

North Central chat

MARCH 2017

A message from the Regional Landcare Coordinator

Hi everyone,

Since the last Chat edition, there has been plenty of planning and preparation for the coming months of regional Landcare support and engagement activities.

I met with the Local Landcare facilitators on February 22 to discuss upcoming group and network activities, and identified areas where we can collaborate, which I am really looking forward to. The same can be said for the Victorian Landcare Team meeting, on February 17, where integrated CMA Landcare support actions were identified. The upcoming North Central and Goulburn Broken CMA Local Landcare Facilitators peer-to-peer networking forum in March was also discussed.

In late February I attended the Victorian Rabbit Action Network (VRAN) forum in Melbourne. The meeting brought together key land managers, community group representatives, rabbit management leaders and scientists to discuss the most practical methods for communicating and supporting the national release of the K5 Calici Virus, beginning March 6.

I encourage you to be a part of this national experiment by recording disease spread and rabbit sightings on [RabbitScan](#). Given the investment Landcare projects make into restoring the landscape, particularly through revegetation, rabbits are a key species in shaping the success of many local programs.

Now I know the annual Landcare Health Survey isn't everyone's cup of tea, but the data collected from the 2016-17 Community Grants Landcare Health Survey is so valuable. The data has now been collated and is with the designer to produce the 2015-16 North Central Landcare Report Card.

Reponses indicate the highest priorities for

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Landcare groups haven't changed, with weed control, revegetation and repairing degraded land the top three. Interestingly the average group membership has increased from last year from 35.8 to 38.1, which is really positive. Look out for the 2015-16 Report Card in the next edition of the Chat and on the Landcare Gateway.

We really look forward to seeing many of you at our upcoming regional events, such as the 2017 Future Farming Expo (see Events section) and visiting Community Grants project sites.

Enjoy the read,

Tess Grievs

Regional Landcare Coordinator

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News...

Landcare Victoria Inc.

The Farm Tree and Landcare Association and the Victorian Landcare Council (VLC) held a special general meeting in February 16, to formally approve the measures, which will merge the two organisations and move to the new Landcare Victoria Incorporated.

Landcare Victoria Inc. will take effect on April 3. This is more for information, as there is no wholesale change to the way in which groups are currently insured or incorporated and Susi Johnson will remain the key contact for groups in relation to these functions via ftla@vff.org.au

Further communications will be circulated by the organisation in the coming months about the committee and structure of Landcare Victoria Inc.

Child Safety Standards

As I mentioned in the February edition of the Chat, I attended a session on the Victorian Child Safety Standards (CSS) legislation, which came into effect on January 1, 2017.

After the very insightful session, I drafted an email to all Landcare Network Facilitators to disseminate through to groups.

The email included a few key messages and suggestions on working with the legislation that may assist those groups who are concerned or unsure about the effect of the CSS and its relation to Landcare activities.

In essence, the standards are not prescriptive about how to comply, which is intentional as the level of compliance/due diligence is going to be very different for a Landcare Group to a Preschool or Child Care Centre. It is likely that groups can self-determine if they are a Child Safe organisation, which is most certainly Landcare's intent.

There are a few simple steps that your groups can take now as a minimum standard

- Create a **Statement of Commitment** to child safety, to be documented in your constitution, minutes, website etc. e.g. "The XXXX Landcare group is committed to providing a child safe environment and being a Child Safe organisation in accordance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards"

Twisted Science Success

Strathallan Family Landcare hosted a very successful Threatened Species Forum at the Twisted Science centre in Echuca on February 19.

Fifty people attended to hear from threatened species biologist Dan Harley, Wildlife Conservation and Science officer from Healesville Sanctuary who lead the discussion and gave directions about the work of Zoos Victoria in this field.



The group is very active on Facebook and promoted the event online, with flyers and through a display at the local library, which gained a lot of attention from a variety of age groups.



Photos: Strathallan Family Landcare Facebook



- A further step might be some **supporting principles** such as “The XXXX Landcare Group has zero tolerance of child abuse” “The XXXX Landcare Group will ensure all new volunteers are aware of our commitment to child safety when they are welcomed into the group”
- An **Action Statement** will assist your members to know exactly what to do should any issue arise and for reporting any suspected abuse e.g. “The XXXX Landcare Group will comply with Victorian Law by contacting the police in any instance that abuse toward children is suspected or witnessed”
- If you produce OHS/ Hazard Risk Assessments or Plans before your events, consider adding a line in specifically for the Safety of Children e.g. “This event is open to the general public, therefore parents are advised that their children remain their responsibility at all times”
- If working with schools, think about making the Standards part of the conversation with the teacher in charge when you’re planning the logistics of the activity e.g. “What do we both need to do to ensure this activity/event/session provides a child safe environment?”

If you would like more assistance, please get in touch with me or contact the team at the Commission for Children and Young People on (03) 8601 5281 or email childsafestandards@ccyp.vic.gov.au

Economic benefits of Landcare

For over 25 years, Landcare has improved the productivity of Australian agriculture through increasing the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices, which not only protect and enhance the productivity of our landscapes, but also improve yields and boost income for farmers.

The spread of these practices has had flow-on benefits for local economies, as farmers use more products and services from local suppliers and experts to meet the needs of their growing business.

This summary document refers to three case studies that estimate the combined market value of selected on-farm and off-farm

economic benefits from Landcare investment to exceed \$1 billion. The report is online at: <http://www.nrm.gov.au/publications/economic-benefits-landcare>

Re-snagging Pyramid Creek

Peter Rose, North Central CMA Project Officer

Ask any inland angler where the best spots to fish are and they will undoubtedly say “under a snag”.

Last week, 26 snag complexes were installed in Pyramid Creek for fish habitat as part of a plan to boost native fish populations in the Gunbower and lower Loddon region. The timber will provide cover, resting sites, sites for food production and spawning sites for species such as Murray cod.

Box-Pyramid Creek is part of a ‘fish highway’ between the Murray River and important fish nursery habitat in Kow swamp. With construction of two fishways in the Little Murray River, optimisation of Kerang Weir fishway and construction of the Box Creek Fish Lock, migrating native fish such as golden and silver perch will have unrestricted access throughout 180km of waterways connected to 530 km of open Murray River. The snag complexes will provide important ‘pit stops’ along their journey.



Installing the snags in Pyramid Creek

Previous fish surveys indicate that the creek supports good populations of Murray cod, golden perch and silver perch. Further surveys are planned in autumn this year to see how fish are responding to their newly installed habitat.

The timber is ‘pinned’ to the stream bed ensuring that it doesn’t dislodge under high flow conditions. Hydraulic modelling was undertaken to ensure that the snags do not increase flooding risk or reduce water conveyance down the creek for irrigators.

Waterway users should keep a lookout for snags



when boating, canoeing, fishing and swimming. The timber pins holding the snag complexes in place extend out of the water and are visible under normal flow conditions. The pins indicate the areas where the submerged snags are present and are usually situated near the stream banks.



The finished site remains visible from the banks

The re-snagging is part of North Central CMA's Native Fish Recovery Plan, a large-scale and long-term plan to reconnect waterways for fish movement using fishways, implement fish friendly flows, and improve habitat in over 200 km of rivers and wetlands in the Gunbower and lower Loddon region. For more information the plan see: [http://www.nccma.vic.gov.au/Biodiversity/Conservation and Habitat/Native Fish Recovery Plan/index.aspx](http://www.nccma.vic.gov.au/Biodiversity/Conservation%20and%20Habitat/Native%20Fish%20Recovery%20Plan/index.aspx)

Mineral Springs Makeover

Willow removal works are now complete at the popular Kyneton Mineral Springs as part of the Caring for the Campaspe project funded by the Victorian government's Regional Riparian Action Plan.

Native revegetation in spring will further enhance the river environs. This completes a 3.5km section of rehabilitated section of the Campaspe River that was once heavily infested with invasive Crack Willow.



What a difference!





Hello everyone

I hope you are all getting out and about in this beautiful weather!

February was a great month with lots of sunshine and catching up with volunteers, recruiting new volunteers and preparing for the River Detectives Program professional development workshops. I hope you are enjoying playing around on the new Waterwatch Victoria website, it's very exciting, and has some really great opportunities for data analysis and reporting. I have certainly been testing my skills on the new website and find myself side-tracked by all the new and fancy functions within the website, if you haven't had a chance to play, you should definitely get on and try it out!

The year is filling up with lots of exciting activities and events. Sophie has been working hard with program developers to get the state-wide River Detectives website ready to launch for 2017! This year we have 153 schools across Victoria participating in the program - this is huge for the River Detectives program, and demonstrates a desire within the education sector that resources that support sustainability are highly sought after.

At a local scale, I will be delivering three River Detectives professional development workshops at three locations across the catchment, this year we have 19 new schools joining us in the north central region and total of 37 schools registered. We will focus the first workshop on activities such as Water Science and providing training on how to use the new version on the website.

March is the perfect opportunity to get out with our team of citizen scientists to collect important aquatic ecological information about the health of our waterways. During March I will be hosting the Annual Agreed Level Taxonomy (ALT) workshop with John Gooderham from the Waterbug Company. John will be spending five days in the region training Bendigo TAFE students, Traditional Owners and Waterwatch volunteers. Participants will participate in an accredited workshop, which will allow them to gain the skills and technical knowledge required to collect and

identify live waterbugs.

If you are interested in participating in the workshops please email me at cass.davis@nccma.vic.gov.au.

What's happening in March?

River Detectives, Professional Development Training workshops

Workshop One

When: Monday 6th March 2017

Time: 4.15 - 6.15 pm

Where: Boort Primary School, 9 - 27 Malone Street, Boort Vic 3537

Workshop Two

When: Wednesday 8th March 2017

Time: 4.15 - 6.15 pm

Where: Doxa Youth Camp, 1000 Vaughan Springs Rd, Drummond North VIC 3446

Workshop Three

When: Tuesday 14th March 2017

Time: 4.15 - 6.15 pm

Where: North Central CMA Office, 628 - 634 Midland Highway Huntly VIC 3551

Please register which workshop you will be attending and if you have any dietary requirements by Wednesday 22 February 2017 to cass.davis@nccma.vic.gov.au

Waterbug Blitz Workshops

Native Fish Recovery Program's - NatureBlitz event 2017 - YOU WILL NEED TO REGISTER FOR THIS - LIMITED PLACES

When: Thursday 23 March 2017

Time: 9.30 am - 3.30 pm

Where: Meeting at the Cohuna Gateway Centre and will head off to three monitoring sites from there.

ALT Training Workshop - John Gooderham, the Waterbug Company - YOU WILL NEED TO REGISTER FOR THIS - LIMITED PLACES

When: Saturday 25 March 2017

Time: 9.30 - 3.30 pm



Where: Lederberg River, Bacchus Marsh (a bus will be leaving from Huntly)

Other events

World Wildlife Day - 3 March 2017

International Women's Day - 8 March 2017

World Water Day - 22 March 2017

If you have any questions about any of our events, please feel free to call.

Cass Davis

Regional Waterwatch Coordinator
North Central Catchment Management Authority
Phone: 03 5440 1863
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Citizen Scientists helping to protect local waterways!

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome two new volunteers to the Waterwatch Program. During February I met with Margaret Lockwood and Kerrie Jennings and provided them with training and equipment to become local Waterwatch-ers on two of our precious waterways.

Meet Margaret Lockwood

Monitoring site: NC_LOD035, off Loddon River Drive

Waterway: Loddon River

Catchment: Loddon (Upper) Reach: 48

Long-term resource condition target: Improve the condition of waterways from moderate to good (based on the Index of Stream Condition) by 2050.

Margret is a member of the Glenlyon Upper Loddon Landcare Group and has registered as a volunteer to monitor the Loddon River at Glenlyon. The data from this site will contribute to developing a long-term data set for this site. The data will help inform a range of stakeholders about the area along with contributing to the Waterwatch water quality monitoring report. The report provides an insight into the overall health of our waterways using data collected by citizen scientists, further to this, the data can be used comparatively to understand if the site is meeting its long-term resource condition targets.

Margret is aiming to build on her experience as a Waterwatch volunteer so she can share her knowledge with the younger generation. Margret is developing a program called "What's in Our Backyard at Glenlyon" with the local Landcare group and the Progress Association. She will be participating in our River Detectives professional development workshop and will deliver activities through the program that focus on waterway health with the youth of Glenlyon.



Meet Kerrie Jennings

Monitoring site: NC_LOD300, 310, 320, off Loddon River Drive

Waterway: Loddon River

Catchment: Loddon (Upper) Reach: 10

Long term resource condition target: Improve the condition of waterways from moderate to good (based on the Index of Stream Condition) by 2050

Kerrie lives on the Loddon River and is keen to learn more about her precious waterway. She is learning all about the birds that live on her property, the fish in the river and is keen to promote sustainability on the frontage of their 4 km stretch of Loddon River. It is timely that Kerrie undertakes water quality monitoring so she can



begin to understand the local patterns in water quality, so she can use this information to help her make future decisions about property management to improve ecological health.

Kerrie volunteers her time in the local community of Baringhup and will be helping Cathy McCallum and staff at the Baringhup Primary school to deliver the River Detectives program with the students throughout the year.

Welcome to the program Margret and Kerrie!

Victoria's Climate Change Framework and 2020 Target

The Victorian Government has set Victoria's first interim emissions reduction target – a 15-20 per cent reduction in emissions from 2005 levels by 2020. Victoria's Climate Change Framework also articulates the Government's long-term vision and approach to climate change in a single document.

It sets out

- our shared vision for a net zero emissions,
- climate-resilient Victoria in 2050 how action on climate change aligns with the government's focus on jobs,
- cost of living and health
- the steps the Government is taking now to commence
- the transition the challenges to be addressed as we move to a net zero emissions economy
- how Victoria is preparing for a changing climate

See more at:

<http://www.delwp.vic.gov.au/environment-and-wildlife/climate-change/climate-change>

River Detectives: a state-wide pilot project

Sophie Pritchard, CMA Project Officer

Organisations across the state have been developing their plan to deliver the education approach, River Detectives, developed by North Central Catchment Management Authority's Waterwatch program.

As the River Detectives Project Officer, I have visited the organisations participating in the state-wide project armed with the equipment to make up their water quality kits. The kits will be provided to schools to test their local waterways

and I was there to chat about ideas for the year ahead!

The road trip took me from the flat western plains (Wimmera CMA), heading close to the coast in Colac (Corangamite CMA) and the green north east of the state visiting the North East CMA. As well a quick stop off in the bustling city as Melbourne Water is also participating in the program supporting schools with their own kits. It was lovely to see the excitement at delivering the new approach in their region and the ideas for the future that could be added to continue to improve the program.



The revamped website is almost finished, so schools can input their data into the River Detectives portal which is connected to the new Waterwatch database. Some aspects will require a login while others with resources, what's happening and the chat forum not requiring a login. The CMAs across the state are running sessions to train teachers and educators coordinating activities with students at their local waterway. I look forward to sharing some stories of schools participating across the state.

Steps to Sustainability Conference 2017

The 2017 Steps to Sustainability Conference will explore and showcase school sustainability leadership (student, teacher, whole-of-school, community partnerships, curriculum and ELC) through presentations and workshops delivered by teachers.

Join over 120 teachers, parents, local government officers and educators to experience a wide variety of school sustainability examples and experiences including state, catholic, independant, ELC, primary, secondary, metro and regional schools. Presenters are from schools and



early learning centres who have recently started on their sustainability journey through to those who have been leaders for numerous years.

The conference is suitable for all participants interested in school and ELC sustainability who would like to learn real life experiences from other teachers and educators. The conference streams will include presentations and workshops on sustainability:

- Student Leadership
- Teacher Leadership
- Curriculum Leadership
- Community Leadership
- ELC/Prep Leadership

The conference will use a variety of the Zoo's educational spaces so be ready for walking and glimpsing 'behind the scene' experiences.

Organisers encourage you to use sustainable transport options (details on the booking page). Five-hour City of Melbourne parking is available and it will be the responsibility of the participant to move their vehicle as required.

https://www.eventbrite.com/e/steps-to-sustainability-conference-2017-tickets-30072170672?utm_campaign=ResourceSmart+Schools+communications&cldee=Y2Fzcy5kYXZpc0BUy2NtYS52aWMuZ292LmF1&recipientid=contact-197c80c0b47ee51180f0c4346bc532a0-0b984cd8bf2c4b039efad152b8d8f2c6&utm_source=ClickDimensions&utm_medium=email&esid=96375190-67f2-e611-80fa-1458d05a586c

Events...

Camp Out on the Mount

Connecting Country's Annual Camp out on the Mount is set to be another exciting event, engaging young people in their local environment at Mount Alexander.

In the past this event has attracted a large crowd to share in the joys of eradicating weed pine trees. However, volunteers have already done such a good job that this time campers will be able to celebrate with a range of engaging activities for all.



Held on the on the first weekend of April at the Leanganook Camping Ground on Mount Alexander, an impressive suite of talks and children's activities are on offer. See the website for full program details

When: April 1 & 2, 2017

Where: Leanganook Camping Ground on Mount Alexander.

Cost: Free camping. BYO Food & Gear

RSVP is essential:

<http://connectingcountry.org.au/landcare/2017campout/> or contact Connecting Country on 5472 1594.

Future Farming Expo

The North Central and Goulburn Broken CMA's are hosting the fifth Future Farming Expo in Rochester on April 5, 2017.

Farmers today are faced with many opportunities and challenges. Building on the wealth of knowledge and expertise across each of the agricultural sectors the expo provides an opportunity to hear from industry leaders who will share their knowledge and strategies to help farmers achieve goals. Overcoming on-farm challenges such as employment, farming structures, water use efficiency, climate and global conditions, whilst protecting the natural resource base on which it depends on will also be discussed

The 2017 expo is free of charge and will begin with keynote presentations followed by concurrent sessions so participants to explore areas of interest.

Expo speakers include Mike Stephens (Meridan Agriculture), Nathan Scott (Achieve Ag Solutions), Lyn Sykes (High Resolutions), Christian Bannan (South East Soil and Water) and Phillip Doyle (KPMG- Trade & Marketing). Trade stalls and information displays will be present on the day.



When: Wednesday April 5, 9.30 am -3.00 pm

Where: Rochester Town Hall, McKay St, Rochester

Registration is essential:

You can register online:

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/2017-future-farming-expo-registration-32309654045> or call the North Central CMA on (03) 5448 7124.

Funding opportunities...

FoodSourceVictoria

Growing the Future of Food



Food Source Victoria supports food producers and businesses to work together to grow exports and create new jobs.

These grants opening July 1, enable eligible alliances and value chain partnerships to engage independent skilled advisers with private sector experience to develop a growth plan with clear actions or undertake activities that support export growth and create quality jobs.

Planning grants: To develop a growth plan

Growth grants: For an alliance of food producers and businesses to create jobs or boost exports

Scholarship program: Funding for short study and training courses to boost your businesses' growth and exports

By working together and taking a 'paddock to plate' approach, agri-food businesses can take advantage of:

- greater economies of scale
- better market leverage
- market knowledge

- new skills and experience.

For full details on either of these grant processes, read the guidelines at:

<http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/food-and-fibre-industries/food-source-victoria/grants>

Electronic identification for sheep and goats

From 1 January 2017, all sheep and goats born in Victoria will require an electronic identification tag, linked to the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS), before being dispatched to a saleyard, abattoir or another property.

The transition package has two phases and is a program of support, including funding, to help industry transition to an electronic NLIS (Sheep & Goats). Under the package, \$17.06 million is available, including:

- Cost neutral tags for producers for the first 12 months, at \$0.35 for the lowest priced electronic NLIS (Sheep) tag for 2017 lambs and kids
- Funding for:
 - the purchase and installation of infrastructure (including hardware and software) required to meet the regulatory obligations of an electronic NLIS (Sheep & Goats)
 - the purchase of optional infrastructure (including hardware and software) that will help industry benefit from the commercial opportunities associated with electronic identification
 - planning and design activities in saleyards and abattoirs
 - assistance to implement operational procedures; and
 - research and design to address an identified need within the supply chain.
- Access to technical support and consultants; and
- Training and extension activities

Key Dates

Sector	Applications close
Producers, stock agents, transporters and EID scanning contractors	31 December 2017
Agricultural show operators	31 December 2017
Export depot operators and export companies	31 December 2017
Abattoirs and knackeries	31 March 2017
Saleyards phase 1 (planning and design)	31 March 2017
Saleyards phase 2 (infrastructure and installation)	30 June 2017
Third party provider / Research and development (R&D)	31 December 2017

The program is run through Agriculture Victoria and all details can be found online at <http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/livestock/national-livestock-identification-system/nlis-sheep-and-goats/electronic-identification-for-sheep-and-goats/transition-package>

Package assisting small exporters

The Package Assisting Small Exporters (PASE) is a \$15 million grant programme for small exporters administered by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources. The PASE programme funds activities aimed at improving market access for small exporters.

Funding is available for projects in 2016-17 to 2017-18.

Applications for Round 2 funding are now open and applications must be lodged by 5:00pm AEDT on 27 March 2017.

Eligible commodities for PASE grants include:

- dairy
- egg
- fish
- grain
- horticulture
- plant
- meat.

Guidelines, example budgets and Application forms for PASE grants should be made through the Australian Government GrantsConnect website.

<http://www.agriculture.gov.au/export/from-australia/package-assisting-small-exporters>

Managing Farm Risk Programme

The Managing Farm Risk Programme is open for applications

The Managing Farm Risk Programme provides rebates for advice and assessments to help farmers prepare and apply for a new insurance policy that assists with the management of drought and other production and market risks.

These one-off rebates will cover half of the costs incurred by eligible farm businesses, up to a maximum of \$2 500 (GST exclusive). The rebates are not for insurance policy premiums.

Insurance can significantly reduce the financial risks farmers face from production loss caused by factors beyond their control. The Australian Government understands that insurance for risks—like adverse weather, drought and fluctuating markets—can protect profits and give farmers peace of mind, but identifying and choosing suitable insurance can be challenging.

That's why the Australian Government is providing \$20.2 million over four years help farmers with their decision making.

The Managing Farm Risk Programme is part of the Australian Government's Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper, the government's plan to grow our agriculture sector for stronger farmers and a stronger economy.

<http://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/drought/assistance/mfrp>

