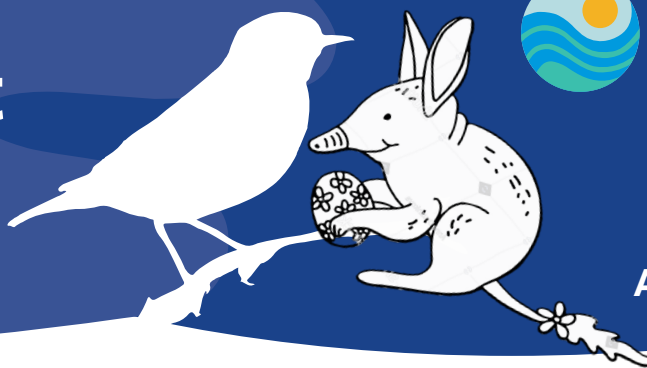


# North Central Chat

Keeping you up to date with all the Landcare and Waterwatch news



April 2022

## A message from the Regional Landcare Coordinator

Hi everyone,

March was a busy month, filled with landcare meetings, field days, International Women's Day celebrations, and rounded out with a stall at the fabulous Bendigo Sustainability Festival - read more about that event in the News section.

I trust many of our readers have been busy completing the new Landcare Victoria Inc. (LVI) online Member Census. This data is incredibly valuable for LVI to enable support for member groups with insurance and other services. Furthermore, nominations for the Landcare Victoria Inc. Board and Members Council positions are now open. Please take a look at the details in the News section and think about how you could provide leadership and be a voice for our regional Landcare community.

As cropping paddocks are being prepared for sowing, DELWP and Agriculture Victoria have shared some valuable resources for farmers and landholders during this time about the protection of paddock trees and management of stubble burning. A Stubble Burning Fact Sheet can be found on the DELWP website [Farming and Native Vegetation Portal \(environment.vic.gov.au\)](http://environment.vic.gov.au). Further information is also available on the Department of Agriculture website: [Managing stubble \(agriculture.vic.gov.au\)](http://agriculture.vic.gov.au)

It is of course autumn, which means it's the perfect time to head to the south of the catchment for the [2022 Autumn Festival](#). An initiative of the Macedon Ranges Visitor Economy Strategy, the festival supports and showcases local producers, creatives and businesses, and encourages community and visitors to engage in the diversity of experiences to be had across the shire. One thing I know I am looking forward to is the Autumn Pie and Tart Trail- what more needs to be said!

At the end of the month, I am co-hosting the 'Cascade Connections' Landcare Facilitators event in Wangaratta. It's a joy to be planning the final details of the event



Landcare and Waterwatch teamed up to host the North Central CMA stall at the 2022 Bendigo Sustainability Festival on Sunday 27 March.

which supports peer-to-peer learning and professional development for landcare support staff.

Finally, a small request. If you receive the Chat via the post, and would prefer it via email, please get in contact so we can switch over your mailing list preferences and save some paper.

Have a very safe and happy Easter with your family and friends.

Enjoy the read,

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Connecting rivers, landscapes, people

The North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) acknowledges Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the region, their rich cultures, spiritual connection to Country.

[www.nccma.vic.gov.au](http://www.nccma.vic.gov.au)



## News...

### Nominations now open – Landcare Victoria Inc Board and Members Council positions

**Nominations for the Landcare Victoria Inc. Board and Members Council positions are now open. To view eligibility for each role, nomination forms and the list of Voting Delegates, please visit the [Victorian Landcare Gateway](#).**

The Landcare Victoria Inc. Board is responsible for overseeing and steering the organisation by setting strategic direction and providing governance. We are also seeking nominations for the Members Council which represents community Landcare in Victoria, advising on policy and Landcare issues and assisting two-way communication between Landcare Victoria Inc. and community Landcare.

**Nomination forms must be completed and sent to Landcare Victoria Inc. by 5pm, Friday 8 April 2022.**

Please email completed forms to [info@lvi.org.au](mailto:info@lvi.org.au) or post to: Landcare Victoria Inc. PO BOX 509 Flinders Lane VIC 8009.

In light of the nomination process, I wish to acknowledge and thank the current representatives in our region for the contribution they have made to supporting community Landcare.

- Paul Foreman (Board Dep. Chair - Partnerships)
- Danny Pettingill (Board Professional Landcarer rep.)
- John Rowlands - Ullina Landcare Group
- Christine Kilmartin - Castlemaine Landcare Group
- Sandra Nichols- Clunes Landcare & Waterways Group

To understand more about Landcare Victoria Inc. and their role in supporting Landcare, have a read of this strategic plan: [Landcare Victoria Strategic Plan 2021-2024](#)

## River TOur 2022

Article by Angela Gladman, North Central CMA

**On 8 March 2022, the fifth River TOur event for Traditional Owners along the Campaspe River was coordinated by the North Central CMA with input from the groups and previous participants.**

The event was jointly funded by three Victorian Government funded projects, including Caring for the Campaspe, Campaspe Environmental Water Reserve and the Reconciliation Action Plan.

Forty-two people in total, including 27 Traditional Owners attended the one day event, including participants from Taungurung, Yorta Yorta, Dja Dja Wurrung, Barapa Barapa, Wamba Wemba and other groups. The purpose of tday was to share knowledge to better understand the cultural landscape and river management while getting to know each other with some fun along the way.

The day began with a Dja Dja Wurrung Welcome to Country and Smoking ceremony performed by Aunty Marilyn Nicholls at the Epsom accommodation. The group then travelled to the Axedale River Reserve on Dja Dja Wurrung Country to learn about how the river flows are managed for environmental outcomes and the growing role and opportunities Traditional Owners have in the cultural water space.



Natural resource management work crew members from Taungurung (Biik Environmental) and Dja Dja Wurrung (Djandak) meeting up on the River TOur

Moving downstream on to Taungurung Country, Uncle Corrie Leatham provided a Welcome to Country and

Smoking ceremony and shared his experience working with Baan Ganalina (Taungurung Water Advisory Group). The participants then went paddling along a long, deep stretch of the river, which was a great way to connect with the water and each other - despite the strong winds!

After lunch including traditional foods provided by Myrnong Mummas, the North Central CMA spoke about a couple of Campaspe River projects that have or will continue to work closely with Traditional Owners to plan, deliver and monitor the outcomes of the Caring for the Campaspe project and Mid Murray Fish Recovery Plan. The group spent a while longer on the riverbanks capturing their observations about the health of the river and its cultural values led by Uncle Corrie Leatham as an introduction to Aboriginal Waterway Assessments.

The group then moved to the Strathallan Glider Sanctuary on Yorta Yorta Country where Neil Morris performed a Welcome to Country and Smoking ceremony and shared his passion for culture and his Country. Strathallan Family Landcare shared their captively bred Squirrel Glider project and participants could sneak a peek at the nocturnal animals. After returning to Epsom, a smaller group stayed for an evening meal and wildlife talk that included handling snakes, lizards, crocodiles, owls and possums.

Kelly Hamill, Taungurung Ranger with Parks Victoria at Mansfield said, *"I had a great time, I learnt so much and it was such a great group of people. Oh and the food was really good especially the Murnong Mummas lunch, their (wattle seed) biscuits, and the hot chocolates. I also loved the three Welcome to Country ceremonies. They were all so different, and I learnt a lot from each of them. So much of the day I will remember for a long time to come if not forever. Thank you again. Ngun godjin."*



## Evaluating revegetation outcomes through community-based monitoring

**In case you missed it, given we were all a little preoccupied in September 2020, ARI published a technical report on the outcomes of a project designed to gain a better understanding of community-based revegetation outcomes across Victoria**

Federal and state government funding go towards revegetation actions in Victoria, but little is known about the effectiveness of these actions or the biodiversity outcomes that result from restoring degraded landscapes. This project worked with community groups to monitor revegetated areas to obtain a better understanding of the effectiveness of restoration actions in Victoria.

Lead author Sasha Jellinek writes, "In Phase 1 of the project (June 2018 - June 2019), we contacted a number of CMAs and Landcare Groups, including non-government organisations such as Bush Heritage and Greening Australia, to understand where revegetation activities were being undertaken across the state and by which groups. We then developed a draft monitoring protocol and commenced revegetation monitoring on 11 sites around the state. This trial showed that the monitoring method adequately surveyed plant survival and was easily used by regional staff. We also tested if there was a difference between the results that different surveyors provided and found that results did not differ significantly (ARI staff & regional/Landcare staff).

"Initial results indicated that planting success varied across the state and between species. It was then determined that more sites (50 - 100) were needed to adequately test the monitoring method. Phase 2 of the project started in July 2019 and was extended to May 2020. This report outlines the outcomes of the second phase of that project"

Another worthwhile study to read when time permits, concluding that "community groups need to be supported in undertaking revegetation monitoring through funding and the development of a cloud-based database and associated app"

Access the report via: [ARI-Technical-Report-321-Evaluating-revegetation-outcomes-through-community-based-monitoring.pdf](#)

## A Healthy Coliban Catchment project at Tylden School

Article by Tylden Landcare President Brendan Smith

### Tylden Primary School grade six and prep students recently participated in a Tylden Landcare program that involves the school improving the health of the Coliban River catchment.

This part of the project is to grow indigenous plants for revegetation along the Little Coliban River during 2022. The Healthy Coliban Catchment rehabilitation program is supported by the North Central CMA, Coliban Water and the Victorian Government's Landcare Program.

With the help of school staff and Tylden Landcare Group, children from the school spent time "picking out" small plants from seedling trays and placing them into forestry tubes. The plants will then be kept for growing on before planting along the river in 2022.

James Dobson of Tylden School said, "The students have propagated indigenous trees, shrubs and grasses. Seed has been collected from local indigenous plants because these are most suited to local environmental conditions. The students are very aware that indigenous vegetation offers food and homes for native animals, prevents soil erosion and keeps the air clean. These plants will be planted along the Little Coliban River as part of the Healthy Coliban Catchment program."



Gwendolynn, Imogen, Henry and Lachlan of Tylden Primary School propagating seedlings for the Little Coliban River.

Tylden Primary School students have played a role in Landcare projects over the years and these plants will be planted along the Little Coliban River. Plants included eucalypts, acacias, callistemons, leptospermums, bulbines and other species.

Tylden Landcare is working with landholders along the Little Coliban River and the North Central CMA to protect and rehabilitate the Coliban catchment area to ensure a healthy water supply for farms and all users of the Coliban water storage system. The Little Coliban is a tributary of the Coliban River and contributes water to the Upper Coliban Reservoir. A clean, healthy catchment ensures clean, healthy water for the future.

Along with Landcare, school staff assisted students on the day and said, "The senior students did a great job of passing on their plant propagation skills to the younger students!"

## Waterbugs, weeds and rascally rabbits

### Tania and I were thrilled to represent the North Central CMA on Sunday March at the annual Bendigo Sustainability Festival.

Organised by the Bendigo Sustainability Group, the festival aims to showcase the best sustainable living products, programs, goods, and services that are active in central Victoria. Stallholders showcase sustainable products, services, and initiatives that offer sustainable solutions for both businesses and householders.

Our stall site was on the lush lawn of the Botanical Gardens which was perfect viewing across to the main stage for the presentations throughout the day. To say we were thrilled to hear from Millie Ross is an understatement. Millie (from ABC's Gardening Australia TV program) highlighted how home gardeners make the most interesting gardens. While heavily designed and curated details in landscape architecture and 'art gardens' can be very interesting, it's neighbours, families and friends growing, sharing and eating from their gardens that is truly inspirational to Millie.

Throughout the day we welcomed more than 130 people through our stall, particularly families and younger children who relished in the waterbug ID activity.

Over on the regional Landcare table, I was asked most about rabbit management, weed control, and helping people to identify their local Landcare group.

Exhibiting near Parks Victoria, City of Greater Bendigo and the Biolinks Alliance was a fantastic networking and sharing opportunity. Congratulations to the local Landcare groups represented on the day. The displays on offer were informative and engaging. It was handy to have the groups onsite to send people who are new to the local area across to link up with Landcare.



## Communities Caring for Catchments

### Save the date – May the 4<sup>th</sup> be with you

North Central Waterwatch has been lucky enough to secure a state-funded community session with Waterbug guru John Gooderham. The exact details of the event are yet to be finalised however it's an opportunity for Waterwatch volunteers to connect face-to-face after a long COVID -interrupted hiatus, hone water quality monitoring skills and learn all about waterbugs from a fun, engaging and interesting presenter. Stay tuned for an e-mail with details over the coming weeks.



### A word on safety

You may have heard in the news that Japanese Encephalitis Virus (JEV) has been detected in northern Victorian. JEV is transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. More than 90% of JEV infections are asymptomatic and less than 1% develop clinical disease. The best prevention is to limit exposure to mosquitos when out sampling your waterway by:

- Wearing long, loose fitting clothes and
- Using effective mosquito repellents containing picaridin or DEET on all exposed skin.

For more information and up-to date health advice visit [Japanese encephalitis virus detected in Victoria | health.vic.gov.au](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/japanese-encephalitis-virus-detected-in-victoria)

**Duck hunting season opened 30 minutes** prior to sunrise on Saturday 19 March 2022 **and will close 30 minutes** after sunset on Sunday 26 June 2022.

While this will not impact the vast majority of Waterwatch sites, it is worth checking out the Game Management Authority's website for listings of those sites that will be

open this year and avoiding those locations during peak times (sunrise and sunset) or altogether.

[Duck - Game Management Authority \(gma.vic.gov.au\)](https://gma.vic.gov.au)

### What do you love most about your waterways?

**Kayaking with the family? A picnic by the river with your friends? Getting out to experience nature and wildlife?**

The Waterway Health team at DEWLP want to know how Victorians use their waterways and what they value about them. Your responses will help shape what the community's vision is for how waterways are managed – now and into the future.

The [My Victorian Waterway survey](#) is designed for any Victorian who visits a waterway. This survey will build on data collected in a previous My Victorian Waterway Survey (2009) to identify trends in waterway use, perceptions, and knowledge over time. This information helps to inform government policy, decision-making and investments.

The survey should take only 10 minutes to complete and will be open from 21 March to 17 April 2022 The survey is available in seven languages – English, Chinese, Hindi, Punjabi, Arabic and Vietnamese.

### Bumper year for River Detectives

Further to the March Chat, final registrations for the 2022 River Detectives program are now finalised and the school year is well-underway. We can report that a total of 39 schools across the North Central CMA region will be participating in the program and a whopping 96 throughout the state. Our team not only delivers this program for North Central CMA but facilitates the state-wide delivery of the program across four other regions.

Thank you to Project Officer Nicole Howie for all her dedicated work in setting up each school, distributing equipment and supporting educators throughout the state.

Hold on for a big 2022!



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**Water Storages Update**

Region	Water Storage	% full at	% full at
		24 Feb	25 Mar
Murray Storages	Dartmouth Dam	92.93	↑93.19
	Hume Dam	95	↓91
	Third Lake	NA	128.73
	Reedy/Middle Lk	97.16	↓95.58
	Kangaroo Lake	93.12	↑96.45
	Kow Swamp	86.94	↓83.80
	Lake Boga	85.18	↓82.04
	Lake Charm	93.37	↑96.60
Loddon Storages	Cairn Curran Res	63.64	↓58.62
	Tullaroop Res	71.27	↓65.50
	Laanecoorie Res	38.38	↑50.50
Bullarook Storages	Newlyn Res	85.44	↓77.75
	Hepburns Lagoon	77.10	↓71.25
Goulburn Storages	Lake Eildon	83.76	↓80.16
	Waranga Basin	61.12	↓47.22
Campaspe	Lake Eppalock	51.79	↓49.97
Coliban Water Storages	Upper Coliban Res	92.40	↓91.90
	Lauriston Res	92.90	↓89.70
	Malmsbury Res	47.50	↓34.80

[www.g-mwater.com.au/water-resources/catchments/storage-levels](http://www.g-mwater.com.au/water-resources/catchments/storage-levels)  
[www.coliban.com.au/about-us/our-reservoirs](http://www.coliban.com.au/about-us/our-reservoirs)

**Upcoming Events and Special Days**

April	
World Heritage Day	18 Apr
Earth Day	22 Apr
World Penguin Day	25 Apr
May	
Composting Awareness Week	1-7 May
World Migratory Bird Day	14 May
National Volunteer Week	TBC
World Bee Day	20 May
International Day for Biological Diversity	22 May
World Turtle Day 🐢	23 May
June	
World Environment Day	5 Jun
World Oceans Day	8 Jun
Sustainable Gastronomy Day	18 Jun



Keen Waterwatchers in the making enjoying the action at the Bendigo Sustainability Festival.

## Sustainable Ag Snippet...

### Stubble management

**As the autumn cropping season is upon us farmers are busy preparing paddocks for planting crops and pastures. Long season crops and pastures should be in the ground ready to burst out making the most of the early rains and warm sunny days.**

As paddock management, machinery and technology have improved we have seen an increase in early sown crops and pastures with seed in the ground ready to make use of the rain as soon as it falls, providing a head-start for the season and early ground cover.

The retention of crop stubble and summer weed control over the years has improved soil structure, water capture, trafficability and nutrient cycling supporting timely sowing operations. Grain yields from the 2021-22 season are forecast to be 25% above the 10-year average to 2020-21, as a result there are some heavy stubble loads in paddocks across the region particularly for the 2021 cereal crops. These stubbles have been protecting the fragile soil over summer, keeping soil cool, and increasing water infiltration supporting the soil critters (micro-organisms) to breakdown plant material, roots and organic matter, cycling and releasing 'free' nutrients for the next crop. Recent rains and warm temperatures will be supporting nutrient mineralization and increasing availability in most soils right now!

There are many options for managing a high stubble load if required for optimum seeding, disease or weed control. Stubble management starts at harvest with cutting height and chaff spreading, cutting short or longer, spreading chaff evenly or dumping in header rows, grazing to reduce the load or straw could be baled after harvest and removed. The GRDC have supported the development of the Stubble Management Optimiser which allows growers to calculate the overall financial and nutritional cost of managing stubble both at harvest and during post-harvest treatments such as baling or burning. (<https://grdc.com.au/research/trials,-programs-and-initiatives/stubble-initiative/stubble-management-optimiser> )

Burning is often the last resort to manage heavy stubble loads and the following issues need to be considered: -

- Exposing the soil to erosion risk from wind and water.
- Loss of soil moisture and nutrients. Approximately 80% of nitrogen, 50 - 80% of sulphur and 40% of phosphorus can be lost to the atmosphere from

burnt cereal stubble. Additional phosphorus and potassium can be lost in the ash (Agriculture Victoria).

- Protection of native vegetation.
- Fire permits and regulations.
- Impact on soil structure, micro-organism population and organic carbon.



If burning is the only option consider a cool, late burn of windrows to remove heavy loads while leaving sufficient cover for soil protection.

Consider all your options for managing stubble and remember the three main benefits for retaining stubble are:

- Improving soil organic matter (nutrient cycling, water infiltration and holding, bug food, soil structure).
- Preventing soil erosion and;
- Retaining moisture



For more information go to <https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/crops-and-horticulture/grains-pulses-and-cereals/crop-production/general-agronomy/stubble-burning#h2-0>

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## Courses & Resources...

### Climate Ready Young Growers - Registrations NOW OPEN!

Get the skills you need to secure your food future in a changing climate.

The Youth Climate Network, as part of the ADAPT Loddon Mallee Program, are hosting a five-part workshop series from April to May 2022.

Local experts PepperGreen Farm will be joined by special guests who will contribute climate related content such as: First Nations approaches to caring for Country, water use and addressing climate anxiety.

Topics covered across the five dates include

- April 2: Soil preparation
- April 21: Seasonal produce
- April 22: Pest & Weed management
- May 14: Plant propagation
- May 28: Composting

You can register via this QR code. For more information visit [www.adaptloddonmallee.com.au](http://www.adaptloddonmallee.com.au) | 0436 629 698



### Victoria's wheat crops and climate change

Monash University recently shared findings of investigations into the impact of climate change on wheat yields and farm profitability in Victoria's major grain-producing regions – the Mallee and Wimmera regions.

Under some climate change scenarios, heavy losses are predicted for Victoria's wheat crops. But there are steps farmers can take to mitigate the impact.



A research team from Monash Business School's Department of Econometrics and Business Statistics and Centre for Development Economics and Sustainability (CDES) has been investigating the impact of climate change on wheat yields and farm profitability in Victoria's major grain-producing regions of Northwest Victoria.

The research focused on the impacts of extreme temperature (hot and cold) exposures on wheat yields to generate future yield predictions for the next 45 years under various climate change scenarios.

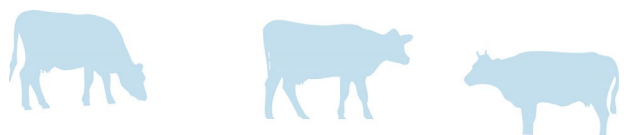
Read the full article published in Monash University's Impact publication: [How climate change could threaten Victoria's wheat crops | IMPACT: Monash Business School](#)

### Livestock grazing impacts on riparian vegetation

ARI researcher and author Chris Jones, has led a study into the permanent removal of livestock grazing in riparian systems benefits native vegetation, focused along the Broken Boosey creeks in the Goulburn Broken CMA region

"Grazing continues to be a major threat to riparian vegetation and waterway condition in Australia (including this study) and globally and the permanent exclusion of livestock grazing in riparian areas should be considered where possible and there are expected net benefits. In drier climates, such as this study, permanent exclusion of livestock resulted in less bare ground and more native vegetation, but also more exotic graminoids. In wetter climates, the changes in cover of exotic species may differ with different grazing regimes, but we expect native species will be impaired so long as grazing remains, so this represents a challenging trade-off for managers..."

This is a detailed but digestible read for anyone interested in riparian management. The paper was published in the [Global Ecology and Conservation](#) Volume 33, January 2022, e01959





## Events...

### Wet 'n' Wilder on the Loddon

The North CMA invites you to a family day of free activities including



- Loddon Carp Catch - register on the day, bait supplied, bank fishing only. HEAPS OF PRIZES.
- Welcome to Country.
- Turtles Australia & Native Fish Australia displays.
- BBQ lunch.
- "Ask me about Waterbugs" with Waterwatch.
- Kids' colouring competition.
- Hear about our Native Fish Recovery Project and we're doing to bring back native fish.
- Learn more about Loddon River flows...and lots more!

All ages welcome. No need to register, just turn up on the day.

**When:** Sunday 10 April 10.30am – 1pm

**Where:** Kerang Regional Park end of Wyndham Street, Kerang

**Cost:** Free

**What to bring:** COVID-19 Safe event with proof of vaccination required

### Journey in Regen Ag- Local Farmers Series

Macedon Ranges Shire Council are inviting people to visit local farmers as part of our Journey in Regenerative Agriculture series on 1 and 3 April.

**When:**

- **April 1:** Aaron Demeo - Raywood at 10:30am – 12:30pm. Mixed enterprise with a compost trial
- **April 1:** Paul Righetti - Yapeen at 4pm - 6pm Chicken and beef farm
- **April 3:** Darren Cater - Monegetta at 2pm - 4pm Cattle farm with a dung beetle nursery

**What to wear:** Please remember to wear suitable clothing and footwear.

**Cost:** All events are free

**RSVP:** [Healthy Landscapes - Macedon Ranges Shire Council \(mrsc.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.mrsc.vic.gov.au)

## Leaky Landscapes field day

### Biolinks Alliance invite you to their Leaky Landscapes Symposium field day

Presentations from.

- Paul Foreman, Biolinks Alliance Ecologist
- Jon Fawcett, CDM Smith Principal Hydrogeologist
- Dr David Tongway, Landscape Function Analysis (virtual presentation)
- Ann-Marie Monda, Holy Goat Cheese

Download the full program and book you tickets NOW: [Leaky+Landscapes+-+site+visits+-+combined+-+small.pdf \(squarespace.com\)](https://www.squarespace.com)

**When:** Friday 1 April, 2022

**Where:** Sutton Grange; Sutton Grange Hall, Pilchers Bridge Nature Conservation Reserve, and Holy Goat Cheese

**Cost:** \$35 Biolinks Alliance Network Members

\$45 General public

\$65 Government agencies

**What to bring:** All attendees must provide proof of vaccination upon arrival. This field trip will be a self-drive, and BYO lunch event. Afternoon tea will be provided.

## Funding opportunities...

### Volunteering Innovation Fund

The Victorian Government has an exciting new opportunity to inspire ideas and encourage innovation by funding community-led projects that consider new ways of volunteering in and for the environment.

Parks and forests in Victoria are supported and enhanced by a host of passionate volunteers. The Volunteering Innovation Fund is building on this incredible work and inviting everyone to enjoy Victoria's Great Outdoors through volunteering.

The Volunteering Innovation Fund will award \$2million in funding over four rounds, with the final round closing in 2022. Round 3 is now closed with outcomes announced May 2022. Round 4 opens in Autumn 2022.

Parks Victoria are looking for innovators, nature-lovers and community minded people to expand and diversify environmental volunteering across Victoria. To apply:

1. Think of a creative idea that inspires more Victorians to volunteer in and for nature
2. Read the [Funding Guidelines](#) to make sure your idea aligns
3. Apply online through [ParkConnect](#)