



North Central chat

DECEMBER 2016

A message from the Regional Landcare Coordinator

Hi everyone,

I think I share the sentiment with many of you as I turn the calendar page over in shock to find its December!

What a busy year 2016 has been. As I reflect on the activities I have been a part of over the past 12 months, I am very proud of the work our Landcare groups and catchment community undertake and continue to learn so much about our regions landscape, threatened species, culture, geology, soils, agricultural systems and of course, the many quirky characters that make it all happen.

In 2016, we welcomed important changes to the way we deliver our regional Landcare program. Two big items were moving the community grants program online and asking groups to embark on a mapping mission, spatially recording both proposed activities for grant applications and reporting funded activities. Again, a challenging task but one I have found so rewarding, assisting people through these change processes as we all learn together how to utilise new systems and create a spatial story of Landcare works across the catchment.

Community events and training activities are hugely popular in our region. Mandy and I have been overwhelmed with the interest people have shown in the events and activities run throughout the year. Mandy's update covers outcomes of the many courses and resources she has developed throughout the year such as the Inspiring Women in Agriculture course and the Soil Health Guide and scorecard for north central Victoria.

Taking feedback from the annual survey attached to the community grants program, Mandy and I have aimed to cover a wide range of shared areas of interest through rabbit buster roadshows, Sustainable Farming field days, Future Farming

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Photo: Adrian Martins, North Central CMA

Expo, Citizen Science Forum, Chicks in the Sticks and 30 years of Landcare celebration event.

As the year comes to a close, I wish to thank you, our Chat readers for your contributions, photos and most importantly, remaining engaged with Landcare.

Wishing you and your family a safe and merry festive season.

I'm off to soak up some shade in Bali, see you in 2017!

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News...

30 Years of Landcare awards

The Victorian Landcare team proudly presented the 30 Years of Landcare awards in Melbourne on Friday November 25.

North Central has several honour roll nominees who have been a part of Landcare for the past 30 years, which is an incredible achievement.

We would also like to congratulate our regional executive committee service award winner, Doug Hansford, of the Guildford Upper Loddon Landcare Group.

Find all the winners and award information is on the Victorian Landcare Gateway; <https://www.landcarevic.org.au/state-government-news/celebrating-30-years-of-landcare-in-victoria/>



Revegetation reveal! Our feathered friends are key critics

A recent ABC article featured Floyd Holmes whom is completing his PhD research with a specific focus on landscape restoration and looking at completion criteria for the creation of a successful woodland habitat.

Whilst the project focuses on woodland habitat on Rottneest Island, Floyd has previously researched revegetation program success using vegetation surveys and the notion that 'if you build it they will come' which is often the thinking behind many restoration revegetation projects, "Rather than saying this habitat was successfully restored because there are X number of different plant species, [we are] going a step further and saying, yes, the birds are breeding in this habitat".

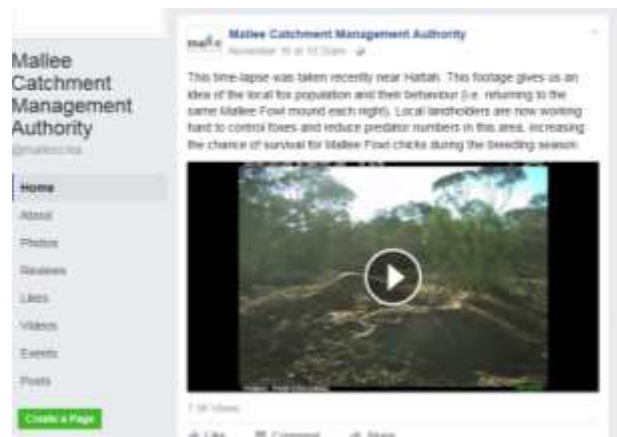
Essentially, his work seeks to translate what the birds say about the environment into a tool that will help judge habitat quality.

Read the full article at: <http://mobile.abc.net.au/news/2016-11-14/bird-behaviour-may-deliver-verdict-on-bush-regeneration-work/8018248>

Foxes go foul

Camera trap images from our neighbours in the Mallee have caught devastating footage of foxes entering a Malleefowl mound.

The vermin are filmed near Hattah, returning to the same mound each night to prey on the precious eggs. The footage has given Mallee CMA great insight into fox behaviour, allowing more targeted control during the breeding season.



View the video on the Mallee CMA Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/malleecma/>

Feast of food & feeling; 2016 Chicks in the Sticks a spectacular success

As I recover from another wonderful event, I am blown away by the bravery and beauty showcased this year.

Set against the magnificent backdrop of Mount Mitchell homestead in Lexton, over 90 women turned up the glamour and gumboots, keeping the traditional dress code alive. The 2016 event on Friday Nov 25 was themed FarmHER and featured speakers explored topics of wellness within rural communities.

The setting itself was food for the soul, connecting people to a piece of Victorian history which has been relatively private until owners Kate and Simon Tol open the gates to the public just over a year ago.



Workshops focussed on personal wellbeing, kitchen garden and farm fresh produce demonstrations as well as a wonderful farm tour full of historic happenings and future farm dreams.

Keynote speaker Laura Molloy was simply incredible. Laura bravely bared all to destigmatise the 'little black dog' of depression that crept into her life during her pregnancies. Laura's takeaway message was that we all have that little voice of intuition, so it is vital to recognise it, listen to it and ask for help, reminding everyone, it's ok to not be ok.

This annual event provides an invaluable and unique space for women within our community to gather, network, share, discuss, feast and collaborate. Meeting people with similar ideas or shared passions creates interest and connections, which are so integral to individual and community wellbeing.



Thank you to all the wonderful women who make this event possible, and who continue to share the Chicks in the Sticks story. Some of the photos from this wonderful event are online at:

<https://www.facebook.com/MtMitchellHomestead/?pnref=story>

If your town and community has a unique location & would be the perfect setting for 2017 Chicks in the Sticks, we'd love to hear about it! Get in touch with myself or Mandy throughout 2017.

Funding for this event is provided through the Victorian Government's Regional Landcare Coordinator, Australian Government's Regional Landcare Facilitator and Pyrenees Shire, through funds from the Victorian Governments drought support for regional communities.



Henny Penny taking the day quite literally!

Rabbit Buster Roadshows

The recent rabbit buster roadshow events were well received across the catchment, spreading the message about the impending release of K5 strain of calici virus.

Landholders and Landcare groups across north central Victoria are now well informed about the virus; its expected impact on rabbit populations and the importance of coordinated conventional control once the virus arrives in your local area.



Landcare icon Maurie Dynon (left) and his brother caught and paired hundreds of rabbits in the 1950s

Tracking the spread of the virus across the state



from its release date in March 2017 is imperative to effectively take advantage of the free control tool, likely to be a once in a generation opportunity.

Rabbit Scan is the app to map and monitor disease spread and locate when K5 is likely to be in your region. Download the app now:

<https://www.feralscan.org.au/rabbitscan/>

Detectives at Bald Hill Reserve

Article from Sandy Scheltema

Amidst swarms of mosquitoes Year 9 and 10 Environmental Science students undertook detective work at Bald Hill to research a project investigating the flora and fauna of the reserve. They also helped install nest boxes and remote cameras which will monitor arboreal mammals such as the threatened phascogale.

Students each picked a native species from the Bald Hill Management Plan which they then had to find at the Reserve. Many chose some of the beautiful wildflowers which were on display on the day. Charlotte Arlow, said *"I find that nature is very beautiful, it's so amazing how life works – how the flowers are created and what colours they have. I really enjoy this assignment because I love nature and I find this subject calming."*

The students picked their way through swampy marshes, grass plains and peppermint forests - eventually giving up on keeping their shoes dry, to find suitable trees to install nest boxes and remote cameras. They used GPS's to record their locations and will be involved in monitoring the resulting data in conjunction with the Friends of Bald Hill and the Macedon Ranges Shire Council.

Macedon Ranges Shire Council Environmental Officer William Terry said "It's really important that students learn about protecting our local ecosystems if we are going to have any chance of protecting our endangered species. We are hoping to record evidence of arboreal animals such as the brush tailed phascogale, the sugar and squirrel gliders, and the agile antechinus. The nest boxes and remote cameras will help give us a broader understanding of the important flora and fauna in this reserve."

Teacher Cindy Bradford said the students gained valuable field study experience of how to preserve the flora and Fauna of Bald Hill Reserve using modern monitoring techniques.



Recent heavy rains have meant the spring wildflowers are prolific at Bald Hill Reserve. Seen here are a Wax Lip Orchid, (Glossodia major) ©Scheltema

Exciting new find for Gunbower Forest!

A new population of a nationally endangered orchid has been unearthed in Gunbower Forest.

The Floodplain Rustyhood (*Pterostylis cheraphila*) was discovered during a baseline survey to monitor the effects of grazing pressure at a relatively undisturbed patch of endangered woodland vegetation. Ninety five plants were found in a concentrated area.

The find is significant because the only other site where the species has ever been found is on the Wimmera River between Murtoa and Dimboola in the west of the State.

North Central CMA Project Manager Adrian Martins said "initially only three rosettes were found and the identity of the species was only confirmed when it flowered."

"At first we didn't know what it was, and then we thought it was another threatened orchid species until it flowered and the diagnostic features were fully visible allowing orchid experts to confirm its identity".



Floodplain Rustyhood. Photo: Adrian Martins



Floodplain Rustyhood pollinator insect is an undescribed fly species.

Native orchids have a complex and fascinating ecology which includes species-specific symbiotic relationships with mycorrhizal fungi and pollinators. The pollinator of the Floodplain Rustyhood is an insect belonging to the fly family Keroplatidae in the tribe Orfeliini.

Melbourne Museum entomologist Dr. Ken Stewart remarked the pollinator insect is yet to be formally described and is only known to fly after 2pm on hot sunny days!

Sustainable Ag Snippet...

With the end to the calendar year fast approaching, I thought I'd take this opportunity to reflect on some of the achievements delivered through the Regional Landcare facilitator role. Without the undue support and willingness of farmers, land managers and communities to learn and share knowledge to adopt sustainable land management practices and better manage our natural resources, the following outcomes simply would not have been able to be achieved

Over 400 people participated in a range of events, field days and training this year. Some of these are highlighted below;

- 'Women in Agriculture' regroup session and accredited short course.
- 'Future Farming Expo' in partnership with the Swan Hill Rural City Council attracting over 120 people.
- 'Donald Fishing Event in partnership with multiple stakeholders including the VFF, DEDJTR, Royal Flying Doctors Service, Landcare and Waterwatch to support farmers during dry conditions, attracted over 250 rural families, Coupled with a dinner for Watchem farmers in early February, supporting rural families during times of dry was well supported by all.
- Understanding the landscape proved invaluable for a highly successful 'Farm Field Day' in partnership with Connecting Country. Reaching people new to farming or those looking for ways to value add in a sustainable way really highlighted the future need to focus on building diverse and viable farms.

The completion and launch of the Soil Health Guide and Score card has enabled many people with a passion for soils to learn further about conducting visual soil assessments through a series of nine simple and practical tests. Several workshops and training events in partnership with DEDJTR soil scientist Rebecca Mitchell have already been delivered throughout the north central region and these will continue into 2017. Excitingly, the soil health guide will be presented at the International Soils Conference in December.



2016 Women in Agriculture course participants

The delivery of the Inspiring Women in Agriculture accredited short course was popular for rural women. After a short reflection session involving past participants from 2014 and Australian Women in Agriculture Board Director, Val Lang, I was convinced there was going to be a need and demand to deliver the course again in 2016. With enthusiasm and energy, 21 participants signed up for the 2016 course. Over the course duration, each participant experienced personal growth, networking and developed a range of diverse and inspiring projects, from 'niche' farming, to small-scale farming to large-scale value adding opportunities.

The following provides a snap shot of some of the innovative stories and projects developed throughout the course duration

Participant 1: Since enrolling in this workshop, I have been able to set myself a clear path with how to reach our dream

1. Speak with husband
2. Speak with in-laws
3. Employ a farm succession consultant
4. Set the wheels well and truly in motion to realizing our dream

I think the biggest hurdle for us was to have the difficult conversations... but really, until that is done there is very little progress that can be made. We are now very comfortable with what we can achieve, and how to get there. Since beginning this course 2 months ago, we truly have found our "clarity" and can now work towards achieving our 5- and 10-year plans."

Participant 2: My project idea is to establish a small chicken flock consisting of 20 purebred hens with my two sons.

Although I wanted to feel that I was contributing financially to our family business, a young family

meant that I was restricted in my ability to do so. After giving it some thought I realised that I was not giving enough credit to the things I could teach my boys at home – valuable life skills such as responsibility, money management, the principle of cause and effect, appreciation for the land, how climate can influence our farm, and life cycles. As such, they will be involved in all aspects of this enterprise and any money earned after costs will be theirs."

Participant 3: When you find out what you truly want to do with your time on this earth, everything else fades away and a deep longing and drive to succeed is unveiled.

My 'thing', my 'hobby', my meaning is to live long and love being a beekeeper. It's to focus on the job at hand, the constant learning, the beauty in these tiny creatures that we admire.

It has taken me a few years to have that light bulb moment; to love something that can sting you (and die doing so) is obscure. From the day I stopped being afraid, let go of the fear, my passion blossomed and today I am beginning the journey that is living the life I will create it to be..."

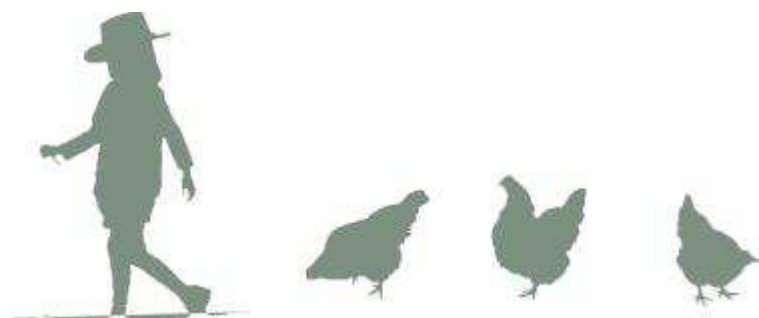
On this note, I wish you all a very safe and fun filled festive season. I can't wait to see what exciting events, training opportunities and workshops we can collectively develop to help grow a healthy and sustainable agricultural community throughout 2017.

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Hello everyone,

November has been all about Waterbugs! I'm sure you've heard about the events that were being held across the catchment from River Detectives professional development workshops focussing on Waterbugs at Daylesford to NatureBlitz at Gunbower, we have been everywhere!

In the last edition of the North Central Chat, I mentioned that I have been meeting and talking with people about the North Central Waterwatch Water Quality data report, this report will interrogate the past 20 years of data collected by our wonderful citizen scientists. The aim of the report is to identify spatial and temporal patterns, identify hot spots and gaps in data and discuss trends and opportunities for going forward, this important review will feed into the regional Waterwatch monitoring plan.

Sophie has been working on the River Detectives State-wide pilot program as making her way through the development of the website and all the resources and discussing opportunity's with project partners.

Registrations are now open for the 2017 River Detectives Program, please see article further on.

December and January are a little quieter than November, we don't have any events coming up, however, I will be working on the water quality report and designing promotional material for the program. I have a few dates booked in for some volunteer visits so if you would like a visit, please give me a call.

I plan to have everyone's water quality data diaries to them by end of January with a new look. I will also be developing a plan for NatureBlitz, identifying how we can work with citizen scientists and school groups to participate in programs such as frog and bird census across the region using the NatureBlitz app.

I will be on leave from 19 December to the 13 January 2017.

IMPORTANT: The Waterwatch web portal is still

being developed, when I return from leave, I am hoping the web portal will be live and ready for you to enter your data! I will also organise training so we can all learn how to enter data together!

I hope you all have a wonderful Christmas and a Merry New Year! Please be safe when working in and around our beautiful waterways and most importantly smile lots.

Cass Davis

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It's all about Waterbugs!

We have been very lucky to have John Gooderham from the Waterbug Company come to the north central Victoria to facilitate training in the Agreed Level Taxonomy (ALT) Waterbug training to volunteers across the region.

The ALT is a Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning approved and accredited course developed by scientists to assist community to easily identify live waterbugs in the field so they can contribute important and quality information to a state-wide database.

John and I spent a day in Baringhup on the Loddon River with community volunteers training them in the ALT method. The day was a great success with over 10 varieties of waterbugs key'd out using ALT keys. Part of this program is to provide opportunities for community volunteers to become scientists, so they can develop skills and knowledge to actively participate in monitoring the health of waterways across the region.

Over four days, 15 people attended the Native Fish Recovery Plan's (NFRP) NatureBlitz event. Twenty-five sites were selected based on location of previous monitoring programs including sites from the Environment Protection Authority's (EPA) river health team and the Lower Loddon River's Environmental Flows monitoring sites.



Lois collects water samples from the Loddon River as a part of her ALT Waterbug training

On the Monday and Tuesday participants were taken out to four sites in total to participate in the ALT training with John, Peter and myself. On Wednesday and Thursday participants were split into two groups and taken to three sites each.

Group one and two continued their training with Peter and I. The data collected from each site will be analysed after which a report will be developed and made available on the North Central CMA's website. The data will contribute to the NFRP's outcomes and will help to determine the effect of the environmental flows on the Lower Loddon River, further to this, the data will build on 25 years of EPA data.

If you would like to get involved in waterbug training and volunteering please call me on (03) 5440 1863.

Fantastic Frogs! Frogs & Friends Partnership between Friends of Cornish Hill and Daylesford Dharma School.

Story by Tanya Wiggins

A perfect gap in the weather on Friday 7th October provided grade 3-6 students from the Daylesford Dharma School a great opportunity to get down to Cornish Hill in Daylesford and look for frogs!

Our whole school theme in term 4 is Environmental Balance and with our entire curriculum, we aim to engage the students in local projects, which facilitate investigation and inquiry from our students as well as encourage them to take action in making our community a better place for all living things.

Ray Draper, from Central Highlands Environmental Consultancy, and local frog researcher, came to the school and gave a wonderful presentation to the students about the frogs in our area and some of the challenges facing frogs. He showed us pictures of our local frogs and we listened to some frog calls which many of us have heard coming from somewhere in grasslands and wetlands around us.

After learning about our local frogs, we then went frog hunting with Ray and some volunteers from the Friends of Cornish Hill Community group where we found and identified a Ewings Tree Frog living on Smiths Creek.

All of the children were given a frog identification resource to take home to help them identify the frogs in their local environment.

It is important that we don't pick frogs up as the natural oils and acid on our hands can affect the frogs' skin, which is how they breathe. So we encourage everyone to identify the frogs without picking them up where possible.

We also participated in a frogs and friends art project with local artist Rosie Laszlo. On October 28 we undertook a street art project on Vincent Street in Daylesford (outside the ANZ bank) as part of Hepburn Shires Artober Program. Under Rosie's creative eye, our aim was to raise community awareness about the importance of frogs to the health of our local environment. Each student had made either a positive or negative stencil of a frog outline in a previous session with Rosie. Using natural chalk paint coloured using plant dyes, we stencilled frogs all over the



footpath and the brickwall outside the bank with messages about how we can care for frogs.

It was great to see parents and community members joining us in our frog investigations. The funding grant for this program was made available from the Hepburn Shire and we would like to thank Margie Thomas from Friends of Cornish Hill for facilitating this project and working with us to make it such a wonderful success!

The children are currently working on information boards, which will be full of local froggy facts. These will be placed around Cornish Hill along the walking track to draw people's attention to the small amphibians which are peacefully resting in the grass around them. The Daylesford Men's Shed kindly made the signs for the students to place their facts on and the signs are due to be installed at Cornish Hill in early December.

For more information about frogs head to <https://frogs.org.au/frogs/of/Victoria/> to learn more about these groovy little amphibians.

There are a number of specially made frog habitats along Smiths Creek at Cornish Hill where families are encouraged to do their own investigations. The children know where these are and are encouraged to lead family expeditions to find and identify some of our little froggy friends.

Everyone is reminded that our local snakes like to dine on frogs so suitable exploring clothes and boots are recommended, as is keeping your eyes open. Happy frog watching!



Students paint froggy street art on footpaths in Vincent Street, Daylesford

Waterwatch for Schools – The River Detectives program – Registrations now open!

In 2017 school year the River Detectives program, will run again supporting educators to get out and explore local waterways and catchments with students.

Being involved in River Detectives gives you access to:

- A group water monitoring kit for your group
- Ability to record and explore data through an interactive website
- How to guides, resources and activities linked to the Victorian Curriculum (Geography, Mathematics, Science, Sustainability and more)
- Two professional development sessions to help you run the activities in the classroom

Workshop One (March) – Introduction to water science and recording your data

Workshop Two (September) – Discovering the world of water bugs

To get involved in 2017 please contact the North Central CMA, email; riverdetectives@nccma.vic.gov.au for a registration form which needs to be completed by Tuesday 13 December 2016.

Not a teacher? Maybe you might like to offer to help your local school run the program!

Did you know, the River Detectives program is also being run in other CMAs across Victoria – so there will be a few changes coming in the new year too, keep your eyes peeled!

Events...

Soil Health Workshop

Langley Landcare and the Upper Campaspe Landcare Network are running a free workshop to assist landholders gain a better understanding of soil on their property.

Learn from experts how to evaluate the condition of your soil and apply appropriate management practices to enhance soil health. Identify possible soil health issues using nine simple visual tests



conducted in the field.

Join Martin Hamilton, from the Department of Agriculture, who will be leading the workshop utilising the latest Soil Health Guide for North Central Victoria. Learn how to use the Soil Health Score Card to provide real-time information on the physical, chemical and biological characteristics of your soil.

When: Tuesday 13 December, 10.30 am to 1.30 pm

Where: 53 Pickering Lane, Edgecombe

What's on: Participants to bring a soil sample (handful), Field Practical from 11.30 am to 12.30pm, remember to wear boots, hats and water.

RSVP: essential for catering by Thursday 8 December to Martin Hamilton (03) 5430 4802 martin.hamilton@ecodev.vic.gov.au

Weed Buster Workshop

Upper Campaspe Landcare Network and the Macedon Ranges Shire Council are hosting a weed buster workshop in Kyneton.

If you own a small farm property and have an annoying weed problem, this is a great opportunity to obtain valuable advice from industry experts regarding identification and treatment of your weed problems. There will be tea and coffee on arrival and a light lunch will be provided.

When: Saturday December 3, 10:00AM - 1:00PM

Where: Bald Hill Reserve, 281 Pipers Creek Road, Kyneton 3444

RSVP: To the MRSC on (03) 5421 9660 or email environment@mrsc.vic.gov.au

2017 Autumn Fungus Workshops and Foray

Renowned fungi expert and photographer Alison Pouliot has another wonderful season of workshops coming up in 2017.

Many locations within the catchment will be focus settings for a fungi foray, so ensure you keep updated and book in soon. All booking details are on Alison's website at: http://alisonpouliot.com/projects_fungi_ecology.php

Courses & resources...

Bendigo Tafe is again calling for expressions of interest for the 2017 intake for Certificate III, IV and Diploma of Conservation and Land Management.

There are no pre-requisites for any levels. If you are reasonably fit, want to learn more about the environment and enjoy being outdoors this may be the course for you. Current graduates are employed by places such as Connecting Country, DELWP, North Central CMA, Local contractors, Councils and Conservation Volunteers Australia.

- Certificate III – gain skill sets - pathways to further study or employment
- Farm Chemical Users Certificate
- Chainsaws
- Fencing
- Revegetation
- Water quality, macro-invertebrate survey and animal identification skills
- Introduction to Native Flora
- Weed and Pest management
- Multiple field trips
- Camps where applicable

Certificate IV – gain knowledge – pathways to further study or employment

- Native Flora and Fauna ID
- Survey methodology
- Farm Chemicals Users Certificate
- Revegetation
- Mapping
- Pest Management
- OHS
- Project Costing
- Environmental Policies, Legislation
- Multiple camps and field trips

Diploma – It is advised that students have completed the Certificate IV or have extensive environmental background – pathway to further



study or employment

- Research
- Planning River restoration
- Whole Farm Planning
- Conduct Biological Surveys
- Advanced Flora ID
- Creating Management Plans
- Environmental Legislation
- Creating Funding Bids
- Management of weed and Pest Planning
- Management of Alpine, Woodland and Coastal Parks
- Multiple camps and field trips

For more information go to the Bendigo Tafe website <http://www.bendigotafe.edu.au/Environment%20and%20Primary%20Industries/2017/index.html#32-33> and put in an enquiry/ online application or contact Terri Williams, Coordinator of Conservation and Land Management, twilliams@bendigotafe.edu.au or call (03) 5434 1743.



With at least 81 introduced vertebrate species having established populations in Australia – now is the time for action.

The conference will be the 17th in a series convened by the Invasive Plants and Animals Committee (IPAC). The conference is held triennially, with the last conference held in Brisbane in May 2014. The 2017 AVPC is being organised by the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre, in conjunction with the Australian and ACT Governments.

Registrations are now open for the conference, as are nominations for the 2017 ACTA AVPC Awards, promoting excellence in field-level pest management. Visit <http://avpc.net.au/>

Funding...

Australian Government Volunteer Grants 2016

The Australian Government's Volunteer Grants 2016 are now open. The funding will help volunteers to do their important work, and the grants of between \$1,000 and \$5,000 each will allow organisations to buy much needed equipment, such as computers, or help with training volunteers, fuel costs or undertaking background security checks.

Application period is from 8 November 2016 until 20 December 2016 - 2:00pm AEDT. Visit: <https://www.dss.gov.au/grants/grants/funding-open-for-application/volunteer-grants-2016>

Pest Plant and Animals Innovation Grants

The Australian Government is supporting farmers and the community to tackle established pest animals and weeds through the Control tools and technologies for established pest animals and weeds competitive grants programme.

Approximately \$10 million is available through the programme in 2016–17, to support the development of, and/or improvement to innovative and forward-thinking control tools and technologies from 2016–17 to 2018–19.

To be eligible for funding, projects must propose to develop a chemical, biological or physical control tool or technology to manage one or more established pest animals (excluding invertebrates) and/or weeds that are not native to Australia or a particular part of Australia.

You are encouraged to apply if you are an:

- Australian company or organisation with research and development capability
- Individual pest animal or weed researcher or innovator partnering with an eligible company or organisation

Applications close 5pm AEST, Monday 23 January 2017.

All the application details can be found at: <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/pests-diseases-weeds/pest-animals-and-weeds/wp-comp-grants-programme/apply>



The North Central CMA would like to thank community members who attended the recent community drop-in sessions and provided valuable local knowledge and information to assist the development of the Regional Floodplain Management Strategy (RFMS). Information will greatly assist the North Central CMA, Councils and VicSES prioritise future floodplain management actions across the region.

Whilst floodplain management is complex, the RFMS will consider and respond to the issues raised. The following is a snapshot of the themes and specific issues raised during recent community drop-in sessions.

LEVEE MANAGEMENT

- Which levees are most important?
- Who owns all the levees? Who's responsible for maintaining them (if anybody)? Who can maintain them and how?

FLOOD FLOW MANAGEMENT

- Emergency management authorities should consider a coordinated plan and utilise the Lower Loddon River and Lower Avoca River lakes systems (including the region's water storage reservoirs) to store floodwater during flood events.

FLOOD WARNINGS

- The importance of reliable information, in various formats, to make informed decisions.
- The importance of incorporating local knowledge in flood warning information.
- Supporting the development of a system of flood observers to assist emergency management authorities during flood events.

WATERWAY MANAGEMENT

- Who is responsible for waterway management and the management of strategic floodways? CMA's, Council or individuals?

ROAD CLOSURES

- The accuracy of information about road closures during recent flooding.
- Informed and reliable community communication regarding road closures and when they are re-opened.

CHANNEL DECOMMISSIONING

- Changes in flood behaviour as a result of channel decommissioning projects.
- The accountability of channel owners undertaking works and liability if flood behaviour is altered.

NEW FLOOD STUDIES

- High quality flood information is critical to emergency services ability to provide accurate flood warnings.
- Landowners need a level of certainty about what is likely to occur based on predictions.

PERMANENT SOLUTIONS VERSUS EMERGENCY RESPONSES

- What can be done before the flood and what can only be done during the flood.

VARIABLE IMPACTS

- The difference between land-use and the impacts of flooding.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE

- The capacity to maintain existing floodplain management systems (e.g. private levees, floodways and drains) has also been reduced – as fewer landowners now have to maintain more infrastructure.

ILLEGAL WORKS

- Illegal works occurring in the floodplain altering flood behaviour and who is responsible for managing the process and undertaking enforcement against illegal works.

CROSS-BORDER ISSUES

- The management of floodwaters across both states (e.g. Victoria & New South Wales) and regional borders (e.g. flood water from North Central CMA naturally flows into the Mallee CMA).
- The dissemination of flood warning information across regions

Over the next six months, the North Central CMA will be meeting with Councils and other agencies with emergency management functions to discuss the matters raised by the community and develop the Regional Floodplain Management Strategy document. This may include follow-up meetings with individuals who provided information to gain a better understanding of the matters raised.

For anyone who couldn't attend the drop-in sessions there is still an opportunity to provide comment. If you would like to discuss any floodplain management issues or provide feedback to the project team please contact the Project Manager – Shaun Morgan on (03) 5440 1898 to discuss how you can be involved.