from Bendigo's La Trobe University have worked to develop the self-guided trails, which will have signage installed along the route and an interactive guide users can download to their phones or print out.

Each trail offers people a unique insight into points of interest along the waterways, allowing paddlers to take a self-guided tour on their own.

Signage for the trails is being installed this week and the project is expected to be complete by May.

The trails have been created in a joint project by La Trobe University, the Loddon Shire, Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation and the state government.

Why not enjoy this autumn weather on the water and head out along the Loddon River, or the stunning Serpentine Creek these school holidays.

Funding opportunities...

The Farming Together program is a nationwide campaign for primary producers and processors to collaborate and claim marketplace power.

Australian Government funding is helping agricultural groups value-add, secure premium pricing, scale-up production, attract capital investment, earn new markets or secure lower input costs. All farmers who register receive one-on-one expert advice to discuss their opportunities and appetite to create a successful collaborative group. This could be either as a structured co-operative, as a collective bargaining entity or as a less-formal collaborative group.

Funding opportunities are regularly updated through the Farming Together website and monthly newsletter online at: www.farmingtogether.com.au

Have a safe and happy Easter break



If you are anything like me, you may find yourself quite partial to some tasty treats this time of year.

The Save the Bilby fund is again encouraging the purchase of Easter Bilbies, available Australia-wide. Look for the green swing tag on the Easter range that indicates they donate to Save the Bilby.