

# North Central chat

MAY 2017

## A message from the Regional Landcare Coordinator

Hi everyone,

I have been so busy enjoying local events, activities and planning for the Community grants release that the Chat is a bit late this month!

On April 11, I spent the evening in Lockwood with the Mid Loddon CMN group, hearing from a range of speakers doing research and Landcare activities within the Shelbourne Nature Conservation Reserve. It was simply wonderful to have all the interested parties and land managers in one room, put new faces to email signatures and reconnect with familiar faces, including one of my university lecturer's Greg Müller, who has been doing Cherry Ballart (*Exocarpos cupressiformis*) research in the NCR. It wouldn't be a Mid Loddon event without an update on those precious Curlew chicks that featured in the February 2017 Chat, both of whom are thriving. Well done to Judy Crocker and the Mid Loddon CMN for convening the meeting, I think the partnerships formed will go a long way to supporting the projects of the CMN into the future.

On a mild, damp April weekend, I set out with my pooches in hand, to finally walk the Domino Rail Trail at Trentham which has been a Landcare project site I have long wanted to visit. Landcare facilitator and Trentham local, Sandy Scheltema, passed on the trail's fantastic pocket size brochure, which folds out into a map and describes historical, cultural and ecological points of interest along the way. We cut the 6km walk short just in time as the huge pre-Easter storm broke over us within minutes of returning to the car. I highly recommend this easy day trip and walk if you are ever in the area, it's just gorgeous.

More recently, the North Central, Goulburn Broken and North East CMA's descended on Moama for our second Knowledge Conference. Over two days we enjoyed hearing from peers, and keynote

### This Month's Contents:

News	2
Waterwatch update	4
Events	7
2017-18 Community Grants	9



speakers including Gregory Andrews, Australia's first Threatened Species Commissioner and Margot Spalding, a Bendigo local who spoke on inclusiveness, community spirit and making connections.

Read on to learn about some of the amazing events being held across that catchment and upcoming grants rounds,

Enjoy the read,

### Tess Grieves

Regional Landcare Coordinator

Phone: 03 5448 7124

Email: [tess.grieves@nccma.vic.gov.au](mailto:tess.grieves@nccma.vic.gov.au)



## News...

### Protecting Victoria's Biodiversity for Future Generations

**The Andrews Labor Government has released Protecting Victoria's Environment - Biodiversity 2037, a new long-term plan to protect our environment.**

Using the latest scientific modelling, the new plan enables Victoria to adapt to the challenges faced by all aspects of our natural environment.

It builds on work already underway to review Native Vegetation Clearing Regulations and a refresh of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, ensuring that Victoria has an effective approach to protecting its biodiversity.

Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio said "We're supporting a broad range of rehabilitation efforts by community and volunteer groups that will improve the resilience of our native plants and wildlife."

This followed news that threatened species of amphibians are recording encouraging captive breeding results, with record numbers of Southern and Northern Corroboree Frogs and Baw Baw Frogs bred at Healesville Sanctuary and Melbourne Zoo.

For more information on the new biodiversity plan visit: [www.environment.vic.gov.au](http://www.environment.vic.gov.au) or to apply for a grant visit: [www.delwp.vic.gov.au/grants](http://www.delwp.vic.gov.au/grants)

### A bit more Bilby banter

**I thought it would be nice to round out the Easter break with an update on recent Bilby populations surveys.**

The Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) reported in their April e-News that 'Bilby populations are on the rise, with an increase in the Yookamurra population and the establishment of a new population at Mt Gibson.' In addition to Bilby surveys, Numbats were also surveyed in the same locations and it is now estimated that the AWC is protecting more than 30% of the entire Numbat population!



Watch Bilby and Numbat release videos at: <http://australianwildlife.org/sanctuaries/mt-gibson-sanctuary.aspx>

### Wetlands Wonders

**During late March whilst out monitoring wetlands and vegetation around the Gunbower Forest, our ecology team stumbled across these cheeky chicks.**

In southern Australia, Painted Button-Quail usually breed between August and February. Damien suggested that either these two are late starts or their parents had such a good season after the summer flooding they were able to sustain another clutch.

Chicks leave the nest immediately and are only fed by the male for 7-10 days. The chicks can fly 10 days after leaving the nest.' Source: Birdlife Australia

No matter their seasonal story, these two are a welcome sight.







## Planting begins at Trent Creek

Article and images by Upper Campaspe Landcare Network facilitator, Sandy Scheltema.

**On a cold and blustery day in Trentham a few weeks ago when the mercury didn't rise much over 7 degrees 40 primary school students, teachers and parents from Trentham Primary School joined forces with the Friends Of Trentham Creeks and Reserves to plant over 180 indigenous plants at Trent Creek.**

The children had a great time getting muddy whilst planting and learning about the importance of protecting the riparian health of our environment.

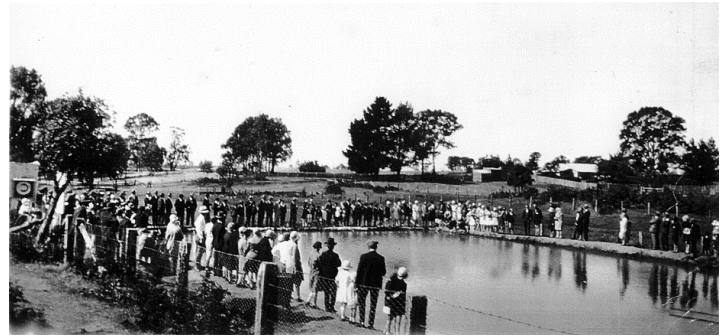


Students from Trentham District Primary School, including Lucinda and Murdoch, seen here, joined the Friends of Trentham Creeks and Reserves to plant over 180 indigenous species along the banks of Trent Creek as part of a plan to restore the riparian health of the area.

Friends of Trentham Creeks and Reserves received funds recently as a result of the Regional Riparian Action Plan Program to clear weeds and plant along the creek, a tributary of the Coliban River. The area has two species listed as 'rare' in Victoria – the Brooker gum – *Eucalyptus brookeriana*, and the Floodplain Fireweed – *Senecio campylocarpus*, and riparian forest (EVC18) listed as vulnerable in the Central Highlands Bioregion.

FOTCR Convenor Jan Robertson said " *We, the Friends of Trentham Creeks and Reserves, had a great time working alongside the Trentham Primary School students. Their enthusiasm was well supported by school staff and parent volunteers. Having washed 40 pairs of small- size gardening gloves and dozens of hand -tools, my laundry smells like a damp swamp, but I will happily put the equipment away for next time.*"

Trent Creek is the site of a historic swimming pool, used by Trentham residents in the 1920's, with a concrete base which, according to local Bill McKenzie, " became so rough it would take a yard of your skin off ".



Source: Victorian Collections

The group plans to acknowledge the history of the site, from which Trentham gains its name, with interpretive signage.

## Future Farming Expo roundup

**65 people joined in the 2017 Future farming Expo held at Rochester on April 5.**

Hosted by North Central and Goulburn Broken CMA's, the event was focussed on future proofing farm businesses, featuring keynote speaker Nathan Scott from Achieve Ag.

Nathan presented some bold ideas, challenged the audience to change the agriculture conversation and mindset from victims to leaders, and most importantly, explore and embrace new ideas and technologies.

Some of the thought provoking comments from Nathan included

- We need to change the mindset of our industry; we need to think like businesses not victims. Be leaders, no excuses.
- Set big goals & don't tell anyone your goals as they'll tell you it won't happen. Then start working towards it.
- Break down goals into steps & put a due date on them, this will keep you motivated & achieving!

The workshop breakout sessions generated a huge flutter of chatter, in particular Lyn Sykes (High Resolutions) session in which she spoke on farm business planning for future generations. Lyn generated one of the quotes of the event! " *Talking succession is like talking about sex with your kids,*



*uncomfortable, avoiding details where possible”*



The event participants were a fantastic mix; farmers, agronomists, industry group reps, and Departmental staff and Landcare members all of whom enjoyed meeting and being presented with a range of farm business topics.

Thankyou to everyone that came along and those that followed updates on social media throughout the day. We look forward to following up on the feedback for future events and planning for the 2018 event.

### Feathers fly at Glenlyon

I attended what I have to say was one of the most engaging field days at Glenlyon over the weekend, a Birds of Prey event beside the Glenlyon Dam.

Organised in partnership by the local Landcare group, the Leigh Valley Hawk and Owl Sanctuary showcased four of their rescued feathered friends and wowed the audience of over 140 people.



Photo: Sandy Scheltema

Visit the [Glenlyon 3461 Facebook page](#) for more photos and stories from the day.



### Hello everyone,

Whilst April has been a little quieter for Waterwatch events and the River Detectives Program there has still been lots of exciting things going on behind the scenes.

We are working away on planning for Saltwatch Week, a state-wide initiative that has been going for 30 years this year. You can find out more about Saltwatch Week and how to get involved on page 6.

We have been progressing with the North Central Waterwatch Data report, 20 years is a lot of data to filter through, we are almost there and are preparing to write a story and share an insight into Waterways of our region. Whilst on the topic of data, we have almost completed the first Native Fish Recovery Program's Waterbug Snapshot report for 2016! Watch this space.

Some of you may have already received your water quality monitoring diary for 2017. Those of you still waiting, I assure you it will arrive this month. You will notice some changes to the Diary and I am excited to share that we are continuing to improve the diary so we can include a range of options for participation in Waterwatch. More to come, so keep your eyes and ears open!

### What's happening in May?

#### Saltwatch Week

**When:** 21 - 27 May 2017

**Where:** State-wide

#### Cass Davis

Regional Waterwatch Coordinator  
North Central Catchment Management Authority

Phone: 03 5440 1863

Email: [cass.davis@nccma.vic.gov.au](mailto:cass.davis@nccma.vic.gov.au)



## Habitat Assessments: A change in time

**Waterwatch volunteers from Castlemaine Landcare Group met on Forest Creek in Castlemaine to undertake important habitat assessments of their monitoring sites this week.**

The aim of the assessment was to see what changes in habitat have occurred since the group last undertook a habitat survey in 2006. The group assessed bank and verge vegetation, in-stream cover, bank erosion and riffles, pools, and bends. Each component was given a score according to a ranking system designed to assess factors that are important for waterway health and habitat.

The group was able to identify changes to native vegetation on the banks and the riparian verge due to the Landcare Groups program of weed control and indigenous plantings. Localised erosion had increased at some sites, and is believed to have been caused by the 2010-11 floods in the catchment. The floods had a positive effect at some sites, by scouring out sediment and creating deeper pools and bends which improves the habitat value of the waterway.

An overall Stream Habitat Assessment of "Fair" for the four assessed sites indicates that there has been significant alteration from the natural state of the creek, but Forest Creek still offers useful habitat (a mix of native and exotic plants) that help to stabilize the creek and provide shelter and food for native fish, waterbirds and other animals.



Anne and Marilyn from Castlemaine Landcare Group undertook Habitat Assessments of four sites on Forest Creek.

## Waterwatch welcomes our new Citizen Scientists!

**Over the past few months we have been fortunate to have Rhys, Terry and Jean join the Waterwatch program.**

Rhys and Terry have come on board as a part of our Native Fish Recovery Program (NFRP), monitoring five sites between them across the Gunbower and Lower Loddon River system. Rhys and Terry's data will help us to identify impacts, guide waterway management decisions, and demonstrate outcomes from management actions.

If you are interested in becoming a Citizen Scientist and help us to monitor the Native Fish Recovery Program, please contact Cass Davis on [cass.davis@nccma.vic.gov.au](mailto:cass.davis@nccma.vic.gov.au)

## Waterwatch welcomes Jean!

**Waterway:** Loddon River

**Catchment:** Loddon (Lower) Reach: 7

**Long term resource condition target:** Maintain all improvements in ISC scores through maintenance program.

**Personal monitoring plan:** To monitor water quality of the Loddon River and contribute to developing a long term dataset that can help project development and natural resource management.

Jean McClymont has recently joined the program; Jean is involved in the local Landcare group and also helps with some very important river health detective work with local students from Bridgewater on Loddon Primary School who are part of our River Detectives Program.



Jean and Lady Gah Gah join the program





## Tilly's adventure to Gunbower!

*Tilly tells us all about her adventure to Gunbower Forest.*

On Thursday morning, all the kids from Eppalock Primary School jumped on the school bus and headed all the way up to Tree Tops Scout Camp in the Gunbower Forest for an excursion as a part of our living green program.

When we arrived, we met with students from Lake Charm, Welton and Gunbower Primary Schools, we all sat had a little bit of food.

After this, we broke up into groups and started to explore the forest. I was in the first group to learn all about Aboriginal culture. Uncle Dixie, Rochelle and Daniel talked to us about their culture and we learnt that their group is called Barapa Barapa, it means Cohuna. We got to paint Boomerangs too.

Then we went with Graham from Turtles Australia who spoke to us about what type of turtles can grow to what size. He told us how turtles lay their eggs by digging holes and then they lay their eggs and cover the hole with mud.

We then went with Sophie and Amy from the North Central CMA who told us all about waterbugs. Amy showed us how to scoop up the bugs from the creek and we found Water Scorpion in one of the buckets. It doesn't hurt you like a real Scorpion! *Phew!*

We finished the day with Kate, she gave us a little card and then we had to go and find the plant that matched the card. When we found our first plant, Kate gave us a lolly!

I had a great day, it was lots of fun learning all about the Gunbower Forest.



Help celebrate 30 years of Saltwatch Week this May by monitoring some local water bodies for salt.

GET INVOLVED IN WATERWATCH VICTORIA'S ANNUAL SALINITY SNAPSHOT MONITORING!

Learn about salinity while collecting and testing water samples from your local waterway. Then upload your data to the Saltwatch website to help create a snapshot picture of catchment health, along with other individuals, students and community groups across Victoria.

If you would like to register visit [www.vic.waterwatch.org.au/saltwatch\\_registration.php](http://www.vic.waterwatch.org.au/saltwatch_registration.php)

## Student's celebrate World Water Day

**Baringhup Primary School recently celebrated World Water Day (Tuesday 22 March). The 2017 theme for World Water Day focused on waste water.**

The little school has just fourteen keen students who participate in the River Detectives program has the Loddon River at their front door, the perfect environment to study habitat, water quality, flora and fauna of the area.

On the day students discussed the need for safe water sources for people in developing countries, carried out science water quality testing, sat under the River Red Gums beside the river listening to river stories.

Students watched and identified the birds which surrounded the river, photographed the river environs for an in school photographic competition, and finally designed and built a boat which was raced in the shallows. Here are a few of their reflections on World Water Day:

- Yesterday the whole school went to the Loddon River. First we read the acknowledgement of country. It was about Dja Dja Wurrung people. Second we read River Time together. Third we did a phosphorus water test. Fourth we did another test for how clean the river is. Fifth we saw a Rufous Night Heron: it is



rare and nocturnal. Sixth we made boats out of foil, paper, bark and leaves. We had a fantastic day. **Ronan**

- The water is a living thing. It keeps animals alive. **Dustin**
- I saw a Shrimp. It was jumping on the rocks. **Violet**



Students of baringhup Priamry School are heading out to celebrate World Water Day on the Loddon River. Photo by Kerrie Jennings

### Being detectives! Investigating the mysteries of Gunbower Creek

Students from Gunbower and Welton Primary Schools have started their year of being River Detectives, testing the quality of water in their local waterway, Gunbower Creek.



The students got their water quality kit out and checked the temperature, salinity, pH, turbidity and phosphorus levels of the creek, as well as learning how to complete a habitat assessment. They discovered all about water quality and why it is so important for everything that relies on it.

Their conclusion based on the evidence they gathered was that the creek's water quality was in good shape, with all results at the levels they should be. They will continue to monitor the river over the next year to see if there are changes.

### FUN FACT

**Frogs use their eyeball to swallow their food!**

When eating, frogs blink, this forces their big eyeballs down the top of their mouth squeezing the food down into its throat!

**Pretty cool huh?**



Source: <https://didyouknowfactsblog.wordpress.com>

### Events...

#### Linking Landscapes Symposium

The North Central CMA Landcare program is supporting the upcoming Central Victorian Biolinks Alliance's second annual Symposium at the Capital Theatre Bendigo on Friday May 12.

It will be a chance to get together with Alliance members and other interested people to hear the latest expert knowledge around how to design and deliver ecological connectivity.

The program will be headed by four of Australia's leading conservation research scientists and practitioners;

- Dr Veronica Doerr - CSIRO AdaptNRM
- Professor Andrew Bennett (La Trobe University & Arthur Rylah Institute)
- Professor Ary Hoffman (Melbourne University)
- Dr Gary Howling (Great Eastern Ranges)



The Symposium will also provide the opportunity to hear lessons from inspiring, long established projects and hear about central Victorian projects with a focus on ecological connectivity.

- Cost \$25 for members of Central Victorian Biolinks Alliance member organisations. \$50 for others. Ticket price includes morning tea and lunch.
- Registration closes May 10th.
- For further information contact Sophie Bickford: [sophie@centralvicbiolinks.org.au](mailto:sophie@centralvicbiolinks.org.au)

Register through Eventbrite at:

[https://www.eventbrite.com/e/linking-landscapes-symposium-tickets-33072090513?utm\\_source=CVBA+Delegates+%26+Associates&utm\\_campaign=d7d14d64dc-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2017\\_04\\_03&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_b27616f875-d7d14d64dc-53812873](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/linking-landscapes-symposium-tickets-33072090513?utm_source=CVBA+Delegates+%26+Associates&utm_campaign=d7d14d64dc-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_04_03&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_b27616f875-d7d14d64dc-53812873)



## Swift Parrot and Regent Honeyeater survey weekends

It's almost that time of year again! The Swift Parrot and Regent Honeyeater survey weekends for 2017 are on **May 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup>** and **August 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>**.

Birds Australia are looking for volunteers to survey both species across Victoria, NSW, ACT and Queensland, so get in touch with BA if you're keen to get on board

You can sign up to volunteer for this program via: <http://birdlife.org.au/support-us/volunteer/> and keep up to date with all of Birds Australia's events through their jam packed events calendar: <http://www.birdlife.org.au/events>



Source: Birds Australia website

## Nestbox Workshop

**Buloke Northern Grampians Landcare Network has advertised an upcoming workshop focusing on Nextboxes.**

The event will be led by Gio Fitzpatrick, an outstanding young ecologist and naturalist from St Kilda.

**Where:** 61 Adams Road, Slaty Creek (near St Arnaud)

**When:** Sunday 21 May from 9.30am

**RSVP:** Rob Youl 0407 362 840

**Light refreshments afterwards**

## Courses and Resources...



## Science to Policy Leadership Program

**The Peter Cullen Trust now has four scholarships available for the Science to Policy Leadership Program due to the generosity of a number of donors.**

Each of these fully funded positions is worth \$20,900 ex GST. The Peter Cullen Trust *Science to Policy Leadership Program* develops networks and supports Australia's future water leaders.

This program is designed to bring about

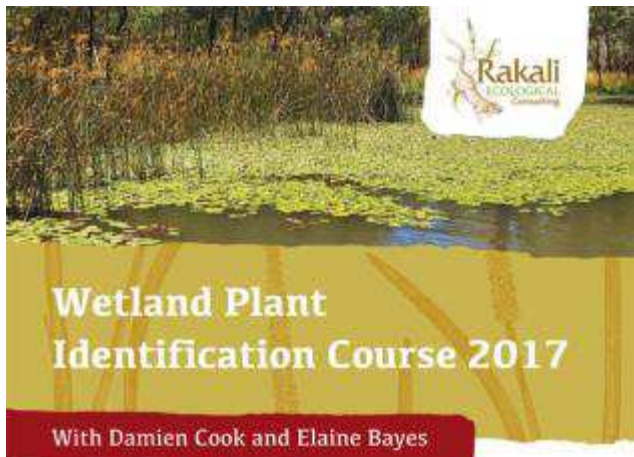




sustainable change, not just temporary inspiration. Potential applicants and/or sponsoring employers are reminded of the closing date of **17 May, 2017**. In addition to sponsored places, several scholarships are available as follows:

- **Reverend Vicky Cullen Scholarship** – applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are being sought
- **Professor John Langford Scholarship** – open to all individuals
- **Jigsaw Farms Scholarship** (co funded by the Trust)– open to all individuals
- **Suzy Nethercott-Watson Scholarship** (funded by the Trust) – open to all individuals

Additional information and the relevant application forms for scholarships and employer sponsors can be found at <http://www.petercullentrust.com.au>



### **Rakali Ecological Consulting welcome registrations for the October Wetlands Ecology Course.**

The course is designed for anyone interested in wetland plant identification and ecology. The course will run over 3 days and participants can elect to do 1, 2 or all 3 days. Each day will focus on a different wetland habitat and be timed so as to follow the wetting and drying of the stunning Reedy Lagoon at Gunbower Island or nearby wetland.

More information, the 2017 flyer, program and to view feedback from past participants please click here <http://rakali.com.au/education-and-training-2/wetland-plant-identification-courses/>

## **Landcare Professionals Forum**

**A Landcare Professionals Forum will be held at Riddells Creek on 14 -15 June 2017.**

This is a free event, with accommodation options ranging from cabins to bunkhouses. Those registering early will get their pick of accommodation.

This forum reinforces the commitment of the newly established peak Victorian Landcare organisation, Landcare Victoria Incorporated, to professional development in the Landcare community, and builds on the legacies of both the founding partners, the Victorian Landcare Council and the Farm Tree and Landcare Association.

The organising committee of Ross Colliver, Klaus Boelke and Libby Riches consulted extensively with Landcare professionals and volunteers to produce a thought provoking agenda, definitely an event not to be missed.

**Registrations: close 26 May 2017**

To register: go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/5J9S6HR>

## **Funding opportunities...**



**NORTH CENTRAL**  
Catchment Management Authority  
*Connecting Rivers, Landscapes, People*

### **2017-18 Community Grants- North Central Victoria OPEN MAY 15**

The North Central CMA is calling for applications for the 2017-18 Community Grants Program from May 15 2017.

The process and priorities have not changed from previous years grant programs, with three types of grant still available:

- Maintenance (up to \$500/group or network) and start-up grants (up to \$500/group or \$1,000/network)
- Project grants of up to \$10,000 are available for individuals and Landcare or community based NRM groups, and



- Landcare networks are eligible for grants of up to \$15,000.

We will prioritise projects that improve the natural resource base of agricultural landscapes and encourage projects with a focus on improving soil health, innovative agricultural techniques and practices such as trialling pasture species under variable seasonal conditions, and activities that increase community awareness and engagement such as workshops to up-skilling volunteers and field days.

To be successful, groups need to read the guidelines, map their proposed project activities and know their projects really well. Clarity of purpose is vital, as is a clear direction and focus, of both the project and the community

A total pool of approximately \$340,000 will be available. The grants program is supported with funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme (NLP) and the state government's Victorian Landcare Grants (VLG) and Regional Riparian Action Plan.

Application forms, guidelines and the online survey link are available under the Landcare Grants tab at [www.nccma.vic.gov.au](http://www.nccma.vic.gov.au). **Online applications are to be submitted before 5pm Friday 23 June 2017 via <https://nccma.smartygrants.com.au>.**

*\*The mandatory 'Supporting Landcare in North Central Victoria survey' has been extensively revised and remains part of the annual grants program.*

## Grants for Gorse Control available

**The Victorian Gorse Taskforce (VGT) is calling for project submissions for their 2017/2018 Community Grants Program.**

You and your neighbours or your local Landcare group can attract up to \$25,000 in grants to help combat gorse in your local area.

The VGT will support groups, starting from just two landholders, who are genuinely willing to control gorse and stay on top of it.

The VGT will consider projects under a Small Community Grants up to \$5,000 (GST exclusive), and Large (Facilitated) Community Grants up to \$25,000 (GST exclusive).

**Guidelines & application forms:** go to [https://www.vicgorsetaskforce.com.au/news/community\\_grants](https://www.vicgorsetaskforce.com.au/news/community_grants)

**Applications close: Monday 5 June 2017**

**How to apply:** submit your application including checklist and maps to [info@vicgorsetaskforce.com.au](mailto:info@vicgorsetaskforce.com.au) by 5 June 2017.

**More information:** email [info@vicgorsetaskforce.com.au](mailto:info@vicgorsetaskforce.com.au) contact the VGT Executive Officer on 5561 9905, or visit the VGT website: [www.vicgorsetaskforce.com.au](http://www.vicgorsetaskforce.com.au)

## Our Catchments Our Communities Leadership Development Grants 2017

**The *Our Catchments Our Communities* Leadership Development Grants provide funding of up to \$10,000 for travel, study, research or other forms of professional development in the following categories:**

**Innovation** - new approaches and knowledge to address contemporary issues in integrated catchment management

**Aboriginal Leadership** - recognising and supporting Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians as leaders

**Women in Leadership** - improving diversity and inclusion and the opportunity for women to lead

**Who can apply:** individuals from government agencies, private sector businesses, educational institutions, local governments, not for profits, community groups/networks.

**Applications close Wednesday 24 May 2017.**

**How to apply:** for guidelines, application form & FAQs go to <http://www.delwp.vic.gov.au/water/governing-water-resources/our-catchments,-our-communities/leadership-grants>

**More information:** please email [ourcatchments.ourcommunities@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:ourcatchments.ourcommunities@delwp.vic.gov.au)

Grants will be awarded annually over the next four years until 2020.