

North Central Chat

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



March 2021

A message from the Regional Landcare Coordinator

Hi everyone,

I'll start by sharing details about an unusual and exciting field visit, read on... In early February, I was invited to help with eDNA sampling at Kow Swamp. Like many people, I had heard of eDNA but wasn't exactly sure what it was and how it applied to our river and wetlands. Thankfully, I spent a whole day with fish ecologist Dan Stoessel and our very own fish enthusiast Amy Russell, to learn all about it.

In simple terms environmental DNA sampling, commonly known as eDNA, is a scientific sampling technique. In riparian environments, it involves sampling the water with specialised filtering equipment, in our case, to identify the distribution of several threatened fish species and provide valuable baseline data. That data collected helps design management plans and support future recovery projects, as well as contributing to the national database of biodiversity knowledge.

Not just reserved for scientists, many Landcare Groups in our region have been adopting eDNA sampling into their programs, including the Upper Campaspe Landcare Networks recent Platypus Project aimed at addressing the lack of contemporary knowledge about platypus and blackfish populations in the upper Campaspe region. It's fantastic that many Landcare and volunteer community groups are growing their biodiversity knowledge.

Which leads me to the recent announcements from DELWP regarding the 2021 Community Environment Grants. Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio announced the \$7.4 million Community Environment Grants package, to fund small and large-scale projects dedicated to preserving Victoria's biodiversity and waterways. The full list of grants open now, with more details over the next few months in the 'Funding Opportunities' section of the Chat.



It was smiles on a sunny February morning spent eDNA sampling at Kow / Ghow Swamp with Amy Russell (North Central CMA) and Dan Stoessel (ARI Fish Ecologist).

Photo: Courtesy of North Central CMA

While many events and on-ground activities are shaping up outdoors, behind the scenes Victoria's Landcare community are readying funding applications for the 2021-24 Victorian Landcare Facilitator program. This program is vital for securing funding for local support staff who strengthen and sustain Landcare Networks and landscape-scale actions that benefit regional communities.

Please get in touch if you want to discuss any of the grants available or to talk through project ideas.

Enjoy the read,

Tess Grievés

Regional Landcare Coordinator
North Central CMA

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Email: tess.grievés@nccma.vic.gov.au

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



News...

CMA Actions and Achievements report

Victorian CMAs’ 2019-2020 Actions and Achievements report is now published.

The report summarises whole of state achievements and includes a summary from each individual CMA highlighting the key policies that influenced their work, outputs and case studies, and acknowledges key delivery partners, investors and community stakeholders.



OUTPUTS 2019-20

500+ Landcare groups
54 Landcare networks
29,663 members/volunteers
159,863 volunteer hours
\$6.6 million value of volunteer contribution

FUNDING

In 2019-20, the Victorian Government invested more than \$9 million in Landcare through the Victorian Landcare Program.

You can read the report via our website viccmas_aa_report_2019-20.pdf (nccma.vic.gov.au)

Biodiversity Response Planning Update – February 2021

Jill Fleming- Manager- DELWP Natural Environment Programs Loddon Mallee

Biodiversity Response Planning is how we’re implementing Victoria’s plan for biodiversity, Protecting Victoria’s Environment - Biodiversity 2037 in different places.

Biodiversity Response Planning (BRP) is about making the most of our collective effort to improve biodiversity and is a key pathway for Victoria’s biodiversity to be healthy, valued and actively cared for.

During 2019 and 2020, we worked with partners to identify areas to focus our biodiversity actions in the short to medium term. Data on the status of key biodiversity values and threats has been collected, collated and shared among stakeholders via ecological modelling, Traditional Owner involvement, stakeholder

workshops, and qualitative data. This data informed the identification of what we are calling “Focus Landscape”.

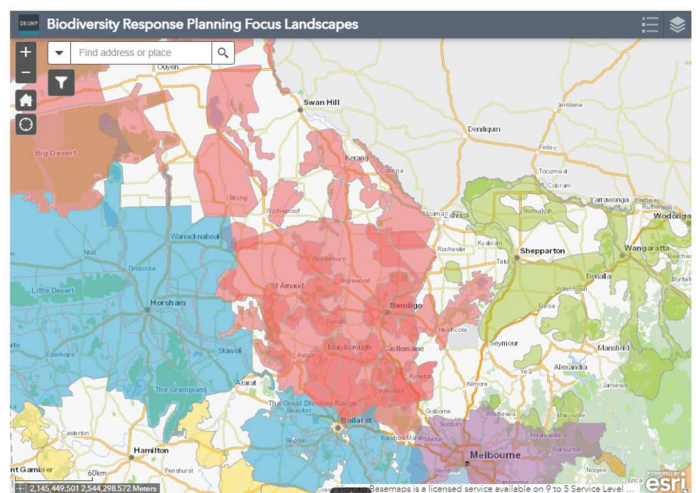
We’ve also developed BRP resources including:

- Individual fact sheets for each Focus Landscape.
- An interactive statewide map of our Focus Landscapes, where people can access the relevant fact sheets.
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) associated with BRP.
- A dedicated BRP website where you can learn more about program and access resources. Click the link here: Biodiversity Working-together-for-biodiversity

I encourage you to have a look at the website and read through the FAQs and relevant fact sheets.

The fact sheets provide useful biodiversity information for the community, non-government and government organisations during project planning and development. They can be used to provide direction for priority on-ground activities to achieve the best biodiversity result. This direction can also be helpful when thinking about applying for funding to undertake on ground projects.

Importantly, community and Traditional Owner groups will be able to refer to the Biodiversity Response Planning fact sheets for Focus Landscapes to assist with planning your grant application.



Map showing the “Focus Landscapes’ in red in the North Central CMA region.

Connect Greater Bendigo



The City of Greater Bendigo recently launched a single community directory website that helps people Find-Join-Connect with local organisations and events.

The website called Connect Greater Bendigo brings together information about community groups, organisations, events and activities across Greater Bendigo.

The website is for local community or not-for-profit groups and health and wellbeing services and education providers that operate in the City of Greater Bendigo.

You can get involved by registering your club, group, events and activities or by sharing the exciting news with clubs, community groups or individuals.

Registration is quick and simple. All you need to do is enter the link:
www.connectgreaterbendigo.com.au/user/register and follow the registration instructions.

CoGB grants available:

The City of Greater Bendigo's Community Grants Program provides an opportunity for not-for-profit groups or a registered business to develop projects that complement areas identified as priorities in the Community Plan 2017-2021.

- Medium grants - up to \$10,000
 Re-opens March 1 2021 via
[Community grants | City of Greater Bendigo](#)

Grant wiring workshops will also be hosted on Wednesday 3 March 2021

- 1:30pm - 3:30pm or
- 7:00pm – 7:30pm

They are designed for new and experienced grant writers across a broad range of organisations.

For all enquiries about the workshops contact a Community Grants Officer on 03 5434 6000 or email grants@bendigo.vic.gov.au



For more than 30 years, Landcare has continued to play a leading role in managing sustainable agricultural practices, environmental protection, and conservation of land, waterways, coasts, biodiversity and landscapes.

Bob Hawke was the original 'champion' of Landcare so it's with great excitement that the North Central CMA is thrilled to announce LPLN Facilitator nominee Danny Pettingill, has been selected as one of the 12 finalists for the 2020 Bob Hawke Landcare Award.

The Bob Hawke Landcare Award acknowledges the role that former Prime Minister, the Hon. Bob Hawke AC, played in elevating Landcare from a grass-roots community initiative to a national movement with bi-partisan government support that endures today.

The winner will be announced on Thursday 5 August at the 2021 National Landcare Awards in Sydney.



Congratulations on this momentous achievement Danny and best wishes for the Awards Ceremony. Darren and I will be there cheering you on.

Draft Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS) – coming soon!

Nina Cunningham, RCS Project Manager

North Central CMA is renewing the North Central Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS) for 2021-27. The RCS is a high-level strategy for land, water and biodiversity management, for all those involved in the region.

It is important that the community are involved in RCS development so that we can consider local knowledge, issues, opportunities, and priorities.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, our engagement with community was all online last year. Thank you to all who contributed via our online survey, interactive map, gave feedback on our papers, told us about local issues and attended our online workshop. Overall, we had a great response, but we know that some people were not able, didn't want to engage online.

The next step is releasing the draft RCS for public comment. To kick this off, we're hosting a number of community drop-in sessions so you can come and provide your feedback in person:

We will notify our RCS contact list directly about the dates and venues and will also be promoting details via CMA networks and social media. To be included on our RCS contact list email krista.England@nccma.vic.gov.au

If you cannot make it to a drop-in session, there will be an online workshop. Details to follow.

The RCS for 2021-27 will be published as a website, so you will be able to review the draft RCS online and comment directly via a feedback form.

We value your input and hope you can participate in this next round of conversations.

Sustainable Ag snippet...

The Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator (RALF)

With 2020 behind us and 2021 into its third month, I want to remind you about the support our Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitators provide and how they can help you during 2021.

The Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator (RALF) program is a national network of agriculture focused, regionally based facilitators. Darren Bain is, the RALF for the North Central CMA region.

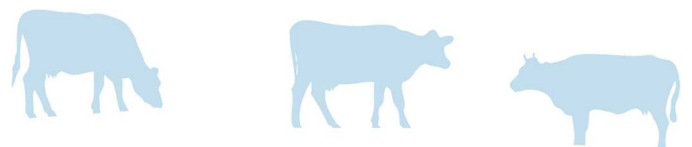
RALFs provide support services to increase the uptake of sustainable agricultural practices, build stronger networks and partnerships that benefit farmers, community groups and agricultural industries.

RALFs are the key contact for farmers, industry and community group providing support across a broad range of agricultural related activities with a focus on sustainable agriculture.

Darren is available to support Landcare and farmer groups and individuals in identifying and sourcing relevant agricultural information such as appropriate funding options or agricultural event information to build a stronger agricultural community.

Darren also provides monthly agricultural related email updates on numerous topics or funding opportunities, if you would like to receive these updates or you would like to discuss other topics, please contact Darren directly on the details below.

To find out more about the RALF program and how it might assist you, contact Darren Bain at the North Central Catchment Management Authority: darren.bain@nccma.vic.gov.au mobile 0419 560 348.





Hi all,

In case you missed Cass' email.....

Hello amazing Waterwatch volunteers,

I just wanted to send you an email to let you know I have accepted a new role at the North Central CMA as Manager - Community and Relationships, after 10 years of working in the Waterwatch program I have met & worked with so many inspiring and wonderful people, I have some very funny and unforgettable Waterwatch meetings, training days and events! I have learnt a lot about the condition of our regions waterways and just how being involved in programs like Waterwatch instils a sense of pride in community volunteers who continue to grow and show their commitment and leadership in advocating for their local patch.

What I have loved most about the program is the people, I can't tell you how much I have LOVED working with all of you and will miss our catch ups! You have all been so supportive and accepting.

I am really proud of the growth of River Detectives program and feel blessed to have been part of a state-wide team that has brought this amazing little program to life and the idea that hundreds of kids have had the opportunity to be involved in hands on environmental activities blows my mind, hopefully they will become our future leaders in NRM! And that I know that the Waterwatch team will continue to find ways to keep the program moving forward!

Waterwatch, well what a journey that has been! 10 years of trying to prove our little program is worthy has been hard work but very rewarding. For a long time, the fight was on to demonstrate the value in engaging with our volunteers in a meaningful way and then being able to develop River Health Snapshot reports that highlight how the community contribute to measuring change as a result of on-ground works has been huge and we finally got there.... I believe Waterwatch is not only valued as a high priority program in North Central, but to our program investors and to CMAs across the state.

My new role will focus on supporting our Waterwatch, Landcare and Indigenous teams to deliver amazing regional programs, to contribute to the development and implementation of our regional Engagement Strategy, coordinate our regional investment reporting portfolio, monitoring and reporting, to continue to build and maintain relationships with stakeholders and ensure Aboriginal Self-Determination is at the heart of all the work we do.

I am so excited about the journey ahead, thank you again for all your support and encouragement over the years xx

FYI - Britt will continue to be the contact for the North Central Waterwatch over the coming months, we will keep you updated with changes as we work out what we're going to do!!

Love and Hugs to you all,

Cass



I would like to offer a huge congratulations to Cass! I have no doubt she will thrive in her new position and will continue to do amazing work with all her passion for the environment, community, and the North Central CMA team.

I will personally miss working so closely with Cass, she has been such an inspiration and a fabulous co-worker. Luckily for all of us she will continue to oversee Waterwatch and River Detectives. I think you will all agree Cass has done such a wonderful job to build the profile and the outcomes of Waterwatch, Citizen Science and River Detectives programs.

Well done Cass, all the best in your new role.

Britt Gregory
 Acting Regional Waterwatch Coordinator
 North Central CMA
 Phone: 03 5448 7124
 Email: britt.gregory@nccma.vic.gov.au

Water Storages update

Region	Water Storage	% full at 21 Jan	% full at 23 Feb
Murray Storages	Dartmouth Dam	62.15	↑63.36
	Hume Dam	57.00	↓55.19
	Third Lake	65.47	↑77.87
	Reedy/Middle Lk	97.12	↓96.14
	Kangaroo Lake	92.40	↑92.70
	Kow Swamp	79.72	↑80.63
	Lake Boga	83.40	↓75.77
	Lake Charm	89.18	↑91.90
	Loddon Storages	Cairn Curran Res	44.90
Tullaroop Res		52.17	↓51.27
Laanecoorie Res		39.50	↑53.81
Bullarook Storages	Newlyn Res	89.34	↓83.87
	Hepburns Lagoon	79.88	↓73.27
Goulburn Storages	Lake Eildon	64.97	↓63.38
	Waranga Basin	69.64	↓62.14
Campaspe	Lake Eppalock	41.67	↓39.45
Coliban Water Storages	Upper Coliban Res	97.80	↓94.70
	Lauriston Res	92.20	↓86.80
	Malmsbury Res	46.70	↓37.50

Source:

www.g-mwater.com.au/water-resources/catchments/storage-levels
www.coliban.com.au/about-us/reservoir-levels

Upcoming events and special days

March	
Business Clean Up Day	2 Mar
ABARES Outlook 2021 conference	2-5 Mar
World Wildlife Day	3 Mar
Youth and Schools Clean Up Day	5 Mar
Sea Week	6-14 Mar
Clean Up Australia Day	7 Mar
World Parks Week	6-14 Mar
Sustainable Seafood Week	8-14 Mar
National Ride2School Day	19 Mar
National Groundwater Awareness Week	8-14 Mar
International Day of Forests	21 Mar
World Water Day	22 Mar
World Meteorological Day	23 Mar
Earth Hour	28 Mar
April	
World Heritage Day	18 Apr
Earth Day	22 Apr
May	
International Composting Awareness Week	2-8 May
World Migratory Bird Day	8 May
Hairy-Nosed (Wombat) Day	11 May
National Volunteer Week	17-23 May
World Bee Day	20 May
International Day for Biological Diversity	22 May
World Turtle Day	23 May



We're up and running for another year

We are extremely proud and pleased to have a cohort of 31 schools from across the North Central CMA region choosing to connect their students with nature and learn about their local waterway by joining the River Detectives program in 2021. This is a fantastic response and one of our biggest years yet despite the challenges of 2020 due to COVID-19.

We are looking forward to a wonderful year with more opportunities to connect with staff and students than we had in 2020 and reaping the rewards of the many improvements made to the program during the hiatus we experienced last year!!

This year, River Detectives schools in target areas of the North Central CMA region are aligned to CMA projects. Embedding the program in the core work of the organisation has many benefits; extending the reach of our work to engage students and their families and providing opportunities for schools to be involved with real environmental action projects in their local community.

We welcome the following schools to our program.

General North Central CMA schools
Castlemaine Steiner School and Kindergarten
Daylesford Dharma School
Marist College Bendigo
Bridgewater Primary School
Marong Primary School
St Francis of the Fields Primary School
East Loddon P-12 College
Lockwood South Primary School
Bullarto Primary School

Schools aligned with the Bendigo Creek Citizen Science Project
Camp Hill Primary School
Catherine McAuley College, St Mary's Campus Bendigo
Epsom Primary School
Kalianna School (VCAL campus) Bendigo
Huntly Primary School
Schools aligned with the RiverScan Project
Kerang South Primary School
St Joseph's Primary School Kerang
Gunbower Primary School
Boort Bush Gang
Schools aligned with the Caring For The Campaspe Project
Woodend Primary School (Carlsruhe Campus)
Sacred Heart College Kyneton
Kyneton Primary School
Redesdale Mia Mia Primary School
Eppalock Primary School
Goornong Primary School
Rochester Primary School
Rochester Secondary College
St Joseph's Primary School Rochester
Echuca Primary School
St Joseph's College Echuca
Schools aligned with the Healthy Coliban Catchment Project
Trentham Primary School
Malmsbury Primary School

If you are a Landcare Group near any of these schools, you may like to consider connecting with them as they

learn about their catchment. I'm sure they'd love to get involved with any on-ground activities you might be doing and you would value the extra volunteers!

Introductory Professional Development Sessions

March is a busy time of rolling out PD sessions across the region to equip school staff for their River Detectives journey. Responding to feedback we are offering a mix of formats for the first time; three face-to-face sessions; three live online sessions and a recorded online session.

We look forward to getting together.

Courses & Resources...



Community builders webinars: Reinvention of Small Towns

Rural Aid is (virtually) heading to the Wild West, and we want you to join the ride! Rural Aid wants to provide proactive solutions and inspiration for the people who "get stuff done" in rural Australia; we call those people the community builders.

Registrations are filling fast for the popular fourth series of Community Builders webinars. These webinars follow on from the successful 2020 series and are a must for anyone looking to breathe new life into their region, small town or country community.

Eight weekly instalments will make up the free "Reinvention of Small Towns" series, showcasing towns that have cracked the code of renewing and reinvigorating their country community.

Starting in February and running weekly on Thursdays at 4PM, join in on one of the upcoming webinar and featured towns;

1. February 11: Norseman, WA – Positive First Impressions.
2. February 18: Mount Magnet, WA – Indigenous Badimaya Culture and Heritage.
3. February 25: Sheffield, TAS – Murals and Public Art.
4. March 4: Donald, VIC – Ignoring the Remote Label with Enterprise.
5. March 11: Indi (electorate), VIC – Local Power and Energy Initiatives.

6. March 18: Horsham, VIC – Revitalisation of the Country Show.
7. March 25: Junee, NSW – Value Adding to Local Ag Products.
8. April 1: Leeton, NSW – Making the most of the Assets in your Town.

The webinars are orchestrated by the talented Lyndsey Douglas and hosted by none other than the brilliant brain that is Peter Kenyon of Bank of Ideas.

To register visit: [Community Builders | Facebook](#)



Farm Chemical Units

Access Skills Training are holding a two-day training session in Bendigo for what is commonly known as the Chemical Users Course.

Participants will learn the practical skills and knowledge to select, transport, store, record, mix and use chemicals used in the agricultural and horticultural sectors. Completion of this course will lead to participants applying for their Agricultural Chemical Users Permit (ACUP).

When: Wednesday 14 and Thursday 15 April 2021

Time: 9:00am - 4:00pm.

Where: PepperGreen Farm, 44 Thunder Street, North Bendigo. Eco-Pod 1

Cost: \$299.99

For further details contact ast@aag.org.au or call (03) 5445 9880



Events...



Managing seasonal variability in the Victorian sheep industry

Presented by **Dr Jason Trompf, Agriculture Consultant, Lambs Alive.**

Sheep farmers are on the front line of dealing with changes in the weather. While we can't control the weather we can make timely management and business decisions to have control over its impacts. We need to make sure our sheep systems are designed to handle the variable seasons, driving productivity when seasons permit and flexing if adverse seasonal conditions occur.

This webinar will look at the impacts of climate variability on farming businesses and highlight opportunities to improve business resilience in a variable environment. It will involve producers that have undertaken a review that critiques the flexibility of their own enterprise from an enterprise structure/mix, feed demand to pasture supply, infrastructure, animal management, genotype, business and human resource management.

When: Tuesday 2 March, 12:00 noon AEST

Duration: 1 hour

Cost: FREE

Register: <https://agriculturevictoria.cmail19.com/t/r-l-juuhvjk-ukjjhuddhi-i/>



Integrated Pest Management - Project Opportunity for growers

Birchip Cropping Group (BCG), alongside project partner FMC, are undertaking an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) applied research project with technical assistance by leading Australian Entomologists, Dr Paul Horne and Jessica Page.

The workshop will be tailored to the specific interests of the group, using examples from relevant crops.

During the workshop we ask participants to nominate crops in which they would like to trial IPM.

We then work with participants to develop a simple IPM strategy that includes:

- **All the pests** that need to be managed in the crop.
- **Key beneficials** – the natural enemies of the pests.
- **Cultural control options** – management strategies to discourage pests and encourage beneficial.
- **Compatible chemical control options** – chemicals that cause minimal harm to key beneficials and can be used as a support tool when biological and cultural control is not enough.

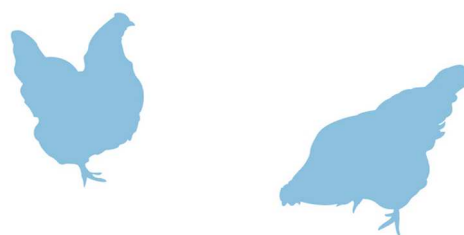
BCG's strategies demonstrate how to successfully *integrate* biological, cultural and chemical control options to achieve better pest control with reduced reliance on insecticides.

When: Thursday 11 March 2021 **10:00am -1:00pm**

Where: BCG Office, Birchip

Register: [via this link](#)

***Following the initial workshop** – participants who are interested in receiving ongoing assistance from Paul and Jessica as they implement their IPM strategies in their nominated paddocks will have the opportunity to join a Special Interest Group (SIG) alongside other interested growers.





Grasslands and Plains-Wanderers- Protecting nature in the Birchip district

Trust for Nature, Birchip Landcare and Mallee CMA are hosting an upcoming field day on Saturday 27th March.

Hosted on Jim Coffey's Farm, guest speakers Paul Foreman (Grassland expert ecologist) and Dr David Baker-Gabb (Australian ornithologist and Plains-wanderer expert) will share their passionate knowledge of the plants that are found in the grasslands of the Birchip district and the iconic endangered species that inhabit them.

When: Saturday 27 March 2021, 10.00am – 12.30pm

Where: Jim Coffey's Farm, Birchip-Corack Road~13.5kms south of Birchip, on the Birchip-Corack Rd.

Entrance gate is on the west (or rhs if coming from Birchip). TfN field day signs will be displayed at the entrance.

What to bring: Lunch/snacks, water, hat, chair

RSVP: Deanna Marshall by Tuesday, 23 March
deannam@tfn.org.au or 0477 168 808



The Bendigo Sustainability Group and the City of Greater Bendigo invites businesses and community organisations to participate in a celebration of sustainability at the Bendigo Town Hall and surrounding gardens on Saturday 27 March 2021.

The Sustainable Living Festival aims to showcase the absolute best of sustainable living products, programs, goods, and active services in central Victoria.

Attendees will have the chance to purchase, learn and explore many new and creative ways to live and then implement them into their everyday life at home and at

work. The festival is a great way to interact face-to-face with your customers.

Come and join us – lets show Bendigo what we have got!

The festival will be dedicated to answering the question:

“What can we do to contribute to a Sustainable Future for our City?”

BSG invite participants from the local area to showcase their products, services and initiatives that positively contribute to practical solutions for both businesses and householders across Central Victoria. This year we will be organising the layout of the festival and our program of presentations to reflect the following themes:

- **Repurpose Road** – reduce, reuse, recycle, repair, compost.
- **Power Promenade** – solar, battery storage, renewables.
- **Living Lane** – sustainable construction materials, double glazing, tiny house info.
- **Transport Terrace** – electric cars and bicycles.
- **Good Food Garden** – local food systems, sustainable home gardens, regenerative agriculture.
- **Conservation Corner** – ethical approaches to tackling climate change and preserving our planet.
- **Health and Wellbeing Wing** – for mind, body, and soul.
- **Resource Roundabout** – an accessible repository for practical information.

North Central CMA Landcare will be hosting a stall on the day, so pop in and say hello if you are in the area. We'll be spreading the Landcare message far and wide.

When: Saturday 27 March 2021

Where: Garden for the Future in White Hills

Time: 10am-4pm

Further details are available via: [Bendigo Sustainable Living Festival](#)

Funding opportunities...

2021 Community Environment Grants

Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio recently announced the \$7.4 million Community Environment Grants package, which will fund small and large-scale projects dedicated to preserving Victoria's biodiversity and waterways.

These grants are now open:

Port Phillip Bay Fund – to protect the health of Victoria's iconic Port Phillip Bay by supporting projects that maintain and improve the health of the Bay's marine life, habitats and water quality.

Aboriginal Community Caring for Country Grants – to support Aboriginal communities and organisations to access and care for Country.

Community Volunteer Action Grants – to protect and enhance the natural environment, boost volunteer participation and address threats to biodiversity on public and private land.

The **Victorian Junior Landcare and Biodiversity Grants** will open in March and the **Victorian Landcare Grants** in April.

All grant streams guidelines, FAQs and application information can be found here: [Grants- Environment, Land, Water, and Planning](#)



Gallagher Landcare Fencing Grants now open

Applications are open for the 2021 Gallagher Landcare Electric Fencing Grants. Gallagher is continuing its commitment to support projects aligned with the priority areas of conservation fencing and grazing management.

Eligible applicants are invited to apply for an individual electric fencing project grant for up to \$8,000, for fencing materials. Up to 12 grants across Australia are planned. Applications close Friday April 9.

After reading the guidelines, criteria and determining if your project is within a 100km radius from a Gallagher Territory Manager location you can apply here: [Gallagher Grants - Landcare Australia Landcare Australia](#)

