



# North Central chat

DECEMBER 2017

## A message from the Regional Landcare Coordinator

Hi everyone,

Welcome to the final edition of the Chat for 2017. What an incredible year of action it has been. I've taken some time to think back to all the regional Landcare team events and activities; the past 12 months have been such fun.

Highlights for me include Breakfast with the Birds, hosted at Lake Cullen in February; the inaugural 'Northern Rivers Roundup' professional development event for Landcare Facilitators hosted with Goulburn Broken CMA in Nagambie; the 2017 Chicks in the Sticks at Walkers Lake and of course, the 2017 Victorian Landcare Awards held on September 1 at Government House. The north central region boasted three award winners, two of whom will go on to the 2018 National Landcare Awards. The awards are the feature of the current Victorian Landcare and Catchment Management magazine, get your copy via <https://www.landcarevic.org.au/landcare-magazine/>

Before the year closes out there is still a power of work to be done to collating and reporting to the Australian and Victorian Governments on the 2016-17 Community Grants achievements. The report information and data submitted by Landcare groups, networks and individuals is vital to demonstrate return on investment as well as the diversity of amazing on ground and engagement work being implemented through Landcare. The 2016-17 Landcare Report Card will showcase this data, which I am expecting to be published early in the New Year.

It would be remiss of me not to thank both Mandy Coulson for her incredible work as RLF supporting sustainable agriculture initiatives, followed by the delightful Darren Bain whom continues to support regional partnerships and deliver activities that suit the needs of the farming community through

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resources, training, field days, community grants and the annual Future Farming Expo. There is great strength and passion for supporting the Natural Resource Management community within the North Central CMA's regional Landcare team, Darren and I look forward to another interesting, educational and engaging year in 2018... *we just need a little break first!*

Happy harvesting to our region's growers, Merry Christmas and best wishes to you and your families for the New Year. See you in 2018.

### Tess Grievs

#### Regional Landcare Coordinator

North Central Catchment Management Authority

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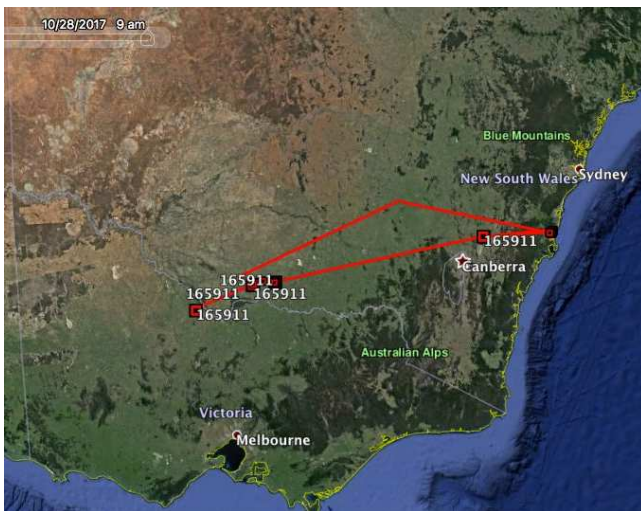
## News...

### MILo has landed

Have you been following the Bitterns in Rice project happenings? In early November one of the GPS transmitter tagged juveniles, caught by Matt Herring, turned up in our region.

Affectionately known as MILo, the project team reported that he was hanging around Kow Swamp after coming back on the radar after five months at Shoalhaven Heads in NSW.

*Will he head to Hirds Swamp?* Hirds Swamp is a site which has had recent bittern sightings. Great news given the environmental watering to support their habitat and feeding requirements.



MILo's movements are helping the 'Bitterns in Rice' project team stitch together the bitterns preferred wetlands across the country. You can follow his exploits through BiRF Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/bitternsinriceproject/>

### The Very Fast Break

**Agriculture Victoria's funnyman Dr Dale Grey presents 'The Very Fast Break' which is delivered as short YouTube videos summarising oceanic and atmospheric climate drivers and the summarised model predictions for Victoria's rainfall and temperature.**

Whether you're at home, on holidays or on the header this summer this four-minute outlook is a handy snapshot of what's been and what's to come for Victoria weather. The current issue is October 2017.

<http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/weather-and-climate/newsletters>

## Save the Date

4 February, 2018

**North Central CMA's annual 'Breakfast with the Birds' event will be hosted on February 4, 2018 at Hirds Swamp.**



Why not download our citizen science app in preparation for this event? Look for NatureBlitz in your app store, or go to: [www.nccma.vic.gov.au/natureblitz-app](http://www.nccma.vic.gov.au/natureblitz-app)

Further event details and a self-registration link will be available on the North Central CMA website in January. You can also register through North Central CMA on (03) 5448 7124.

21 February, 2018

**The 2018 Future Farming Expo will be held in Donald on February 21 in partnership with Wimmera CMA.**

This annual expo draws a great crowd and will focus on cropping related topics such as farm business fundamentals for primary producers engaged in cropping and livestock, insecticide resistance, virtual fencing, drones and aerial imagery, and weather and climate outlooks.

Advertising will begin soon, with North Central CMA taking registrations. Look out for this event in your local paper and register early for what is sure to be another fantastic Expo in 2018.





## The importance of mucking about; keeping the social side of Landcare thriving in Muckleford

Article and photos from Beth Mellick, Secretary of Muckleford Catchment Landcare Group  
<https://mucklefordlandcare.wordpress.com>

**The Muckleford Catchment Landcare Group made a planning decision at one of our AGMs to focus on engagement of members in the upcoming year of activities, rather than large on-ground works projects. So that's what we did for much of 2017, with no grant money needed.**

After surveying members, we found out what people wanted to hear about and put together a program of events.

We ran two morning workshops - Dams to Wetlands, and Landscape Restoration. Both workshops were at members' properties, with one of our members providing the information. We like to think of it as peer learning.

We had a planting day with the local Steiner school who are members of our group, and as part of a Connecting Country project, as well as two mornings taking off plant guards at a previous project planting.

We did a bike ride to Maldon, had lunch in a pub, and returned to Muckleford, all agreeing to make it an annual event for our group. We had a stall at our local community festival, Muckfest, to hand out information and sign up new members, and lastly we hold Christmas drinks and planning for the following year.



Along with a roadside weed grant from the local council, and a project funded by the North Central CMA to restore Bassett Creek, we had a well-

rounded year of activities.

What we learnt this year is that it's important to communicate regularly with members, and run a wide range of events for people to attend. These events don't have to be massive, but they need to be friendly, inviting and informative. We communicate via our blog site, which is easy to keep up-to-date using Wordpress.



Even when there are no big projects happening, it's important to keep doing things, keep your group active via partnering in activities with your network, or running your own educational and social events.

## Outstanding Victorian Aboriginal Leaders Honoured

**Nine Aboriginal Victorians were inducted into the 2017 Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll at a celebration held in Melbourne on November 21.**

Now in its seventh year, the Honour Roll recognises the achievements of Aboriginal people, past and present.

Each inductee has dedicated their life to helping others and giving back to their community, while fighting for self-determination and equality.

Uncle Brien Nelson, a Jarra elder of Dja Dja Wurrung Country is familiar to many central Victorians, and was recognised for his generosity in sharing knowledge of culture and Country.

Brien's honour roll story reads "Brien's willingness to share knowledge of Aboriginal arts, culture and history, coupled with his warm and genuine nature, have not only made him a much-loved figure, but have helped to shape a more inclusive and united community in the central goldfields region."



Uncle Brien was a member of the CMA's Natural Resource Management Committee actively promoting partnerships between the North Central CMA and the Aboriginal community.

Read each inductees story at: [www.vic.gov.au/aboriginalvictoria](http://www.vic.gov.au/aboriginalvictoria).

### The wonders of Wirra-lo

Article and photos supplied by Damien Cook in consultation with Ken and Jill Hooper

A 2016-17 National Landcare Program funded Community Grant assisted in the planting of a diversity of wetland plant species at Ken and Jill Hoopers' covenanted property Wirra-lo Wetlands at Murrabit West. Ken and Jill have been working on restoring the wetlands at this property for a number of years in partnership with North Central CMA, Victorian Environmental Water Holder, Trust for Nature, GMW and Damien Cook.



A thriving swamp buttercup (*Ranunculus undosus*).

Since the planting, which was carried out by local

Barapa Barapa community members Uncle Duck Charles and Robbie Kirby and wetland ecologist Damien Cook, there have been two deliveries of environmental water to the property and the wetland plants are thriving and rapidly spreading across the newly restored Brolga Swamp. As its name suggests this wetland has been specifically designed as a potential breeding site for brolgas.

The swamp provides valuable fauna habitat for growling grass frog, which were recently recorded on the floodplain, the first record since 2008. A number of locally and nationally endangered plant species are also now well established at the site, thanks to the work undertaken through community grants funds.



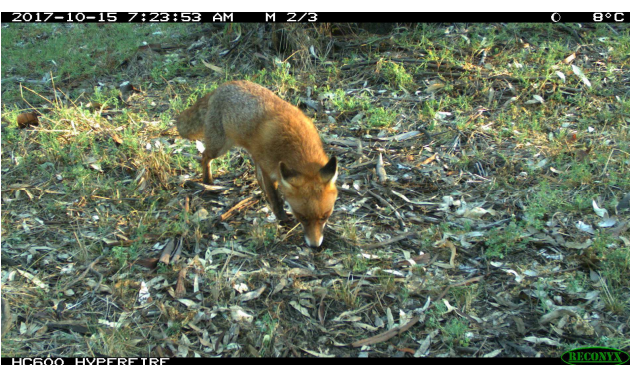
Ken and Jill have done a great job battling the weeds and the whole place is on a trajectory to becoming a model of what can be achieved by cooperative land caring.

### Did you hear the one about the fox and the emu?

**The current Gunbower Forest intensive fox baiting program has almost finished for 2017 and results are looking very positive for turtle populations.**

Project Manager Amy Russell says that "Initial results have been extremely positive with turtle nests located within the fox baiting zone raided 50% less than those nests located in the non-baited zone (referred to as control sites). To help us monitor this program we use a number of monitoring cameras to see what's happening in the forest."

The images captured with remote sensor camera placed out in the forest and along bait station sites show the recent action caught on camera, including one inquisitive emu!



Turtles Australia Inc. recorded over 250 turtle nests during their November 'turtle month' monitoring in Gunbower Forest and surrounds with the help of local community, landholders, Bendigo Tafe and CMA staff.

Finally, we had to giggle when despite all her efforts to help this shelled soul from harm's way; Amy was swiftly soaked by this non-appreciative turtle during a weekend roadside rescue mission.



### Biodiversity Response Planning (BRP)

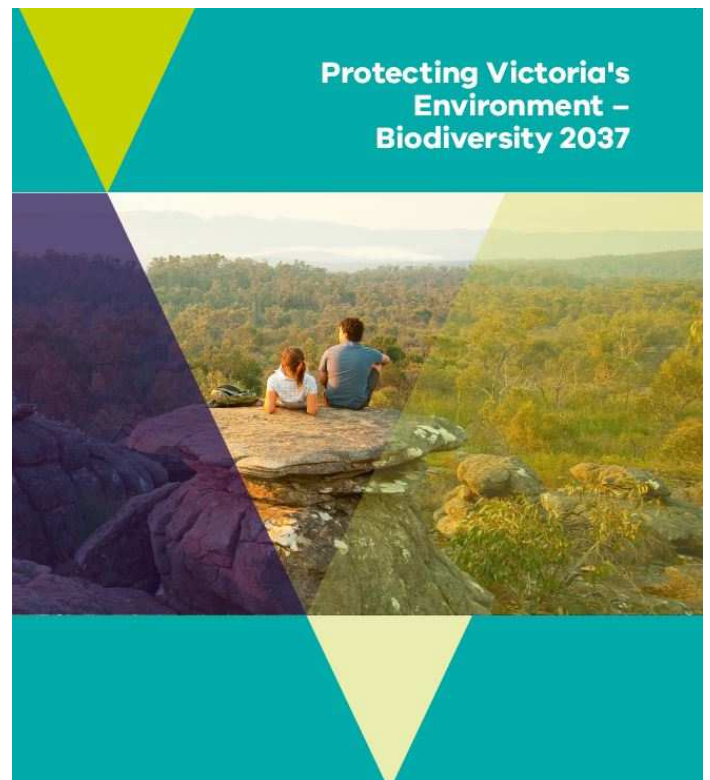
Over the past month, representatives from Landcare, environmental community groups, government agencies and CMA's have been a part of a co-design process for responding to the Victorian Biodiversity Plan 2037.

The outcome of the co-design workshops was to create an agreed Biodiversity Response Planning process which will be up and running early in 2018.

Consultants will soon have a report available on the outcomes and recommendations from the collective responses. The report will encapsulate the discussion and an approach for moving biodiversity response planning forward.

Funding in the order of \$82M is available over four years to implement targeted, collaborative projects that align with Biodiversity 2037 targets.

More information will soon be available on the BRP process and outcomes relatable to Landcare. Keep updated about input and funding opportunities via <https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/biodiversity-plan>





Hello everyone!

A quick update from me to end what has been another wonderful year. 2017 has included some amazing events, saw wonderful people join the program and overall fantastic program achievements. From launching the statewide River Detectives pilot program to releasing the first Annual River Health Snapshot Report 2016 in partnership with the Native Fish Recovery Plan. The year has been jam packed!

We trialled the first River Detectives online webinar – ‘ask the expert’ at Bridgewater Primary School and delivered a whole bunch of Agreed Level Taxonomy (ALT) Waterbug Workshops. We have partnered with the City of Greater Bendigo and Coliban Water to deliver the National Water Week event with kids across the region and worked with local Landcare groups and Angling Clubs to host the third Campaspe Carp Catch event. We have entered data as part of the statewide Saltwatch Week event. And I have to say, it’s all thanks to you. Thank you for being passionate and caring about your patch, monitoring your local waterway and working with children to plant the seed in the minds of our future Natural Resource Management leaders!

A quick reminder: Registrations are now open for the River Detectives program 2018. If you would like to get involved, the program is suitable for both primary and secondary schools and can fit into lots of areas of your curriculum – water quality, sustainability, kids teaching kids, personal and social development, numeracy (mapping, graphs etc.) to get involved APPLY NOW!

Before I sign off, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the following people in their commitment to 10 years of volunteering with the Waterwatch program: John and Jan, Veronica, Melanie, Ron, Marion, John and Veronica and Paul.



I hope you all have a safe and wonderful Christmas and I look forward to catching up with you all in the New Year, safe travels and many happy journeys over the festive season.

### Cass Davis

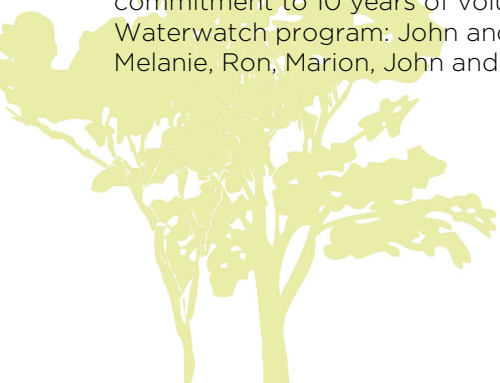
Regional Waterwatch Coordinator  
(03) 5440 1863  
0434 730 526  
[cass.davis@nccma.vic.gov.au](mailto:cass.davis@nccma.vic.gov.au)



### Do you want to get outside with your students and learn more about local waterways and why they are so precious?

The North Central Catchment Management Authority’s (CMA) Waterwatch Program is running the River Detectives program in 2018. The program supports schools to connect to their local waterway (dam, river, wetland etc.) and includes::

- Professional learning workshops on monitoring habitats, water quality and macroinvertebrates.
- Loan of a water quality kit and macroinvertebrate monitoring kit.
- A login to the River Detectives portal (for data recording which contributes to a state database).
- Activity booklet for the classroom with activities that relate to curriculum.





- Invitations to be involved in special events.
- Online learning opportunities (virtual sessions).

The program is suitable for both primary and secondary schools and aligns with educative areas curriculum – water quality, sustainability, kids teaching kids, personal and social development, numeracy (mapping, graphs and more).

### APPLY NOW!

Applications close Friday 15 December. I will be in touch by 22 December 2017.

[www.riverdetectives.net.au](http://www.riverdetectives.net.au)

## Events...

### Build your own nestbox workshop

**Macedon Ranges Shire Council is hosting a free workshop in Newham on Saturday 9 December.**

Learn about nestboxes and make your own to take home. This free workshop will demonstrate nestbox designs, installation and the animals that depend on them..

Presented in partnership with Woodend Men's Shed. Limited numbers and bookings required to secure a nestbox.

**When:** Saturday 9 December, 2pm – 3.30pm

**Where:** Newham Mechanics Institute, 1292 Rochford Road

**RSVP:** To MRSC on [www.mrsc.vic.gov.au/environment-events](http://www.mrsc.vic.gov.au/environment-events) or call (03) 5421 9660

### World Soil Health Day

**Upper Campaspe Landcare Network is hosting an event for World Soil Health Day on 5 December.**

If you would like to learn more about Soil Health on your property and how to improve it why not come along on Tuesday 5 December on World Soil Day to a free workshop being run by the Upper Campaspe Landcare Network at an olive plantation in Edgecombe.

Experts such as Martin Hamilton, Rebecca Mitchell and Dr Helen Hayden from Agriculture Victoria will be presenting. Dr Hayden has over 20

years experience working in soil biology and plant pathology in many different agricultural industries and in native ecosystems. Dr Hayden said "Many landowners are generally aware of the soil chemical and physical constraints that can affect their paddocks and limit crop yields, but soils also have a biological component that plays an important role in soil health. In the workshop we will uncover why biology is so important for healthy soil, caring for the environment and getting the best out of our farming land."

Participants will learn how to evaluate the condition of their soil and apply appropriate management practices to ensure soil health. They will also gain knowledge on identifying possible soil health issues using nine simple visual tests conducted in the field.

By bringing in soil samples from their property attendees will learn how to use the Soil Health Score card to provide real-time information on the physical, chemical and biological characteristics of their soil. The latest Soil Health Guide produced by North Central CMA will be provided to participants, as well as lunch.

**When:** Tuesday 5 December 2017 10.30am to 1.30pm

**Where:** 'Olive's Olives' Olive Plantation Edgecombe

**RSVP:** Bookings are essential by emailing [environment@mrsc.vic.gov.au](mailto:environment@mrsc.vic.gov.au) or calling (03) 5421 9660.



Scientists are learning more every day about how to manage soils and deal with the challenges. *Photo: Sandy Scheltema.*



## Courses and Resources...

### Child Safe Standards- Guidance Note

**Landcare Victoria Inc. in consultation with the Commission for Children and Young People has produced a guidance note for Landcare groups and networks to adopt in their policies and procedures.**

The guidance note is a starting point for Landcare groups and networks to engage with the Child Safe Standards. It is not designed to cover all child safety issues, but it can be adopted by groups and activity leaders and groups who have only occasional contact with children under 18.

Download the document via LVI's Landcare Gateway page:  
<https://www.landcarevic.org.au/assets/Uploads/GroupResourcePage/aa890586-7f81-4fde-b831-147ceaf98544child-safe-standards---lvi-guidance-note---approved---14th-august-2017.pdf>

### Conservation Volunteers Australia



CVA's Regional Manager Adam Smolak recently got in touch to update Landcare across the north central region on the type of work and projects CVA get involved in.

If your groups, network or project team are in need of some helping hands, get in touch with Adam. His team are based in Bendigo, and available to discuss your program of works and how CVA might be able to assist.

A key driver of CVA is 'inspiring change by connecting people with nature' and with a diversity of volunteer backgrounds and experience, CVA are resourced to deliver enduring conservation outcomes. Visit their website for more information

<http://conservationvolunteers.com.au/what-we-do/>

Contact: Adam Smolak, Regional Manager | Conservation Volunteers Australia, Central, Northern and North East Victoria  
03 54440777  
0427 507 004 | [asmolak@conservationvolunteers.com.au](mailto:asmolak@conservationvolunteers.com.au)

## One App wonder~ NatureBlitz

**North Central Catchment Management Authority has developed this wonderful App that citizen scientists are using to help capture important spatial coverage of fauna species from across north central Victoria.**

There are over 768 individuals from 187 reports already captured through NatureBlitz. This includes: 17 fish, 62 frogs, 8 platypus and water rats and 599 waterbirds

*Exciting news - we have revamped the App!* NatureBlitz now includes more species. We have now added kangaroos, koalas, possums, snakes, lizards and terrestrial birds to the list. This App has everything you will need to start reporting animals. The observations captured through NatureBlitz are shared with the Victorian Government's Victorian Biodiversity Atlas and the Atlas of Living Australia and is highly valued by North Central CMA.

**Your data is contributing to the national database of fauna. Download the App now for free and start reporting fauna in your area.**







## Funding opportunities...

### VicTrack Funding opportunity

Landcare Australia is inviting the Landcare community with an interest in working on VicTrack land to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) for projects requiring between \$10,000 and \$30,000 per annum, over a one to three year period.

Landcare Australia is looking for groups to undertake projects that restore, protect or enhance environmental values on vacant VicTrack land through activities such as weed control, revegetation, and threatened species management.

This funding opportunity is open to all volunteer-based community groups that embrace the Landcare ethos.

EOI's close **December 15**. For further information regarding this opportunity, including how to locate VicTrack land or how to submit your EOI please visit <https://landcareaustralia.org.au/funding-opportunities/victrack-funding-landcare-groups-expression-interest/>

If you have any questions regarding this EOI, please call Landcare Australia on 03 8631 7800 or email: [grants@landcareaustralia.com.au](mailto:grants@landcareaustralia.com.au)



The Plan2Farm programs EOI process is still open for farmers of the region. To understand your eligibility or for more information contact Shari Rankin at the North Central CMA on 5440 1885 or [shari.rankin@nccma.vic.gov.au](mailto:shari.rankin@nccma.vic.gov.au)

## CLOSING SOON...National Landcare Program - Smart Farms Small Grants

The Australian Government is inviting applications via an open process for entities to deliver services under the National Landcare Program Smart Farms Small Grants.

Grants are available to support local on-ground projects across Australia that increase the knowledge and capacity of farmers and fishers. Project that facilitate the adoption of tools, technologies and improved land management practices to effectively, sustainably and productively manage Australia's natural resources and adapt to significant changes in climate, weather and markets are eligible.

Applications are invited for grants, the value of which range from a minimum of \$5,000 to a maximum of \$100,000 (GST exclusive).

Projects will be considered under two tiers:

- Tier 1 for those between \$5,000 and \$50,000; and
- Tier 2 for those between \$50,001 and \$100,000.

Under this grant round the Australian Government is seeking applications for projects that will be completed by 30 April 2020.

Grants close 7 December 2017 at 2.00pm

For all the information, guidelines and application forms visit: <https://www.communitygrants.gov.au/grants/national-landcare-program-smart-farms-small-grants>

**Through a guided process, and with consideration of all aspects of your farming business, Plan2Farm will help you make more informed decisions to improve your business resilience.**

Farmers within the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District are strongly encouraged to apply; with all farmers holding water use licences within the broader Goulburn Murray Water regulated area also eligible to apply. To express your interest please visit [www.surveymonkey.com/r/LPGZYMB](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LPGZYMB)



Put your farming future in your hands

