

# North Central Chat

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



February 2022

## A message from the Regional Landcare Coordinator

Hi everyone,

Welcome to the first edition of the North Central Chat for 2022. This humble little newsletter has been in publication since 2014, with earlier iterations of CMA regional landcare newsletters going as far back as 2009. With a current readership of 1700, we're thrilled to engage so many of you in the most up-to-date Landcare and Waterwatch news each and every month.

The summer period is always a welcome one for the Landcare team. December 2021 saw Darren and I reach our 11 year 'work-a-versary' at the CMA and January brings with it our birthday celebrations. It's safe to say we really enjoy working as a team, celebrating what we do in Landcare, and after a refreshing extended break, Darren and I are making big plans for the 2022 regional Landcare program.

This year will see our flagship Landcare event, Chicks in the Sticks, host a 10<sup>th</sup> annual celebration. I am seeking community suggestions for a location, theme and speaker recommendations, so please get in touch if you have exciting ideas to put forward. In addition, 2022 will also see our ongoing partnership with North East, Goulburn Broken and Corangamite CMA's Landcare teams strengthen, as we plan another 'Cascade Connections' Landcare Facilitator networking event which will be hosted in Wangaratta on April 27 and 28.

I am also excited to renew our commitment to supporting the Mount Alexander region Intrepid Landcare group. We're surveying members at the moment to understand what activities and experiences they want to get hands on with this year, from there we can map out a calendar of activities for the year ahead. Having a membership of mostly university students spanning metro and regional areas, the group has been heavily impacted by COVID-19 since forming in late 2019.

This month kicks off with the CMA's annual Breakfast with the Birds event. Always a gorgeous morning out on our northern wetlands, I will again be supporting the



World Wetlands Day is celebrated on February 2, 2022. The Ramsar Convention Secretariat says this years campaign focus is 'A call to take action for wetlands. It's an appeal to invest financial, human and political capital to save the world's wetlands from disappearing and to restore those we have degraded.'

Photo: Courtesy of [WorldWetlandsDay](#)

CMA's 'Bringing back the Bittern' project team, who are hosting the event at Lake Murphy. See the Events section for all the details. Look forward to seeing some familiar faces out there.

Enjoy the read,

Tess Grievs

Regional Landcare Coordinator

North Central CMA

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Connecting rivers, landscapes, people

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

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



**News...**

**Climate-proof planting in Muckleford**

**Beth Mellick, Secretary Muckleford Catchment Landcare Group**

**For more than 20 years, the Muckleford Catchment Landcare Group has been designing plantings with climate change patterns in mind, and encouraging local landowners to consider the advantages of planting a wide range of species and provenances from many bio regions of eastern Australia.**

Within the community, there have been government-funded plantings, including riparian restoration and habitat corridors, as well as tens of thousands of rehabilitation plantings by members of the Muckleford Landcare group.

Elli Wellings and David Mallard purchased their 100-acre property in Walmer – which was once used to graze sheep – a few years ago. They immediately did two things – reached out to the local community and joined their local Landcare group.

As a first step, Elli and Dave made an effort to seek out expert advice about landscape function and plant selection to better understand the land they had in front of them, and what they could do to improve it.

It was not viable to have stock, and the couple’s long-term vision was for the land to be restored. “We could see how the stock has impacted the existing vegetation,” David said. Ellie’s father is a bush regenerator in NSW, so she understands how worthwhile it is to bring back native animals to a degraded landscape.



Over the past 12 months Dave and Elli have transformed their property, with the help of landscape restoration

practitioner and Muckleford Catchment Landcare Group Vice President David Griffiths. Together, they put in 6,500 plants on 10 acres as part of a farm forestry enterprise. Then came revegetation of an old paddock with a further 2,500 native plants to create a wildlife corridor between two dams. This corridor contains 20 species, from wide-spaced trees to middle/understorey plants, with a dynamic species provenance selection.

David and Ellie have spent nearly \$50,000 to restore their new property and plant their forest. They are a glowing example of the type of tree-changers that add value to our Landcare movement.

**A Tree a Minute; Planting 1440 trees in a day**

**Beau Miles, adventurer, YouTuber, and recent guest speaker at Bass Coast Landcare Network’s AGM, has just released his latest film, 'A Tree a Minute; planting 1440 trees in a day'.**

This fantastic short film, which is full of laughs, shows Beau trek up and down hillsides, putting a tree in the ground every minute for a full 24 hours. You would think it'd be hard to watch a 17-minute video of somebody planting trees, but no. Sit back and watch Beau as he works through the challenges of meeting his target.

Thanks to Bass Coast Landcare Network for the link to this short film.



[Click here to watch the 17 minute film](#)



**Land for Wildlife Victoria celebrates 40th anniversary**

**Peter Johnson, Statewide Coordinator  
Land for Wildlife Victoria, DELWP.**

**The first Land for Wildlife property was established in November 1981, at Winchelsea in Victoria. This acknowledged the importance of private land conserving habitats and species not represented on public land, in maintaining links between public reserves and other private land, contributing to sustainable landscapes, and creating a sense of connection between like-minded people.**

The original idea for Land for Wildlife arose out of meetings between the original Fisheries and Wildlife Service (now the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning) and the Bird Observers Club of Australia (BOCA – now part of Birdlife Australia). From those meetings it was recognised that landholders voluntarily protecting habitats for wildlife should be acknowledged, encouraged, and supported.

Land for Wildlife (LFW) has been quietly enriching and improving connections between community and wildlife landscapes since 1981.

About 10,000 properties have been registered as LFW, engaging and motivating more than 24,000 people in Victoria alone (the number doubles when interstate properties are included).

This, plus many requesting to be on the LFW mailing list, has broadly influenced conservation outcomes on private land locally, interstate and internationally.



Thankyou for your dedication to Land for Wildlife and voluntary wildlife conservation, for directly or indirectly influencing others by educating families, friends, and neighbours, or by helping others find the confidence to complete works on their properties



**How will you step up?**

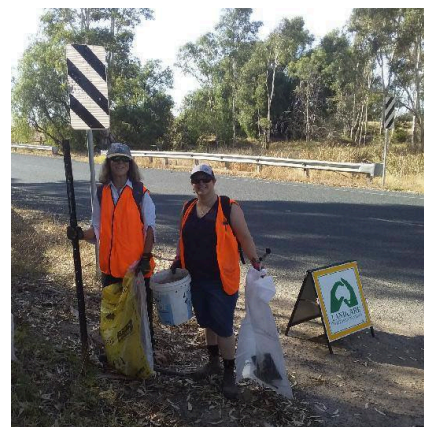
**Clean Up Australia inspires and empowers communities to clean up, fix up, and conserve our environment.**

What was started 30 years ago by an "average Australian bloke" who had a simple idea to make a difference in his own backyard, has now become the nation's largest community-based environmental event.

Of course, Australia's waste challenges can't be solved in just one day, so over the past three decades, Clean Up Australia has evolved into an organisation that works with community, government, and businesses to provide practical solutions to help us all live more sustainably every day.

In 2022, as Australia's waste challenges continue to grow, we are being asked to Step Up on March 6 and support solutions which move us towards a circular economy – where everything is a resource, and there is no such thing as waste.

Learn more about the issues, what you can do to reduce the amount of waste that ends up in landfill each year and join a local Clean Up Australia Day event in your area by visiting [Clean Up Australia](http://CleanUpAustralia.org.au) ([cleanupaustaliaday.org.au](http://cleanupaustaliaday.org.au))





## Rabbit Buster Month feature...



**Each February, the North Central Chat promotes information, awareness, and planning for rabbit management as part of a Rabbit Buster Month campaign.**

With spring grasses a distant memory, summer sun creating drier ground, and generally less green feed available, February makes for an ideal time to enact your rabbit management plans.

Control is typically more effective during the warmer months when rabbit numbers are low and breeding has ceased or reduced due to vegetation drying out. While year-round breeding is always a possibility, rabbits do require protein-rich fresh growth to successfully reproduce.

There are at least 304 Australian threatened fauna and flora species adversely affected by competition and land degradation by rabbits. Consequently, rabbits have been listed as a key threatening process to threatened species conservation under the [Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999](#) (EPBC Act).

In Victoria and Tasmania alone, it's estimated rabbits cost \$30 million in lost production for the beef, lamb and wool industries per year. (Source: Agriculture Victoria)

This Rabbit Buster Month edition features contributions from our colleagues at Agriculture Victoria, Victorian Rabbit Action Network (VRAN) and local pest management contractor Nick Hunter, sharing their experiences managing rabbits in Victoria.



## Victorian Rabbit Action Network

### Who and what is VRAN?

We are a Community Pest Management Group, and our primary aim is to see feral rabbits gone from the Victorian landscape.

The way we do that is to provide the tools and networks to enable community, industry, and government to implement best-practice management in the control of feral rabbits.

VRAN runs training and mentoring programs, delivers workshops on best-practice rabbit control, and supports people and organisations to collaborate on rabbit action.

We also provide occasional grants to support community learning, innovation, and rabbit management.

Our ultimate goal is the long-term reduction in rabbits in Victoria, so we can enhance and protect the natural environment and sustainable agriculture production, and secure cultural heritage and community assets.

### What are the impacts of rabbits in Australia?

A new report, [Fighting plagues and predators: Australia's path to a pest and weed-free future](#), launched by Australia's national science agency CSIRO and Centre for Invasive Species Solutions (CISS) in 2021, estimates the cost of damage caused by invasive species in Australia — predominantly weeds, feral cats, rabbits and fire ants — is at \$390 billion over the past six decades, and about \$25 billion a year, and growing.

Pest, plants and animals (now referred to as invasive species) undermine agriculture leading to increased food and fibre prices. More than eight in 10 nationally listed threatened species are endangered by invasive species.

More than 70 per cent of Australia's native animals are found nowhere else on earth, so any impact is a significant loss to Australia and the world.

Let's not to forget our mental health. Feral rabbits cause a huge sense of frustration to communities. They impact places of importance, our assets, and our infrastructure.



## When are the most effective times to implement rabbit control?

We are officially in February and that means, if you haven't already done so, now is the ideal time to start implementing your rabbit management program.

During late summer and early autumn, low breeding numbers, combined with biological control and naturally harsh environmental conditions, can cause added stress on rabbit populations, making rabbit control more cost effective and sustainable at this time of year.

## What is Best Practice Rabbit Management?

Best Practice Rabbit Management (BPRM) uses integrated and proved scientific methods that are applied in the correct sequence in the right seasonal conditions (Williams et al, 1995).

Completing each of the steps in the BPRM approach will ensure all rabbits are exposed to some treatment.

By implementing your control tools in the following sequence, you are more likely to maximise the long-term impacts of your program. If you alter this sequence, you should be aware that you are likely to get a reduced result.

### Summer/autumn

1. Talk with your neighbours about the rabbit issue in your area. You can't tackle the rabbit issue on your own. Make a plan and work together.
2. Assess the rabbit problem: Locate burrows and estimate rabbit numbers, e.g. spotlighting or survey of damage and rabbit abundance using a tool such as the Rapid Rabbit Assessment Guide or the RabbitScan App. Got kids? Get the kids involved! They can help with monitoring rabbit numbers and assessing rabbit damage.

### Autumn/winter

3. Baiting program: Use fresh bait. Bait is to be applied across the whole area, to reduce the rabbit population by 90 to 98 per cent, and slow re-use of breeding burrows. Monitor bait uptake to ensure effectiveness of your bait placement.
4. Warren modification: eg. ripping or destroying every burrow to stop any opportunity of burrows being used for shelter or rearing of young.
5. Follow up and maintenance: a program of further baiting, fumigation or burrow modification to maintain gains and protect your investment.

## All Year Round

6. Monitoring: e.g. measuring changes in burrow activity (number of active burrows), recording rabbit abundance, undertaking spotlight counts (rabbits seen per km), taking photo points to monitor damage and regeneration.
7. Undertake training: VRAN offers an annual training program for people working in rabbit management and has a team of mentors to offer support and advice. See [vran.com.au](http://vran.com.au) for more information. You can also undertake chemical handling courses and watch and learn through VRAN and Pest Smart videos.

## What do I need to think about when planning a rabbit program?

Take care and be aware that native wildlife may also be using rabbit harbours. If any rabbit control work is to be undertaken which may result in disturbance of native vegetation, culturally significant areas, waterways and assets, contact should be made with the responsible authorities prior to works being conducted.

It is your responsibility to be aware of your legal obligations and obtain the necessary permits. If you are unsure, seek advice from Agriculture Victoria, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Aboriginal Victoria, Dial Before You Dig or your local council.

For more information about BPRM:

Read our [BPRM Summary Factsheet](#)

Visit [Agriculture Victoria](#)

Keep up to date with the [rabbit control calendar](#)

Contact Heidi Kleinert, VRAN Executive Officer  
[Heidi.kleinert@agriculture.vic.gov.au](mailto:Heidi.kleinert@agriculture.vic.gov.au)



## Now is the time to target rabbits

**Agriculture Victoria and the Victorian Rabbit Action Network are encouraging landowners to get together with their neighbours to plan a rabbit control program, with summer and early autumn the best time to reduce local rabbit populations.**

Agriculture Victoria Biosecurity Manager Jason Wishart said the best rabbit control results are achieved when landowners work together and implement management programs when rabbit populations are at their lowest.

“With food scarecer over the summer period, there is a natural pause in the breeding cycle, so the time to act is now,” he said.

Mr Wishart said control techniques such as baiting and ripping also become more effective at this time year because the rabbits are more likely to eat bait and the soils are more friable and better for ripping.

“While there are a number of biological control agents in the environment such as myxomatosis and RHDV (calicivirus), they are not effective for managing rabbit populations on their own,” he said.

“The most effective programs are those that adopt the ‘rabbit recipe’ which is an integrated approach using a combination of baiting, ripping and fumigation.

“It is also critical to monitor rabbit numbers before and after your program to confirm that you are having the desired impact on the rabbit population.”

Rabbits cause considerable damage to agriculture as they consume pasture and various crops and compete with livestock for feed. This, coupled with their burrowing behaviour, also leads to soil erosion and other land degradation issues.

Rabbits also have a significant impact on the natural environment through selective grazing, competition with native species and habitat degradation.

Mr Wishart said effective rabbit management is especially critical at the moment because populations are predicted to increase as a result of the late browning of vegetation this spring and summer.

“Research indicates that the late browning of vegetation in spring and summer can result in increased rabbit populations the following year,” he said.

“With the wetter conditions we are seeing this spring and summer, it is very important to control rabbits now, so they don’t get a chance to build up.”

Landowners are urged to talk to their neighbours and form community rabbit action groups that can share the cost of contractors to conduct baiting, ripping and fumigation over multiple properties, making it more effective.

Chair of the Victorian Rabbit Action Network and farmer from north west Victoria Gerald Leach said it was essential that communities are motivated and supported to conduct effective rabbit control programs.

“Rabbits are a serious problem for everyone. They have major impacts on agriculture, the natural environment, Aboriginal cultural heritage, infrastructure and community assets.

“Undertaking rabbit control with your neighbours is far more effective than working on a single property, as it provides greater knockdowns and helps slow population recovery,” Mr Leach said.



For more information about best practice rabbit management visit Agriculture Victoria’s website <http://www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/biosecurity/pest-animals/invasive-animal-management/integrated-rabbit-control> or [vran.com.au](http://vran.com.au)



## Rabbit Management

Nick Hunter, Joudi Enterprises  
Kerang.

Rabbits were introduced in 1859 and by the 1930s had colonised two thirds of the continent.

Rabbits damage costs about \$200 million in lost agricultural production each year with untold environmental damage also occurring.

**The question I am most often asked is: “What can I do about them?”**

Answer - look at a holistic approach to control while using integrated control techniques.

Infestation and density levels need to be identified and mapped both locally and on a landscape level.

Community wide management will deliver better and longer lasting control.

Once infestation locations and densities have been identified and mapped, a management program can be implemented, looking at several key control techniques.

- **Biological** – (RHDV and Moama virus) Full benefits of biological control are only achieved where poisoning, warren ripping, and fumigation are used to remove remnant rabbits
- **Harbour management** – Clean-up fallen timber, litter, rubbish where rabbits are living
- **Poisoning** – 1080 and Pindone baiting using both, bait trails and bait stations.
- **Deep ripping of warrens** – cross rip all warrens to a minimum depth of 600 mm and compact ripped ground.
- **Fumigation** – Use approved fumigation tablets to control any reopened warren entrances.
- **Fencing** – Possible exclusion fencing to prohibit rabbits re-entering the control area.
- **Shooting** – Is only successful in cleaning up the last few remnant rabbits.
- **Ongoing** – Follow-up control

The biggest problem I come across is landholders only doing part of the control program and only when rabbits are in high numbers, known as “recurring control”.

**The key to ongoing, successful control is regular ongoing control.**

The cost of initial control can be daunting, but with perseverance and maintenance the cost will reduce considerably over the life of a control program.

Joudi Enterprises has been at the leading edge of environmental management particularly rabbit control for over 30 years within the region.

If you would like to know more about the practicalities of rabbit management including control methods applicable to your property, I'm happy to have a discussion with you or your Landcare Group.



## Partnerships in sensitive landscapes

**VRAN's cultural awareness program is supporting community groups and agencies to undertake rabbit control in culturally sensitive landscapes.**

In 2019, The Victorian Rabbit Action Network (VRAN) visited the far north-west corner of Victoria, as part of an ongoing program to build knowledge about managing rabbits in culturally sensitive landscapes.

Acknowledging rabbit control can be significantly more challenging in landscapes where there are ancestral remains, VRAN hosted a workshop for community and agency stakeholders at Neds Corner Station near Cullulleraine, funded through the Weeds and Rabbits Project.

Damien Jackson is one of the local Parks Victoria staff working to protect the area's cultural heritage, and partnering with VRAN to share his knowledge about how rabbit management can be done in sensitive landscapes.

“It's not just Aboriginal people's issue, it's not my issue, it's not our team's issue. It's everyone's issue – it's the government, it's the landowners, it's everyone,” he said.

Landcare Groups can be further supported to navigate and understand Victorias' Aboriginal cultural heritage management process through the 2020 publication [‘Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Guide for Landcare and environmental volunteering groups and networks’](#)

Aboriginal cultural heritage is found across Victoria. Thousands of generations of Aboriginal people have lived throughout Victoria and Aboriginal places and objects are located in even the most intensively developed regions.



## A review of water quality indicators for the North Central region

On January 20, Britt and I met with dedicated volunteer David Tiller, Leon Metzeling, and the CMA's very own Peter Rose to discuss the new Environmental Reference Standard for Victoria introduced in July 2021.

The standard provides an environmental assessment and reporting benchmark for waters in Victoria and unpins our interpretation of what are acceptable water quality levels for healthy ecosystems in our catchment.

The pair has kindly offered to review the water quality indicator levels that are used by North Central Waterwatch to determine river health, in light of the new standard.

Our six River Health Snapshot reports, to be prepared over the coming months, will incorporate the revised water quality indicators alongside recent waterbug data to assess ecosystem health in our project areas.

We are extremely grateful to David, Leon, and Peter for their generous contribution to North Central Waterwatch – the program is stronger for it!

Tania MacLeod

Citizen Science Coordinator

North Central CMA

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L-R: Leon, Peter, David and Waterwatch Officer Britt discuss all things “limno” (limnology – the study of inland waters!)

## Get in quick, 2022 registrations closing soon

### It's a new year and many education providers are yearning for programs such as River Detectives

In 2021, the program supported 92 River Detective schools across the state in the North Central, Corangamite, Wimmera, and North East CMA regions and Melbourne Water's operation area. About 3000 students learnt about water health and championed their waterway (river, creek, stream, lake, wetland, estuary).

Registrations for 2022 are looking very positive so far and close on February 15.

After the challenges of the past two years, schools are communicating a real thirst for programs such as ours that;

- connect students with the local environment
- ground students in culture
- partner schools with other community organisations
- offer outdoor learning opportunities
- engage students in meaningful real life learning and
- achieve learning outcomes for all students

We have been thrilled to receive many amazing testimonials amid our 2022 registrations. For example;

*As a school we are working towards our first star as a resource smart school. Being involved in River Detectives will assist us in thinking, problem solving and engaging in how we interact with the world around us, the community, the environment, and sustainability. (Langley Primary School)*

*We run this program as a lunchtime program and it's very popular with our students. Our school has a strong commitment towards sustainability. The information, the experiences and the conversations at home and school benefit everyone. (Epsom Primary School)*

*Our town has been severely affected by both drought and floods. The River Detectives program will spark interest in our students as future environmentally responsible leaders. Hopefully, this will lead to decisions*



being made in our catchment area to use sustainable farming practices which will benefit the environment of our catchment area and lead to less severe impact when floods or droughts occur. (Donald High School)

The Loddon River is the lifeblood of our region. We use it's water to irrigate our Kitchen Garden that sustains us and our connected communities. We see this program as an important part of gathering data to support efforts to improve the state of the river. Without a healthy river system, we are in a perilous situation! (Merry Gatherings Kitchen Garden)

The Loddon River and surrounding lakes are integral to Kerang's identity and way of life, yet students are unaware of the environmental elements such as water quality and flora and fauna of their local environment and their impacts upon it. (St Joseph's Primary School, Kerang)

We recently released a new claymation video. It will be used statewide to raise awareness of the program and encourage participation. Check it out [here](#) and feel free to share it.



Find out more at the [River Detectives website](#) and please reach out if you are keen to get involved in some way.

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 Waterwatch Project Officer  
 North Central CMA  
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 Email: [nicole.howie@nccma.vic.gov.au](mailto:nicole.howie@nccma.vic.gov.au)

### Water Storages Update

Region	Water Storage	% full at	% full at
Murray Storages	Dartmouth Dam	84.94	↑91.77
	Hume Dam	98.00	↑99.00
	Third Lake	37.94	↓14.76
	Reedy/Middle Lk	92.02	↑98.39
	Kangaroo Lake	96.10	↑96.75
	Kow Swamp	95.64	↓90.67
	Lake Boga	85.80	↓77.97
Loddon Storages	Lake Charm	95.24	↓91.61
	Cairn Curran Res	68.11	↓63.54
	Tullaroop Res	74.47	↓73.91
Bullarook Storages	Laanecoorie Res	40.75	↑50.38
	Newlyn Res	99.41	↓97.79
Goulburn Storages	Hepburns Lagoon	101.07	↓89.61
	Lake Eildon	86.78	↓86.02
Campaspe	Waranga Basin	97.36	↓75.07
	Lake Eppalock	58.16	↓54.03
Coliban Water Storages	Upper Coliban Res	100.10	↓97.70
	Lauriston Res	96.80	↓93.60
	Malmsbury Res	68.11	↓61.80

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

### Upcoming Events and Special Days

February	
<a href="#">World Wetlands Day</a>	2 Feb
<a href="#">World Pulses Day</a>	10 Feb
<a href="#">Australian Agronomy Conference</a>	6-10 Feb
<a href="#">International Day of Women &amp; Girls in Science</a>	11-12 Feb
March	
<a href="#">Business Clean Up Day</a>	1 Mar
<a href="#">ABARES Outlook 2022 Conference</a>	1-4 Mar
<a href="#">World Wildlife Day</a>	3 Mar
<a href="#">Schools Clean Up Day</a>	4 Mar
<a href="#">Parks Week</a>	5-13 Mar
<a href="#">Clean Up Australia Day</a>	6 Mar
<a href="#">International Day of Forests</a>	21 Mar
<a href="#">Sustainable Seafood Week</a>	21-27 Mar
<a href="#">World Water Day</a>	22 Mar
<a href="#">World Meteorological Day</a>	23 Mar
<a href="#">National Eucalypt Day</a>	23 Mar
<a href="#">National Ride2School Day</a>	25 Mar
<a href="#">Earth Hour</a>	26 Mar
April	
<a href="#">World Heritage Day</a>	18 Apr
<a href="#">Earth Day</a>	22 Apr
<a href="#">World Penguin Day</a>	25 Apr

### Courses & Resources...

The Virtual Extension Officer website is [here](#)

**The Virtual Extension Officer website (VEO) is a free online resource to assist landholders, land managers, professional pest controllers, biosecurity groups and community groups manage serrated tussock, gorse, and rabbits on their property.**

Developed by the Victorian Gorse Taskforce in collaboration with the Victorian Rabbit Action Network and the Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party, this website brings all our expert knowledge about these three species together in the one, easy-to-use place.

Rabbits, gorse, and serrated tussock are widespread in Victoria and impact agricultural productivity and the environment. We all need to work together to manage these devastating pests. But it can be difficult for people to know when and where to use the right control methods.

VGT wants people to feel empowered to control these pests so we can reduce their impact across the state. So the VEO was born.

The VEO was developed to enable landholders battling any one of these species to replicate their individual situation online and gather relevant information in a quick and easy way, without leaving home. No need to search through multiple resources and websites for the right information for how to apply it in your situation. The VEO website provides a step-by-step guide to assist you in finding the right management options for your property.

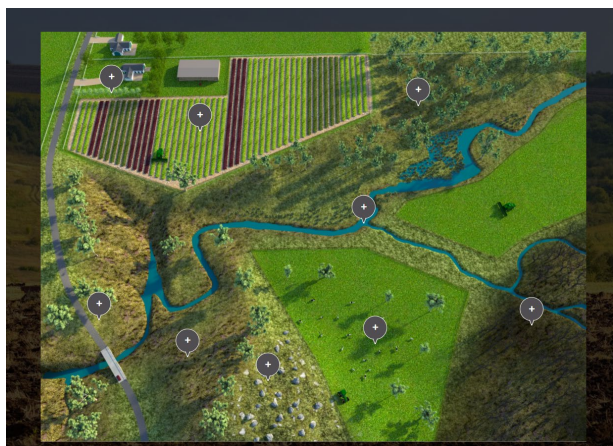
It's just like having your own personal extension officer in your pocket.

#### So, how does it work?

In as easy as four clicks, the user can choose a property location, species, infestation size, and type of control they are interested in, and the VEO will advise the most appropriate control methods.

VGT knows you will find value in this website, and we encourage you to please share it amongst your networks.

The VEO is very easy to use and compatible with most smart devices.



The website can be accessed at [www.virtualextensionofficer.com.au](http://www.virtualextensionofficer.com.au)

Funding for the website was provided by the Australian Government Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper in collaboration with Agriculture Victoria.

For more information, please contact the Victorian Gorse Taskforce at [info@vicgorsetaskforce.com.au](mailto:info@vicgorsetaskforce.com.au)

## Australian Wine Carbon Calculator

**The [Australian Wine Carbon Calculator](#) is designed to help grapegrowers and winemakers estimate their greenhouse gas emissions.**

Agriculture Victoria hosted a webinar on January 27 with Australian Wine Research Institute Project Engineer Kieran Hirlam, exploring the functionality of the Australian Wine Carbon Calculator and discussing the input categories and emissions factors.

The presentation detailed life-cycle assessments to better define emissions within the wine industry, and some of the mitigation strategies for viticulture and wine-making businesses.

Case studies showed how Sustainable Winegrowing Australia members benchmarked their greenhouse gas emissions against other members.

Watch the recording via: [Agriculture Victoria - YouTube](#)



VICTORIAN  
BIODIVERSITY  
CONFERENCE

2022  
2-4 FEBRUARY  
#VicBioCon22  
VIRTUAL

**The sixth annual Victorian Biodiversity Conference will be held online. You can join from the comfort of your own home office, workplace, or even outdoors in a park.**

The Victorian Biodiversity Conference is an annual student-run event bringing together research and practice

The conference organisers are currently arranging the program, inclusive of two panel discussion topics for #VicBioCon22

1. Reflections on the recent IPCC report and COP26 Climate Summit: How can we turn the climate narrative around?
2. Challenges and opportunities for ecological restoration in the suburbs: How do you restore habitat over someone's back fence

**When:** 2-4 February 2022

**Where:** Online via Zoom

**Cost:** \$15 for students (PhD, Masters, Honours and Undergraduate) and \$30 for non-students.

**RSVP:** [Purchase your virtual conference ticket here!](#)

## The Art of Environmental Photography with Alison Pouliot

**Develop your photography skills with Alison Pouliot in this full-day environmental photography workshop hosted by Axe Creek Landcare.**

Alison Pouliot is an ecologist, environmental photographer, natural historian, and devout fungi forager. Her passion for capturing the beauty of the "peculiar and the familiar" has led Alison on a life of adventure teaching and researching in hidden parts of the world.

This highly interactive workshop explores a wide range of environmental themes through an illustrated seminar, active discussion, image critique, demonstration of techniques and a practical field trip.

**When:** Saturday 26 February 2022 from 10am to 4pm

**Where:** Pilchers Bridge Nature Conservation Reserve  
Axe Creek.

**Book online via:** [The Art of Environmental Photography with Alison Pouliot Tickets, Sat 26/02/2022 at 10:00 am | Eventbrite](#)

## Events...

### Breakfast with the Birds

North Central CMA's annual World Wetlands Day celebration event, Breakfast with the Birds, will be hosted on Sunday 13 February at Lake Murphy.

You will be Welcomed to Country with a warm cuppa in hand before guest speakers Damien Cook (Wetland Revival Trust) and Darren Quin (Birdlife Australia Science and Research Project Officer) guide you around onsite. The event will inspire and encourage twitchers of all ages and abilities.

Tickets are available now and registration is essential.



**When:** Sunday 13 February 13, 2022, 5am to 10:30am

**Where:** The event will be held at Lake Murphy (dependent on bird numbers).

**What to bring:** Evidence of Vaccination status is required. Bring a hat, water bottle, chair if required, binoculars & camera (optional). Please dress for the weather including long pants and enclosed footwear. **Coffee, tea and a light breakfast will be provided.**

**Cost:** This is a FREE EVENT funded through the North Central CMA Bringing back the Bittern project.

**RSVP:** Registration is ESSENTIAL via <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/breakfast-with-the-birds-tickets-243325863207>

### Moveable fencing and water for stock field days

Macedon Ranges Shire Council invites you to Gisborne or Kyneton to learn from local farmers and hear how they are using their moveable fence and moveable troughs to improve grazing on their properties.

**When:** Gisborne – Thursday 3 March at 7pm  
Kyneton - Friday 4 March at 10.30am

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

### Ecological burn webinar



Macedon Ranges Shire Council is hosting an Ecological Burns webinar focussed on the benefits of planned ecological burning as a land management tool.

**When:** Tuesday 8 March 2022. 7pm to 10pm

**Where:** via Zoom

**RSVP:** [Ecological Burns - The benefits - Macedon Ranges Shire Council \(mrsc.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.mrsc.vic.gov.au)

### Landcare Victoria Inc. Members forum

LVI advised members in their most recent CEO update of their planned annual forum for 2022.

**When:** May 2022. Exact dates TBC

**Where:** Beechworth

**RSVP:** Registration details will be made available via [Landcare Victoria Inc.](https://www.landcare.vic.gov.au)

## Funding opportunities...

### ParkConnect Volunteer Growth Fund



#### The Volunteer Growth Fund is closing soon.

Parks Victoria is delighted to be offering up to \$2,000 to support your volunteer group to continue its fantastic work in 2022 through the pilot Volunteer Growth Fund (VGF).

This funding initiative, supported through the Victoria's Great Outdoors volunteer program, is to help your group retain existing volunteers and welcome new ones through activities which will encourage environmental volunteering. This could be by helping to cater for an activity, attain more PPE, buy minor equipment or tools or other items.

#### Round two funding is now open and will close on 19 March 2022.

Applications for the Volunteer Growth Fund are to be completed via a short one-page form on ParkConnect. Applicants will be required to have a current Annual Volunteer Activity Plan (AVAP) for this financial year.

#### Who can apply?

Environmental volunteering groups within Victoria that undertake activities on Parks Victoria managed land.

Volunteer groups must:

- Be registered on ParkConnect as a Volunteer Group
- Have a current approved Annual Volunteer Activity Plan on ParkConnect
- Have a bank account

#### What can be applied for?

Funding is available for a range of items that will assist to increase the number of volunteers in a group

- Promotion and marketing
- Tools and equipment
- Project materials
- Additional PPE (for new members)
- Accredited/non-accredited training
- Non-permanent signage
- Catering
- Guest speakers/educators
- Amenities (e.g. port-a-loo)
- Start-up packs for new volunteers
- Transport
- Other

A full list of eligible items is in the Funding Guidelines. To read the funding guidelines, review the criteria for applicants, or visit the supporting documents page please go to ParkConnect by [clicking here](#).

Alternatively, you can also request assistance from your contact staff member or by emailing [volunteer@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:volunteer@parks.vic.gov.au)

