

North Central chat

FEBRUARY 2017



A message from the Regional Landcare Coordinator

Happy New Year everyone,

I do hope you have a great summer break with family and friends. Respite is certainly refreshing, and taking a much needed summer break from routine is a wonderful luxury that many of us get to enjoy.

Cropping farmers of course were busy harvesting across the New Year period. The extended summer dry conditions after a wet spring made for a bountiful harvest this year in the North Central and Mallee regions, despite the crop flooding during September's rains.

The summer break also bought with it budding new life as reports came in of successful captive squirrel gliders breeding along the Campaspe River and bushstone curlew chicks hatching in the Mid Loddon CMN enclosures. Both are endangered species, which local Landcare groups work hard to protect the species and their habitats.

I am thrilled to be able to announce that all funding from the 2016-17 Community Grants program has now been released. The 2016-17 program funded over 90% of applications comprising 44 Projects Grants, 8 Landcare Network Grants and 34 Group Maintenance Grants.

The applications were of a very high quality and covered a wonderful array of NRM and sustainable agriculture themes. Mandy and I look forward to being involved in the delivery of the projects. We encourage funded groups to keep in contact throughout the project implementation, as we are keen to get our hands dirty and visit you onsite.

Reporting for the 2015-16 Community Grants program took place in November. Thank you very much to all those grant recipients for their efforts. We are always so pleased to read about the ways

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in which groups engage communities in their projects, different methodologies used in undertaking works, the challenges and the achievements. The report and photographs paired with the mapping data are used many times over within the CMA and by the program investors, it is so valuable in building the catchment and state scale picture of Landcare's impact.

There is already so much on the calendar to keep us all busy over the coming month, so read on to find something that interests you.

Enjoy the read,

Tess Grieves

Regional Landcare Coordinator

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News...

Friends of Trentham Creeks and Reserves welcome funds to revegetate Trent Creek

Article & images by Sandy Scheltema

The Friends of Trentham Creeks and Reserves were excited to receive news recently that they were successful in a grant application for funds to revegetate Trent Creek. Four thousand nine hundred dollars and seventy five dollars were allocated to the group who are already beginning work on the project. The money will be used to clear noxious weeds and revegetate important native species, such as two species listed as 'rare' in Victoria; the Brookers gum (*Eucalyptus brookeriana*), and the floodplain fireweed (*Senecio campylocarpus*).

Convener of the group Jan Robertson said, "We are delighted to receive news we were successful in our application for funds to rehabilitate Trent Creek. The creek is at the entrance of Trentham and the site of an important historic swimming pool used by the town in the 30's. Trent Creek is a tributary of the Coliban River, by rehabilitating this area we will be increasing biodiversity and providing connectivity with the nearby Wombat Forest through the establishment of a corridor for indigenous flora and fauna.

We look forward to working with Trentham District Primary School, the Trentham Historical Society, and the Upper Campase Landcare Network in order to raise the profile of this valuable wetland area."



Landcare Gateway update

The new and improved Victorian Landcare Gateway was launch in September 2016 and groups are steadily working their way through updating content and contacts.

The information below is provided to assist with working through common queries

Having trouble logging in?

If you've had issues accessing the Landcare Gateway please contact Adam Hughes (landcarevic@gmail.com) at the Victorian Landcare Program (VLP). Adam will get you set up quick smart.

Having difficulty using the Landcare Gateway?

If you're having problems using the Landcare Gateway, we want to know. We are keen to hear your feedback on the website, including any issues and 'bugs'. All issues can be logged with VLP staff - landcarevic@gmail.com

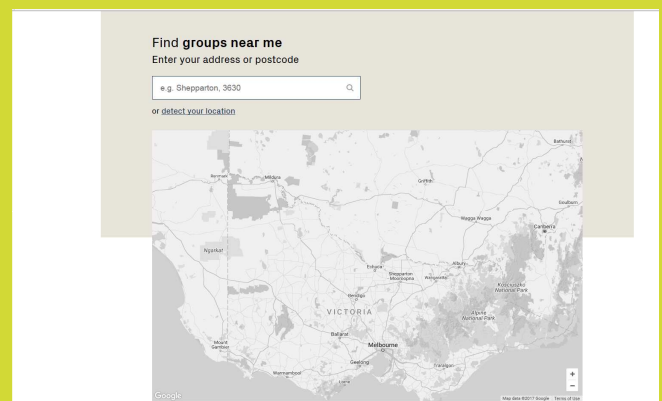
Is content missing?

If content from the previous Landcare Gateway website is missing from the new website please contact the VLP staff for support. VLP staff have an external hard drive where all the content from the previous website is stored. To locate your content email landcarevic@gmail.com

The Regional Landcare Coordinator is able assist all groups working with the Gateway, so get in touch if you'd like assistance.

Remember; The first point of contact for the public looking for their nearest group is often the Gateway, so keeping details updated is really important.

Visit: <https://www.landcarevic.org.au/>





New Child Safety Standards (VIC)

Victoria has new child-safe standards which came into effect 1 January 2017 and applies to any group that provide services for children. The advice from the Commission is that this includes any groups with activities which children (under 18) might attend with their families or as members of the public as well as any children specific activities such as schools programs.

The response required standards are flexible and can be appropriate for the level of risk. Groups will need to adopt child safe policies, a statement of commitment to child safety and a code of conduct. However this isn't about having the right paperwork, it's about providing a safe environment for children. The FTLA and the CMA will circulate further Landcare-specific information as it becomes available.

For further detail go to

<http://www.cyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/standards/index.htm> or call (03) 8601 5281 or email childsafestandards@ccyp.vic.gov.au. Our Community also has a handy webinar at <https://www.communitydirectors.com.au/icda/events/?articleId=7133>

Activity leaders and organisers need a Working with Children Check, even if parents are present. Parliament has introduced further changes which are planned for later in 2017, when supervision by someone with a working with children check will no longer be sufficient.

For more information go to <http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au> or call 1300 652 879

The Regional Landcare Coordinator will be attending an information session hosted by DELWP to be informed about this legislation on February 9.

2017 Duck Season Announced

The Andrews Labor Government recently announced arrangements for the 2017 duck hunting season.

Minister for Agriculture, Jaala Pulford confirmed that the season will commence on **Saturday 18 March, and will last 12 weeks, closing on Monday 12 June.**

The bag limit, as per standing regulations, will remain at 10 birds per person per day. The hunting of the Blue-winged Shoveler, however, will be prohibited due to the low numbers of the species.

The settings for the 2017 duck season reflect the expert advice provided by the Game Management Authority (GMA) based on extensive habitat and waterbird surveys conducted across eastern Australia.

The surveys found that last winter's rainfall has resulted in a significant increase in waterbird breeding and extensive and widespread habitat availability. This has allowed game ducks to breed for a second time and disperse widely across the landscape.

The GMA and partner compliance agencies, including DELWP, DEDJTR, Parks Victoria and Victoria Police will be out in force in 2017 to ensure compliance with all hunting and public safety laws.

The GMA will continue to monitor conditions in the lead up to and during the season. Where warranted, wetlands are able to be closed to hunting on the advice of the GMA to protect significant concentrations of endangered waterbirds.

Details of the 2017 duck season, including any wetland closures, will be regularly updated on the GMA website www.gma.vic.gov.au and the Game Hunting Victoria smartphone app.

Grown in the grounds

Article from Veronica Groat, Strathallan Family Landcare

Strathallan Family Landcare is never short of an innovative idea and after several months working with Gloria Jeans coffee shop in Echuca, they're having more than pot luck.

A chance cup of coffee and a discussion about landfill has led Strathallan Family Landcare members to hatch a plan with an interesting environmental twist.

The group has joined forces with Gloria Jeans Coffee in Echuca and each week for the past five months, disposable coffee cups and used coffee grounds have been collected for use in a fund raising 'Pot-Ups' planting project.

The coffee grounds have proven to be a valuable additive to ordinary potting mix and the cups, in three sizes make good and reliable containers.



Club members and friends from far and wide have provided cuttings of favourite plants from their home gardens to the project and so far just over 500 'pot-up' plants have been created.

The variety of plants include Geraniums in a range of colours, calendulas, cactus, succulents of all types including cotyledon, 'Mother-in-laws tongue', to jade, sage, and herbs such as rosemary, oregano, wormwood and ground-covers.



Rob Burgess (Manager) and Amber Johnson with plants at Gloria Jeans Coffee Echuca.

The 'Pot-Ups' are sold for a gold coin donation at local markets including the Echuca Farmers Market. Funds raised support the group's Campaspe squirrel glider project.

Recent newspaper reports tell us that hundreds of tonnes of coffee grounds go into landfill each year and who knows how many takeaway cups and containers go the same way.

Strathallan's 'Pot-Ups' project is a positive endeavour, that aims to reuse throw-away produce and in doing so reduce the levels going to landfill.

Sustainable Ag Snippet

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions on farms – good for the wallet and the environment!

By Liz Hamilton, Agriculture Victoria, Geelong
Liz.hamilton@ecodev.vic.gov.au

Farmers are always looking to reduce their production costs and environmental impacts, while maintaining or increasing productivity. Nitrogen (N) fertilisers are often the single largest variable cost input for many grain growers. The good news is that recent studies suggest that better use of nitrogen fertilisers looks like being one of the keys to achieving these aims.

In the race to find cost-effective ways to reduce Australia's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, reducing nitrous oxide (N₂O) emissions is an obvious starter! Nitrous oxide is a potent GHG - about 300 times that of carbon dioxide. It can persist in the atmosphere for more than 100 years and has the added downside of being an ozone destroying gas. Nitrous oxide emissions also represent a loss of valuable N from soils which would otherwise be available for plant growth. Around 60 per cent of Australia's N₂O emissions are produced from agriculture.

Although naturally produced in soils by microbes (as part of the N cycle), the amount of N₂O emitted to the atmosphere can increase significantly under certain environmental conditions and agricultural management practices.

For example, N₂O emissions from Australian agricultural soils can range from a low of 10 grams N/ha/year (e.g. in some cropping areas of Western Australia) to a high of 16 kilograms N/ha/year (northern Queensland). As a general rule of thumb, improving overall N use efficiency can be the best place to start for reducing N₂O emissions.

Six Victorian farmers are playing an important role in the race to reduce (GHG) emissions by providing researchers access to their best practice cereal cropping paddocks as trial sites for the '*Reducing on-farm N₂O emissions through improved nitrogen use efficiency in grains*'* research project.

Agriculture Victoria researchers aim to assess the amount of N lost from cereal based cropping systems in different soil types and climatic zones. The research project involves nine sites in seven



localities (covering low, medium and high rainfall as well as irrigated cropping sites) in the Wimmera, North Central and Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority regions. This three year project will be completed in July 2017.

In conjunction with findings from previous Victorian studies, the results from this study should enable grain growers in these dryland and irrigated cropping districts to:

- Gain a better understanding of how small changes to current N fertiliser and irrigation management practices in winter grain crops could help reduce N₂O emissions while improving on-farm profitability.
- Improve their current system for managing N by accounting for potential in-crop N mineralisation in predicting soil N supply.
- Make better assessments of how much of the fertiliser N they apply is actually used by the crop, how much of it remains in the soil for (potential) use by subsequent crops and how much N is irretrievably lost as N₂O emissions or other pathways such as leaching from the soil: crop system.

Prior to application of three different N fertiliser rate treatments at sowing, data collected at each of the nine sites includes:

- recent land use history
- pre-season and post-season soil testing (water and N) to a depth of 1.2 m
- N₂O emissions measurement at key times throughout the growing season
- recovery of N (applied as urea fertiliser) by the crop as well as measurements of that left in the soil at harvest, and
- crop measurements including plant density post crop emergence, biomass at flowering and grain yield, N uptake and grain quality indicators at harvest.

Final crop samples are now being collected during the harvest period and final results from the project are expected to be available in February 2017. In the meantime, some interesting findings are emerging around background levels of soil N, response of crops to N fertiliser application and N₂O losses as follows:

- One of the key findings from the past two years indicated that reducing applied N in the HRZ would often have little negative impact on grain productivity, but would potentially save farmers money. Cereal growers often tend to apply high rates of N without assessing the background N level. For instance, rates of greater than 100 kg N/ha are often applied to crops in the HRZ, even though existing and useable stores of N in the soil can be high, often exceeding 200 kg N/ha in the soil profile (to one m) prior to sowing. Soil testing for mineral N, pre-sowing, is essential!
- N₂O losses from irrigated sites and high rainfall, fertile soil sites are higher than in the medium rainfall Wimmera/Mallee sites, especially when the soils are water logged.
- The proportion of N fertiliser recovered by the target crop, remaining in the soil at harvest and so potentially lost from the soil:crop system, can vary significantly (total recoveries ranging from less than 50 per cent to nearly 100 per cent), with total recoveries depending on soil type, seasonal conditions and timing of N application.
- Findings from similar Victorian trials in the HRZ indicate that by avoiding N application at sowing (and delaying it until preferably late July or early August, around late curing/early booting stage), N utilisation is improved leading to higher crop and protein content yields.

The project is also providing insight into N mineralization during the cropping phase in real on-farm situations with potential implications for N fertiliser management. Given the exceptionally high winter rainfall, across most of the sites, it is likely that findings from the 2016 cropping season will provide some additional insights into the relationship between water logging, N uptake and N₂O losses.

For more information about the project contact Mandy Coulson, Regional Landcare Facilitator Sustainable Agriculture, North Central CMA, mandy.coulson@nccma.vic.gov.au, or Richard Murphy, Land Health Coordinator, r.murphy@ghcma.vic.gov.au, Joel Boyd, Wimmera CMA, boydj@wcma.vic.gov.au, Roger Armstrong, Senior Scientist /Adjunct Professor, Agriculture Victoria, Roger.armstrong@ecodev.vic.gov.au

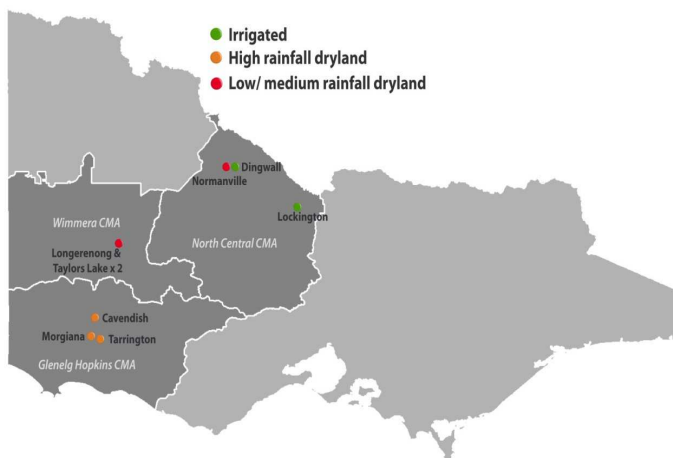
*The 'Reducing on-farm N₂O emissions through



improved nitrogen use efficiency in grains' is an Action on The Ground project co-funded by the Federal Department of Agriculture and the Victorian Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources.

Project collaborators are the Glenelg Hopkins, North Central and Wimmera Catchment Management Authorities and the six Victorian farmers who generously host the trials.

Trial site locations



Hello everyone,

I hope you have all had an amazing break over the Christmas period!

I am heading out and about during February to visit our volunteers and provide training to five new volunteers, if I haven't booked a visit with you, please let me know so we organise one!

A big thank you to all the schools who have responded to our emails about the River Detectives program in 2017.

Sophie and I are looking forward to another year of running the program and we are even more excited that we are able to share this amazing resource with four other regions across Victoria including; Corangamite CMA, North East CMA, Wimmera CMA and Melbourne Water.

For the North Central CMA region I will be hosting River Detectives Professional Development Workshops during March this year, if you haven't already registered, please make sure you do so you don't miss out!

Locations, dates and time are still to be confirmed however, I will be in touch with registered schools to share details shortly.

We will also be delivering a series of waterbug workshops throughout March. John Gooderham from the Water Bug Company will be back in Victoria to roll out the Agreed Level Taxonomy (ALT) Training with our wonderful team of volunteers. If you are interested in participating in the workshops, please email me at cass.davis@nccma.vic.gov.au.

I have also had the pleasure of working closely with David Tiller to develop the North Central Waterwatch Data report. Melissa Ludeman, a Waterwatch volunteer, is also helping. We are currently working through 20 years of data, so we can begin to tell the story about the condition of our rivers and streams through our community volunteers (citizen scientists) perspective.



North Central CMA Clean up Australia day – Gunbower Creek

When: Tuesday, 28 March 2017

Time: 9am – noon (BBQ lunch provided – Garden Park, Cohuna)

Email: info@nccma.vic.gov.au or phone (03) 5448 7124.



What's happening in February?

State Waterwatch Coordinators Meeting
Company

When: 28 February 2017

Time: 10.00 am – 3.00 pm

Where: Melbourne

Site Visits with Volunteers

When: March 2017

Where: Across the Catchment

Cass Davis

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

Waterwatch Victoria: release their new website

The website is full of information from how to get involved in volunteering, to accessing water quality data from hundreds of waterways across Victoria. There are many resources to help you interpret data or learn more about your local waterway.

The website now allows you to explore other areas including our sister program EstuaryWatch – where you can learn all about Estuary's! Another exciting step forward is linking our River Detectives website to this website. Students participating in the 2017 program will have access to interactive maps, they will be able to interactively report results and display graphs and will have access to a broader range of data sets for working on projects. Check out the new website here: <http://www.vic.waterwatch.org.au/>

River Detectives: taking Waterwatch to schools



Over the summer holidays the updated River Detectives website and portal has continued to take shape. In the new version the information schools record for their waterway visits will be stored in the Waterwatch portal. New things will be continuing to be developed during the year but we hope the site will be ready to go in March when we will be running our professional development sessions across the region.



Schools will be contacted in early Term 1 about their application to be a part of the River Detectives program in 2017. If your school has been a part of the program prior you need to let us know your plans for 2017 and if you don't want to continue monitoring a local waterway you will need to return your water monitoring kit to the CMA.



Scan our unique QR code & to find out how you can get involved.
www.vic.waterwatch.org.au



Join our social scene
Instagram: [waterwatch_vic](https://www.instagram.com/waterwatch_vic)
Twitter: [@WaterwatchVic](https://twitter.com/WaterwatchVic)

Waterwatch Victoria
Supported by the
Department of Environment,
Land, Water and Planning



A big thank you, to Deirdre Murphy, our wonderful State Waterwatch Coordinator for all her hard work in bringing this amazing system together.



Events...



Breakfast with the Birds- World Wetlands Day event

The North Central CMA and Gannawarra Shire are again celebrating World Wetlands Day In 2017.

Breakfast with the Birds is a must attend event on our annual calendar, come along to learn and experience the sights and sounds of the birds visiting Lake Cullen.

Ecologist Damien Cook will join us on the day to discuss his research at Lake Cullen and the regions diverse wetland systems.

Date: Sunday, 5 February 2017

Time: 6.30am – 10.00am (breakfast provided)

Location: Lake Cullen, turn down Kangaroo Lake Road and onto Lake Charm - Quambatook Rd and follow signs to carpark on the south side of the lake. A shuttle bus will transport you into the event site.

Cost: Free

Please bring: Binoculars, hats, water, sturdy footwear and a chair if required.

RSVP: Friday 3 February to assist with transport and catering. Email: info@nccma.vic.gov.au or phone (03) 5448 7124.

You can also register yourself online <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/breakfast-with-the-birds-2017-tickets-30153942253>

Hey Hay! & Stock Ration Development Workshop: Animal nutrition for dry seasons

Agriculture Victoria is hosting a free workshop designed to assist farmers provide suitable stock nutrition

Topics include:

- Information on hay quality and the risks associated with feeding hay to stock
- Ration development for stock in containment areas

Guest speakers include Dr. Catherine Fuller, *Veterinarian*, Luise Sigel, *Grains Pathology Project Officer, Agriculture Victoria* and Shamyl Das, *Animal Nutritionist at Coprice*.

Date: Monday 27 February 2017

Time: 9.00am - 3.00pm

Location: Joel Joel Hall, 1966 Landsborough Road, Joel Joel

RSVP: Please register by February 23, 2017. Contact Heather Drendel (Agriculture Victoria) P: 03 5083 2205 | M: 0427 868 705 Email: heather.drendel@ecodev.vic.gov.au

Autumn Start Up- Managing Soil Success

Murray Dairy is hosting a workshop series with on farm demonstrations designed to provide you with an opportunity to discuss options for repairing winter damaged paddocks and ensure best preparation for autumn.

Soil scientist Christian Bannan, host farmers, in conjunction with their advisors, will talk through key points for management, preparation and options for optimizing the season ahead. Soil pits on each farm will be used to demonstrate constraints, issues and provide the basis for discussions.

A session will be held in the North Central CMA region on Di Bowles property at 74 Post Office Road, Mead

Date: 14 February 2017

Time: 10.00 am- 1.30 pm

Cost: Free

RSVP: For catering purposes please register your attendance with Murray Dairy (03) 5833 5312 or email admin@murraydairy.com.au



February is Rabbit Buster Month



The K5 strain of Calcii virus has been hitting the headlines in the past week or so, and there is good reason

If you attended either of the 2015 or 2016 Rabbit Buster Roadshows, you will recall that drier conditions around February and March are the ideal time to plan for conventional rabbit control.

In 2017, there is even greater incentive to do so, as the upcoming biological control release of K5 is a once in a generation opportunity for a free tool to help knock down a portion of the rabbit population.

The Invasive Animals CRC has publicised that RHDV1-K5 will be released at 640 sites across the country including 150 in Victoria from February 25 to March 6.

Conventional control methods need to be applied as soon as the virus comes through your area, so it's well worth chatting to your neighbours about now.

Keep in the know!

You can track the virus spread and contribute disease reporting on the free Rabbit Scan app or website. Head to www.rabbitscan.org.au



Courses & Resources...

Farming together.

Southern Cross University produce a monthly e-bulletin that covers agribusiness research, export and markets news, technology and communications (NBN) updates related to farming enterprises, grants, scholarships and funding opportunities.

Read more at www.farmingtogether.com.au

Climate-ready vegetation guide

NSW Office of Environment and Heritage in partnership with Macquarie University and Australian Network for Plant Conservation have created a guide that is a first attempt at compiling online tools available to assist natural resource managers incorporate the inherent uncertainties associated with climate change when planning vegetation activities.

This may be useful for various types of revegetation or farm forestry projects. Visit http://anpc.asn.au/resources/climate_ready_revegetation

Serrated Tussock ID APP

The Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party (VSTWP) has developed its first App, which guides landowners and managers through the process of how to identify serrated tussock.

The App is available through all smart-phones, tablets and computers and enables users to scroll through a series of screens that outline the important features to look for when attempting to identify serrated tussock (*Nassella trichotoma*).

The App also features the Australia wide distribution of serrated tussock and allows users to move the interactive map around and see a time lapse over the past few decades.

The ID App can be accessed through the VSTWP website at

<http://www.serratedtussock.com/idapp> or by clicking on the 'Identification App' icon on our website homepage: www.serratedtussock.com



Funding News...

City of Greater Bendigo Community Grants - Round 2

The CoGB have announced that Round 2 of their Community Grants program is open from February 1 - February 28 2017, for projects commencing June 1, 2017.

Grants of up to \$5,000* can be applied for under the following categories:

- Community Development
- Environmental Sustainability
- Arts
- Community Events
- Active & Healthy Communities
- Print & Digital Publications
- Driver Education For Youth (DEFY)
*DEFY may exceed \$5000

Groups may submit multiple applications, however the total amount of funding sought across all categories may not exceed \$5,000*

HOW TO APPLY

Applications can be made online at www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/grants. It is strongly recommended you read the guidelines before beginning your online application.

For further information please contact the Community Grants Officer, on 5434 6214 or email grants@bendigo.vic.gov.au

Building Better Regions Fund

The Australian Government Community Investments Stream will invest in local events and activities, strategic regional plans and leadership and capability building activities that provide economic and social benefits to regional and remote communities.

The building better regions will only invest in projects outside major capital cities. Applications open 18 January 2017. For more information go to:

<https://www.business.gov.au/Assistance/Building-Better-Regions-Fund/Building-Better-Regions-Fund-Community-Investments>

Buloke Shire Community Grants & Sponsorship

Buloke's Project and Organisation Support Grant applications can be submitted in February and July each year, however sponsorship requests may be submitted at anytime throughout the year.

Buloke Shire's Community Development Officer, Mr Mark Remnant is available to assist community groups and/or individuals with completing application forms, or alternatively, providing further information by calling 1300 520 520.

For guidelines and application forms visit: <http://www.buloke.vic.gov.au/community-grants-and-sponsorship>

Mount Alexander Shire Community Grants

The Community Grants Program provides support to local community-based projects and initiatives that align with Council's goals and priorities.

The next round of funding will open on **16 January 2017 and close at 4.00 pm on 17 February 2017**. Applications can be made via SmartyGrants once the funding round opens.

Information sessions are being held to give groups an opportunity to discuss their applications with Council:

- Tuesday 31 January 2017, 10.00am – 11.00am, Maldon Neighbourhood Centre
- Tuesday 31 January 2017, 4.30pm – 5.30pm, Ray Bradfield Room, Castlemaine
- Wednesday 1 February 2017, 10.00am – 11.00am, Ray Bradfield Room, Castlemaine

For application information visit:

<http://www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/CommunityGrants>