

North Central chat

AUGUST 2017

A message from the Regional Landcare Coordinator

Hi everyone,

July was certainly jam packed, as the Landcare Team hit peak workload with Community Grant submissions and assessments taking place. We were pleased with the level of interest, in particular, given the Federal and State funding recently made available for groups to apply for. We received over 100 applications across the three grant types available, which was a great result. More details on the 2017-18 Community Grants program will be available in future editions of the Chat.

In late July we hosted a stall at the 140th Australian Sheep and Wool here in Bendigo which was a wonderful success. CMA staff from Sustainable Agriculture and Landcare teams engaged with more than 120 people directly at our stall, with countless other connections made as we all enjoyed perusing the incredible products, displays, animals and food on show. For me, an amazing sight was the ewe producing sextuplet lambs, raised by Penesh Finns of Deniliquin. Their ewes have not once, but twice, produced six lambs at birth, all of whom lived to tell their fluffy white tale! Those ewes certainly were amazing 'women of wool' if you ask me.

Speaking of which, the annual Women of Wool luncheon was again a wonderful event, featuring Helen Heddle from Christchurch discussing community driven crisis management through her 'Farmy Army' volunteers rallying together in the aftermath of the earthquakes. This turned out to be quite topical after the kitchen fridges failed the night before the lunch and the catering staff went into crisis management! 150+ guests were well fed and watered, so hats off to the event team, local produce suppliers and organisers for getting everything back on track seamlessly.

SAVE THE DATE: I am incredibly pleased to announce that our own rural women's event,

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Chicks in the Sticks, in 2017 will be hosted in partnership with Project Platypus and Avon Plains- Banyena Landcare Group on Walkers Lake in the Avon Plains on Sunday 10 September 2017. Read more about this in the Events section.

We're certainly in for another chilly month with average temperatures barely creeping over 10^oc, so fingers crossed the frost stays away for all the croppers and growers across the catchment over the winter period.

Enjoy the read,

Tess Grieves

Regional Landcare Coordinator

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News...

'Meet your Land Manager' sessions a success

Connecting Country's local Landcare facilitator Asha Bannon organised a successful event on 27 June, inviting Landcare groups for afternoon tea with representatives from Parks Victoria, DELWP, and Mount Alexander Shire Council to talk about planned projects for 2017 and beyond

Asha was thrilled with the turn-up to the event saying that "representatives from 15 of the Mount Alexander Region Landcare Network's groups attended the afternoon tea. Parks Victoria, DELWP, and Mount Alexander Shire Council talked with groups about the Land Use Activity Agreement (LUAA) with Dja Dja Wurrung people and the ways in which land managers, Landcare groups, and Aboriginal people can work together to care for our environment and cultural heritage."

"While the conversations left some of us overwhelmed, there were many positive outcomes, including groups giving land managers direct feedback about the structure and content of new Volunteer Activity Plan forms. The meeting also sparked the development of a new webpage on the Connecting Country website to help guide groups through the LUAA process."

When asked if there were any lessons for others interested in running a similar event, Asha mentioned to ensure you plan for a large audience as there is a lot of interest, and leave time for discussion so the audience can do a bit of Q&A in relation to the volume of information passed over to them.



HAVE YOUR SAY:

Loddon Shire Roadside Management Plan

RMCG is preparing a Roadside Management Plan for the Loddon Shire Council. They are currently seeking community input to the development of the plan, via submissions to an Issues and Opportunities Paper as well as through a series of Community Open House events scheduled for early August.

There are several ways to get involved in this

process. Council welcomes submissions to the Issues and Opportunities Paper from individuals and organisations. Written responses can be submitted via email or post to:

Jaclyne Scally
RMCG
PO Box 620
Torquay 3226
e: jaclynes@rcmg.com.au

Submissions are due by Friday 18 August.

In person, you may wish to drop in on one of the series of Community Open House events which will be held at five locations across the Shire during August:

BOORT: Wednesday 2 August, Boort Resource & Information Centre (BRIC), 119 - 121 Godfrey Street

PYRAMID HILL: Thursday 3 August, Pyramid Hill Senior Citizens Centre, 6 - 10 McKay Street

WEDDERBURN: Tuesday 8 August, Wedderburn Community Centre, 24 - 32 Wilson Street

INGLEWOOD: Wednesday 9 August, Inglewood Town Hall, Market Street

NEWBRIDGE: Thursday 10 August, Newbridge Public Hall, 38 Burke Street

Each event will be run from 6 - 7:30pm. Light refreshments will be provided.

To RSVP for an event, or to receive more information about the Roadside Management Plan, contact Jaclyne Scally at RM Consulting Group on 0468 813 609 or via email jaclynes@rcmg.com.au

Glenlyon Biolink Trail Bridge...almost!

The Glenlyon Biolink walking trail had its origins in the Drought Relief program of the mid 2000s and has been strongly supported the Glenlyon community and the Hepburn Shire over the past 10 years.

Since April, significant progress has been made towards the final stages of infrastructure, a bridge crossing the Loddon River which will be finished in the coming weeks.

Landcare group president John Cable said; "The construction of an the footbridge was an outcome of the popularity of the walking trail leading to a need to reduce conflict between the users of the path and groups who hire the Glenlyon reserve for sporting activities. Establishing the bridge to take



the walking path across the Loddon prior to entering the Recreation Reserve has also capitalised on the existence of an unused footbridge adjacent to the pavilion and the playground at the Reserve.”

Next time you're visiting the Daylesford area, swing by Glenlyon, (*grab a coffee at the General Store*) and wander along this fantastic community driven Loddon River Biolink walk.



The community comes together at a planting alongside the newly established footbridge. Photo: Glenlyon 3461 Facebook.

National Landcare Programme Review results

If you recall, the Australian Governments' National Landcare Programme sought input into a programme review online survey in late 2016.

The final *Report on the Review of the National Landcare Program*, together with a report on the results of the survey, is now available at the following link:

<http://www.nrm.gov.au/national-landcare-programme/public-consultation-review>

Culture and craftsmanship combined

At a recent team meeting, Acting CEO Rohan Hogan was lucky enough to be presented with a hunting stick, by Barapa Barapa man Dixie 'Budja' Patten.

Dixie donated the tool, that he has crafted from redgum, for display in the North Central CMA office to recognise the Traditional Owners of the region.



Rohan accepting the gift from Dixie (far right) and his son Daniel. Thanks Dixie!

Seeing the water for the weeds

Article and images: Sandy Scheltema

Trentham and District Landcare received \$18,000 this week from the North Central Catchment Management Authority for the continuation of weed removal and regeneration works on the Coliban River near the historic Enders Bridge.

The work is also part of the Upper Campaspe Landcare Network biolink strategy which involves seven Landcare groups in the district working



together on landscape-scale projects.

Michael Keaney, a member of Trentham and District Landcare, said they were looking for other projects and saw the importance of waterways following a field trip which looked at what Tylden Landcare had achieved along the Little Coliban River.



"We realised the entrance to Trentham could be improved if the area around the historic Enders Bridge was cleared of weeds and other introduced species," Mr Keaney said.

"We have been clearing weeds for the past two years with funding provided by Hepburn Shire Council.

"This money will be spent specifically on fencing the banks of the Coliban to prevent stock invasion and enable native revegetation."

Mr Keaney said this was a small part of a community effort led by Trentham and District Landcare that involved working with the North Central CMA, DELWP, the Dja Dja Wurrung, Hepburn Shire Council, UCLN and private landowners.

"Before this weed removal you wouldn't even know the Coliban River was there. Our vision is that instead of looking at blackberries and willows and other weeds, there will be a view that reflects the way the river environment existed before European settlement."

President of Upper Campaspe Landcare Network Alan Denehey said volunteers were beginning to see the fruits of the effort that went into developing their Strategic Plan.

"A number of our member groups have become energised and active in developing and beginning to implement on ground works for environmental rehabilitation.

"It's exciting to see Trentham Landcare continue their restoration works which align with the UCLN Biolink Strategy for the Upper Coliban Catchment.

"This landscape-scale effort also involves Malmsbury and Tylden Landcare working on the Coliban and Little Coliban River."

Landcare Group Health Survey

The annual 'Supporting Landcare in North Central Victoria' group health survey, which is embedded into the Community Grants process, has again produced some very interesting preliminary results.

Based on reflections of the 2016-17 financial year, 72 Landcare Groups and Networks across the catchment produced the following trends

- 77% of groups rate their overall group health as 'stable' or higher.
- 20% of groups were struggling a little, although every group indicated they were likely to remain active within the coming two years.
- Lack of funding for priority on-ground works and lack of time for volunteers rated as the highest ranked challenges facing Landcare in our region.
- No surprises that pest and weed control rated as the highest focus for Landcare groups.

Further analysis of the survey data will inform the coming year of activities for the Regional Landcare team and a report card on the 2016-17 year of Landcare in North Central will be produced in the near future.





Hello all,

I hope you are enjoying this edition of the North Central Chat.

The past month has been busy with planning and a couple of Waterwatch volunteer site visits. I made my way across the catchment to catch up with the lovely John and Jan Dods of Slaty Creek. I made my way back across to Strathallan where I spent some time with John and Veronica Groat and met their beautiful sugar gliders, I visited Keith Neaves, of Campbell's Creek and popped into Kyneton to train newcomer Steve Marriott.

We have lots of exciting events on the calendar for the new financial year including: Quality Assurance and Quality Control event, River Detectives professional development workshops, ALT Waterbug training workshops, National Water Week celebrations and the annual Campaspe Carp Catch 2017. Keep your eyes open for invites to upcoming events and training opportunities.

What's happening in August?

6 – 19 August: Quality Assurance and Quality Control training

12 – 20 August: National Science Week

12 – 18 August: River Detectives professional development workshops

Cass Davis

Regional Waterwatch Coordinator
North Central Catchment Management Authority
Phone: 03 5440 1863
Email: cass.davis@nccma.vic.gov.au

Welcome to the program Steve!

Steve Marriott has joined the Waterwatch program and is monitoring the Campaspe River as a part of the Caring for the Campaspe project.

"NCCMA has done a magnificent job over the last 4 years in clearing the 2.4km of Campaspe on our place. It has been transformed from a muddy willow-infested cesspool, to a river worthy of the name. The main long waterhole is now re-filled by heavy rains, and even today, when the river does not flow, it is 14 feet deep above the dam/river crossing built by the Kulin long ago" Steve Marriott.



Victorian Citizen Science Association meeting

Last week, I attended the Victorian Citizen Science Associations committee meeting in Melbourne. The meeting was an opportunity to meet with like minded people who are actively working with community, to learn about each other's projects, share ideas and work through issues collectively.

Attendees all introduced themselves to each other and shared our projects and what we were hoping to get out of the meeting. This was followed by a wonderful presentation about bioinformatics in citizen science by Ken Walker, BowerBird, Museums Victoria. Did you know BowerBird has over 60,000 records.

Ken's presentation was followed by group discussion around issues that the group has nominated such as data capture, assurance and sharing, communication and reporting, and supporting volunteers. The key themes discussed included: how do we use data to create change, how does government give back to the community, how do we empower people to tell their own stories, how do we know what people want, how can the evidence be used to inform policy and how citizen science contributes to community in a meaningful way.

For me, attending the meeting was reassuring to know that we, here at Waterwatch, are walking a similar path to others and that we are facing the same issues and asking the same questions.



After some discussion around these topics, the meeting had come to an end. As a group we will be meeting every six months and will discuss these issues in more detail. If you are interested to know more, or you would like to contribute, feel free to give me a call so we can chat about these topics in more detail.

Shaking out the salt facts;
Media Release featured in the Buloke Times

The high salinity levels of the Richardson River upstream of Donald have again been thrown into the spotlight with the annual Saltwatch monitoring results.

Each year, Waterwatch volunteers from across the state head down to their local waterway and measure salinity and water quality levels.

The data is collected and a state-wide snapshot is created.

“There were 117 sites recorded this year, including 37 in our region,” North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) Regional Waterwatch Coordinator Cass Davis said.

“Most readings across the state showed salinity levels at acceptable levels and a handful were high.

“Seven sites in Victoria recorded very high results, the highest classification we have. All those sites were on the Richardson River.”

Salinity levels in the Richardson levels have historically been high.

“Low flows combined with groundwater coming up and getting into the river are what cause the high salinity levels,” Cass said.

“It’s across the entire lower catchment. When the river floods, salinity levels drop dramatically. Once the river flows subside, salinity begins to increase at all the sites below the weir. If follow-up flows are not forthcoming, pools develop, water evaporates and hyper salinity levels are not uncommon.”

The Richardson River cuts into an aquifer that contains groundwater that is two thirds as saline as the ocean, and was once part of a giant inland sea.

The North Central CMA works with nearby landholders through a number of projects, including Farming for Sustainable Soils, in an effort to improve the health and productivity of their soils.

Strengthening community engagement and participation is a key component in supporting the Victorian Governments \$222 million initiative to improve the health of waterways and catchments across regional Victoria.

Ms Davis said citizen science events Saltwatch Week played an important role in waterway health.

“Collecting samples from local creeks, rivers or streams provides vital information about the health of the region’s precious waterways,” she said.

“Creeks, rivers and streams provide important cultural, recreational and economic benefits to local communities. Their health is important to future users.”

North Central Waterwatch Salinity Snapshot Report is now available

Visit the Waterwatch page on the North Central CMA website or click on the image below.

North Central Waterwatch Annual Salinity Snapshot Report 2017

Salinity is a major issue in waterways across Victoria. By practicing good land management and participating in monitoring programs the salinity risk can be reduced.

Become a Citizen Scientist and help protect your local waterway!

About Saltwatch Week

Collecting samples from local creeks, rivers or streams provides vital information about the health of the region’s precious waterways. Creeks, rivers and streams provide important cultural, recreational and economic benefits to local communities. Their health is important to future users.

Saltwatch is an environmental monitoring program that helps communities understand the salinity problem in our waterways. Saltwatch began in 1987, and is Australia’s longest-running community monitoring program.

During Saltwatch Week each year, schools and community groups from all over Victoria learn about the effects of salinity on water quality in their local catchment by collecting water samples and testing them with a salinity meter to determine salt content.

About Salinity

Salinity is a major issue in waterways across Victoria. Land use changes and poor land management such as clearing of native vegetation, removal of riparian vegetation, poor livestock and crop location, and urban development have all had a significant impact on the level of salt in our waterways.

High levels of salinity can severely limit the growth and diversity of vegetation, reduce the capacity and productivity of land, degrade habitats, decrease fauna health and diversity, affect water quality, reduce the value of water and contribute to erosion and damage infrastructure.

VICTORIA State Government | **Environment, Land, Water and Planning** | **NORTH CENTRAL** Catchment Management Authority | **Waterwatch** | **The North Central Catchment Management Authority acknowledges the contribution of the many landholders in the region to the rich culture and natural resources of the region. We also acknowledge the contribution of the many people and organisations in the region to the rich culture and natural resources of the region.**



Events



REGISTER NOW!

The 2017 Chicks in the Sticks event will be held at Walkers Lake, Avon Plains on Sunday 10 September from 10.30 am.

Event information, registration links and costs are being done online through EventBrite:

<https://2017chicksinthesticks.eventbrite.com.au>

We encourage you to invite your friends and family, and spread the word through your own social media channels.

This event is co-hosted by North Central CMA and Project Platypus

Advanced Grazing Masterclass and Farm Visit- EOIs welcome

North Central CMA is seeking EOIs for a one day workshop for farmers and land managers to fine tune their grazing management to regenerate their pasture using holistic management principles.

Places are strictly limited. The course is open to farmers, land managers and community members in the North Central CMA area. People from outside the catchment are welcome to apply, but priority will be given to those from within the catchment. To submit an expression of interest (EOI), please complete your contact details and the questionnaire in the link below.

Places are available for 15 successful applicants. Course fees are \$60 per person (normally valued at \$400), which covers:

- One day workshop, 12 September 2017
- Morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea

- Course notes, guides and planning templates.
- Property visit to set up trial area, and pasture identification on your property

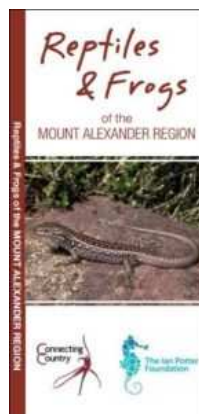
Please note that course fees do not include fencing materials. A small amount of material is required to be supplied by participants.

EOIs should be submitted to the North Central CMA by **10 am Friday 18 August 2017** by emailing darren.bain@nccma.vic.gov.au or posting to PO Box 18, Huntly VIC 3551. Successful applicants will be notified by Friday 28 August 2017. Visit: <http://bit.ly/grazingeoi>



For further information please contact: Darren Bain, North Central CMA by phone 03 5440 1893 or email darren.bain@nccma.vic.gov.au

Courses and Resources



New Reptiles and Frogs of the Mount Alexander Region brochure

Connecting Country's newest brochure, *Reptiles and Frogs of the Mount Alexander Region*, is now out in the world! To download a pdf copy visit:

www.connectingcountry.org.au



Young Farmers Scholarship Program

The Young Farmers Scholarship Program provides young farmers and those who work directly on farm with an opportunity to invest in themselves and their career, by boosting their skills and equipping themselves for the farming challenges of the future.

The scholarship program is designed to be flexible and to fit with the demands and ambitions of young farmers.

Funding available: **Up to \$10,000** is available to farmers and farm workers **aged 35 years or under** to help them with professional development and career progression. The funding consists of up to \$5,000 for study, backed by a further \$5,000 to invest on-farm or in professional development activities to help put new skills into practice.

Examples of eligible courses - Diploma in Agriculture, human resources training, business management courses, Diploma of Agribusiness Management and a range of on-farm technical training.

How many scholarships: Each year 10-15 scholarships are awarded to young farmers aged 35 or under in Victoria.

Applications close: 30 August 2017

More information: and guidelines visit www.vic.gov.au/youngfarmers or <http://www.business.vic.gov.au/support-for-your-business/grants-and-assistance/young-farmers-scholarship-program>

Funding opportunities

20 Million Trees Round 3: CLOSING SOON

Round Three of the Australian Government's 20 Million Trees was launched in July. This is the final round of the 20 Million Trees Competitive Grants.

\$6 million is available for grants between **\$20,000** and **\$100,000** for tree planting projects that will support EPBC listed Threatened Ecological Communities and Threatened Species.

Individuals and groups can apply for projects on both public and private land.

Guidelines, application form and other useful information is available at:

<http://www.nrm.gov.au/national/20-million-trees/competitive-grants-round-three>

Applications are due on **Tuesday 15 August 2017**

What's coming up?

2017-18 Regional Landcare activities

As Darren and I plan out our programs for the year ahead, the following activities, events and training are a selection of the proposed ideas to support landcare and sustainable agriculture across the catchment.

- Farm Chemical Users Training (ACUP) courses and 1080 endorsement, in partnership with three Landcare Networks
- Chicks in the Sticks- 10 September, 2017
- Advanced Grazing Masterclass- 12 September, 2017
- Grant Writing Workshops- May 2018
- GIS Mapping support workshops
- North Central Weeds Guide reprint
- Soil Health Guide workshops
- North Central Chat newsletter
- Northern Rivers Round-up; Landcare Facilitator Professional Development
- 2017 Future Farming Expo
- Holistic management field day in partnership with Goulburn Broken CMA- October 2017
- Interest based workshops in partnership with Landcare Networks e.g. Soils, Pasture Grazing Management and Rabbit Buster
- Site visits and project promotion of 2017-18 Community Grant recipients
- Landcare governance and effective communication themed resources

All our upcoming activities and events will be in upcoming editions of the Chat, so you won't miss out on the things that interest you.

