

North Central Chat

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



November 2020

A message from the Regional Landcare Coordinator

Hi everyone,

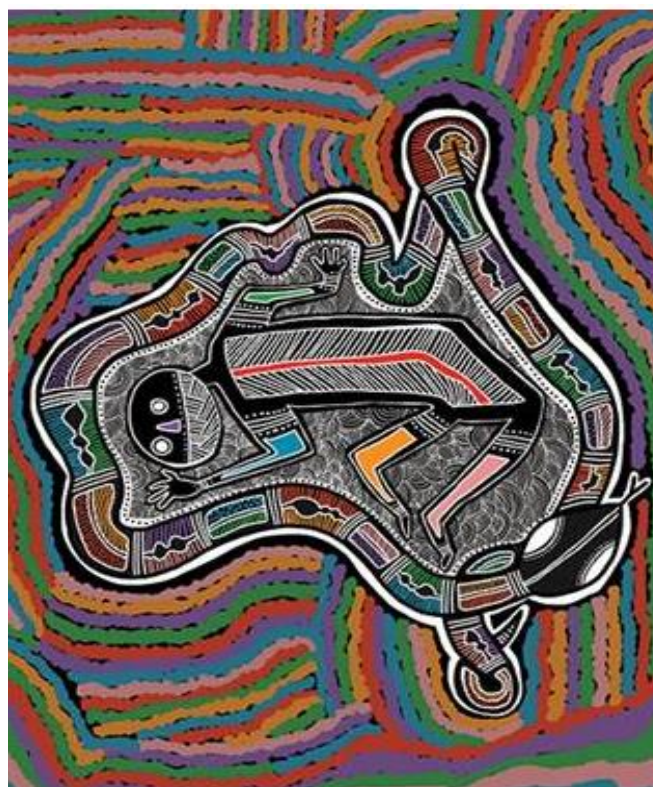
What a lively time the past month has been. October saw the Landcare team engage in everything from online events, student assessments, funding applications, policy decisions and training refresher courses, all topped off with Darren's beloved Richmond Tigers winning the grand final for good measure.

I was of course honoured to again host the 8th annual Chicks in the Sticks event and was blown away with the connections each speaker was able to create with the audience online - it was a joy to be part of and I've included a wrap-up of the day on Page 2.

Darren and I travelled west to St Arnaud in early October, visiting the paddocks of Landcare Facilitator Andrew Borg at Redbank Alpacas. It's safe to say Darren got his fair share of stereotypical Alpaca behaviour, leaving after a few hours having been spat at, glared at and 'chosen' by a lovely female Alpaca who took quite a shine to his bright jacket. I, on the other hand, was delighted with walks, pats (*and yes, plenty of selfies*) with the gentle woolly wonders. Andrew's Landcare Network collaborated with local cropping farmers on a funding submission to the NLP Smart Farms Small Grants Program. We wish all applicants the best of luck with their submissions.

In another first, I travelled to the Kerang Wetlands to assist the CMA's 'Bringing back the Bittern' Project team with their bi-annual listening surveys. Sitting beside the lakes for a few hours on a warm spring evening was fantastic. The frog chorus was like nothing I've ever heard and made listening for the 'boom' of an Australasian bittern quite tricky. Fortunately, the bird's call broke through and were heard on several nights, which is a great result for the next phase of the tagging program.

The region's Landcare Chairs/ Presidents groups had their bi-annual meeting on October 15, and we heard of the ongoing workload in each area. Networks continue to



NAIDOC Week 2020 will be held from 8-15 November under the theme Always Was Always Will Be. Photo: Courtesy of Tyrown Waigana's winning artwork, Shape of Land.

deliver projects, write funding applications for NLP programs, and support groups and volunteers struggling with the lack of social connectivity. The meeting also considered a post-COVID re-grounding, to welcome in or welcome back people to Landcare and group activity in a safe and friendly way - what an inspiring idea.

Enjoy the read,

Tess Grieves

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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



News...

Breaking through the virtual barriers- 2020 Chicks in the Sticks wrap up

On the wet Saturday morning of October 17, I must say I had a small sigh of relief to be hosting Chicks in the Sticks from the CMA office.

40 women from across Victoria joined in the eighth annual Chicks in the Sticks event, hosted by the North Central CMA Landcare Team.

Participants were encouraged to frock up in their Spring Florals, swap out the gumboots for Ugg boots and make a morning of it. We were joined by three exceptional speakers, Rebecca Phillips, Anna Carlile and Katrina Myers. They spoke about creating meaningful connections, finding personal and professional wellness, prioritising mental health, communicating ideas and showed off the power of storytelling.



This year's Chicks, Allison and Belinda, frocked up and enjoyed a socially distant morning tea in their very own 'Tiki Bar'.

The Landcare Team are so pleased the event was well received, with many womern attending for the first time! Despite the change to a virtual event, the speakers were able to share their stories and connect to the audience online, each one sending us off with a heartfelt and generous message.

We cannot wait to be back in the paddock come 2021!

Discover the Value of Victoria's 2.3 million Volunteers

A new report showcases the characteristics of volunteers, volunteering and volunteer-involving organisations (VIOs), and applies the cost-benefit methodology to describe the social, cultural and economic value of volunteering in Victoria.

This includes people who volunteer formally with organisations and those that do not have an affiliation with an organisation but contribute informally to their communities. Volunteers contribute on average 223.9 hours a year or 4.3 hours every week with their fellow Victorians.

The data for this report was collected across April-June 2020 when the impact of COVID-19 altered the work, travel and daily pattern of life across the entire State.

This allowed us to examine both the 'usual' pattern of volunteering (undertaken in the 12 months of 2019) as well as understand the initial impact of COVID-19 on volunteering behaviours.

Volunteering is significantly more than donating time. Rather, this report shows an increasingly professionalised workforce, with leaders of volunteers actively developing the skills and careers of Victorians through volunteering. There is further potential through volunteering, to contribute even more to Victorian productivity and community wellbeing.



Take a look through the State of Volunteering in Victoria website for the full report, surveys, resources and photo gallery: <https://stateofvolunteering.org.au/>

Always Was Always Will Be



The National NAIDOC Committee has proudly partnered with the Woolworths Group to nationally distribute the 2020 NAIDOC Week poster.

The partnership enables the distribution of some 200,000 NAIDOC posters from 1,000 Woolworths outlets across the country.

NAIDOC Week 2020 will be held from 8-15 November under the theme *Always Was Always Will Be*. The revised November dates for NAIDOC Week 2020 follow its postponement from the original July dates due to the impacts and uncertainty from the escalating Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

NNC Co-Chairs Pat Thompson and John Paul Janke warmly welcomed the opportunity to again partner with Woolworths Group – this year as an Official Sponsor of NAIDOC Week 2020.

“The continuation of this partnership with the Woolworths Group significantly assists us in spreading the reach of NAIDOC Week celebrations to a wider audience and helping them gain a greater understanding and awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, our diverse cultures and our rich histories,” they said.

“Importantly as one of Australia’s iconic brands and largest employers, Woolworths Group is in a unique position to influence relationships and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia.”

NAIDOC Posters have been celebrating and promoting NAIDOC Week since the late 1960s and rose to national prominence in the 1970s with the establishment of the Indigenous rights movement.

This year’s NAIDOC Poster features the stunning artwork titled *Shape of Land* by Noongar and Saibai Islander artist Tyrown Waigana.

NAIDOC Week 2020 posters are available from Woolworths’ outlets - until stocks last.

Visit the [NAIDOC website](#) to find out more about this year’s artwork and winning artist and to download a digital copy of the 2020 National NAIDOC Poster.

Putting the spotlight on Plains-wanderers

Northern Plains landholders passionate about their native grasslands and the critically endangered Plains-wanderers have welcomed an unexpected flurry of media attention recently.

In late October, the Weekly Times ‘Country Living’ lift out featured stunning imagery and the story of Torrumbarry dairy farmers, Andy and Jill McGillvray. The couple commissioned a Scottish artist to paint their old corrugated iron shed with a pair of Plains-wanderers, the grassland’s flagship species.

For decades, the McGillvrays have been active in farming, protecting, and advocating for the birds, grasslands and conservation, as well as being founding members of the Northern Plains CMN.



Photo: [Weekly Times subscribers can read the full article online.](#)

Northern Plains CMN President Faye Bail has also been actively promoting a newly completed video which highlights the Plains-wanderer and the Northern Plains Grassland for the Northern Plains Conservation Management Network.

Faye said “The NPCMN would sincerely like to thank network member Peter Morison for his great dedication to achieving such an excellent result”

View the 5-minute video and share it with your own networks via:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RZNJZ2o1qSG3m4quP74VaV2ZoTL_9MXi/view?usp=sharing

2020 Victorian Junior Landcare and Biodiversity Grants

113 schools and youth organisations will share \$409,500 in funding that will help young people across the state protect Victoria's environment and biodiversity. Funded on-ground works and activities will provide both environmental and educational outcomes.

Congratulations to the schools and groups in the North Central CMA region who were awarded funding, including:

- East Loddon P-12 College: ELP - Environmental Landcare Project - 'Biodiversity Boundary'
- Redesdale Mia Mia Primary School: Bugs, Bees and Bogs - A wetland biodiversity project at Redesdale Mia-Mia PS
- Shine Bright - Swan Hill North Kindergarten: Swan Hill North Kindergarten Bush Tucker Garden

See the full list of recipients [here](#)



Pollinator Corridor project launch

The Upper Campaspe Landcare Network is launching a series of webinars in the lead up to their project launch on November 15.

In an article published in the [Newham & District landcare group's Spring 2020 newsletter](#), Landcare Network facilitator Rebekah Ritchie discusses the projects purpose, pollinator ecology and how anyone in the UCLN area can get involved in the upcoming Pollinator Corridor project.

Keep an eye out for more details via the UCLN website and eNews <https://www.uppercampaspeandcare.org.au/>

Falling asleep at school

Nuggetty Land Protection Group member Jane Mitchell passed on some lovely photos from their group's recent nest box installation day at the old Nuggetty School site.

"Each site has been numbered with a GPS location. Our Network Facilitator Judy Crocker managed to convert some funding, giving our group 10 boxes to install across the site. The boxes were made by Miles Geldard of Wildlife Nestboxes.

"The box designs we have are specific for possums, phascogale, micro bats, parrots and sugar gliders. The site had an assessment completed by Connecting Country with funding from the CMA grants."



Newton Hunt installing one of the 10 nest boxes with 91 year old Roy Howell holding the ladder.



Youngest group member Evelyn (12 months) and her mum Elsie inspecting the groups great work.



Hello Friends

Spring is our busy season. Things are panning out a little differently, but this year is no exception.

We have NAIDOC week coming up with a great range of activities to get involved in. You might want to watch a documentary, join in the virtual flag raising ceremony, or listen to a book reading. Keep an eye on your inbox as further information will be circulated shortly.

Our annual QA QC Week (quality assurance, quality control) for Waterwatch volunteers is coming up towards the end of November. This is a fabulous way to test your skills and ensure that your equipment is functioning accurately.

We have 'mystery samples' prepared in a laboratory to certain levels of salinity, pH, phosphorous and turbidity – none of us know the answers until after everyone has tested their samples. It's a great way to check our equipment is functioning properly and our methods are consistent. It's also a great way to demonstrate to the Waterwatch program funder (Victorian Government) that we can have confidence in our data.

I encourage all Waterwatch volunteers to get involved. It's an annual requirement for your data to stay at level 3 on the Waterwatch database for reporting, and use by environmental managers and others. Keep an eye out for mystery samples coming in the post if you put your order in.

Stay well.

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 Coordinator
 North Central CMA
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Upcoming events and special days

November	
Pollinator Week	8-15 Nov
National Recycling Week	9-15 Nov
World Fisheries Day	21 Nov
December	
International Volunteer Day	5 Dec
World Soil Day	5 Dec

Water Storages update

Region	Water Storage	% full at 26 Aug	% full at 21 Sep
Murray Storages	Dartmouth Dam	56.04	↑ 59.56
	Hume Dam	65.04	↑ 75.99
	Torrumbarry Weir	100.02	100.02
	Third Lake	92.93	↓ 85.52
	Reedy/Middle Lk	96.88	↓ 95.61
	Kangaroo Lake	96.59	↓ 95.48
	Kow Swamp	88.43	↓ 88.09
	Lake Boga	83.08	↑ 83.77
	Lake Charm	95.09	↓ 93.08
Loddon Storages	Cairn Curran Res	46.48	↑ 50.01
	Tullaroop Res	61.96	↓ 61.61
	Laanecoorie Res	39.13	↑ 41.19
Bullarook Storages	Newlyn Res	100.31	↑ 100.54
	Hepburns Lagoon	94.24	↑ 103.36
Goulburn Storages	Lake Eildon	58.69	↑ 67.45
	Waranga Basin	91.55	↑ 94.20
Campaspe	Lake Eppalock	41.97	↑ 47.21
Coliban Water Storages	Upper Coliban Res	94.30	↑ 100
	Lauriston Res	90.60	↑ 94.4
	Malmsbury Res	53.90	↑ 101.5

Sources:

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

Southern Pygmy Perch go to School

Move over goldfish, pygmy perch are taking over the classroom!

A partnership between the North Central CMA, the Australian and New Guinea Fishes Association (ANGFA), Native Fish Australia and City of Greater Bendigo has recently established a breeding program of the threatened Southern pygmy perch.

An exciting addition is a new education program at St Francis of the Fields Primary School in Bendigo.

Southern pygmy perch (Murray-Darling Basin lineage) were once a common species in north central Victoria, but over the last 40 years or so, numbers have drastically declined due to altered flows, lack of seasonal flooding to wetlands, habitat loss, predation and competition with pest fish species like carp and redfin.

The partnership was formed to establish a breeding program with a view to reintroduce this little-known species back into the landscape. Raising awareness of this and other small bodied fish species is another aim of the group. Educating children was also discussed and the idea of bringing fish to the classroom grew from there. What better way to engage children in understanding and caring for 'pygs', as their affectionately referred to, than to give the students their very own captive fish to care for, grow to maturity and release into their local Sheepwash Creek.

The school 'fish in tanks project' is a trial, but if successful, the group hopes to set up tanks in more schools across the region. St Francis of the Fields Primary School has an active sustainability program and are involved in the River Detectives program. As local caretakers, they regularly test the water quality of the Sheepwash Creek, which is always excellent. They also know the creek has some permanent pools along its length, so the aim is to one day allow the students to release their fish back into Sheepwash Creek.

In the lead up to their special delivery, students participated in a virtual learning session with Peter Rose (aka Dr Pete), Project Manager of the Native Fish Recovery Program at the North Central CMA, to learn all about small bodied fish and how they could help with recovery of this species.

Well done St Francis! We can't wait to hear all about how the pygs are settling into their new home and look forward to the day they are big enough for you to enjoy releasing them into the wild.

Special thanks to Raelene Gooch at St Francis of the Fields Primary School and to the Strathfieldsaye and Districts Community Enterprise for funding the tank set up.



Teacher Raelene Gooch and one of her students with their new school friends.



Southern pygmy perch



Registrations will open shortly for River Detectives 2021

Teachers - keep an eye out in your inbox and on the website for instructions on how to sign up!

Courses & Resources...

Ten ways to enhance natural assets on farms

ANU's Sustainable Farms initiative have released their newest publication *Ten ways to improve the natural assets on a farm*. The book highlights ten discrete projects that farmers can undertake to improve the health of natural assets on farms, such as dams, shelterbelts or riparian areas.



Ten Ways shows how one small change on a farm can create new habitat for native animals while also leading to increased stock productivity. And these changes don't have to be onerous or expensive - simply fencing a paddock tree or rocky outcrop can help protect these sensitive assets for the future.

The booklet is underpinned by two decades of biodiversity research on farms, and represents the long-term knowledge collaboration between farmers undertaking changes to their management practices, and ANU ecologists, based in regional areas, who have been supporting farmers' observations with science.

To access the booklet, visit the website to see a digital version, find out where to collect a copy in your local area, or request one to be sent to you (for the price of postage). [Click here for details](#).



In last month's edition of the North Central Chat, we promoted this event series, hosted by the Institute of Public Administration Australia.

The series was an opportunity to hear from Traditional Owners from across Victoria talking about why it is so important to protect cultural heritage, how it is managed, and what needs to occur at the government level to help Traditional Owners (and all Victorians) better care for Country.



The recording is available for everyone to view online - click on the image above to watch the video (56 min).



Events...



Australia has around 2,000 native bee species, all of which are important pollinators. We also know there are a couple of thousand butterfly, wasp, fly, moth, beetle, thrips and ant species, some of which are documented pollinators.

Unfortunately, there is not a lot of information on the ecology of many of these insects, what flowers they pollinate, or where they are found.

The Wild Pollinator Count gives you an opportunity to contribute to wild pollinator insect conservation in Australia. We invite you to count wild pollinators in your local environment and help us build a database on wild pollinator activity.

Wild Pollinator Count dates for 2020

Spring: 8 – 15 November

You can join in by watching any flowering plant for just ten minutes sometime in our count week.

You don't need to be an insect expert

You don't need fancy gear

You may be surprised by what you see!

Find out how to count pollinators, identify the insects you see and submit your observations through the links at the top of the page. You can also download our Run Your Own Count kit and organise to count with a group.

Wild Pollinator Count is the flagship citizen science event organised by Wild Pollinators Oceania.



The North Central CMA are a proud co-sponsor of the recently launched Let's Pivot Program

The new program supports community leaders, organisations, and individuals to change their strategy without changing their vision.

Community and professional development will be delivered free of charge and entirely online from **October 1st 2020 to March 31st 2021**

Designed by 'Make a Change' Australia', this is a resilience response program to strengthen community efforts. Over the coming months, they're delivering inspiration, information, digital connectivity, adaptation ideas, and real time support to wherever you work best!

Join in one of the upcoming Zoom meetings to find out how you can best support your group, network, club and community.

Each Zoom Discussion is part of a series of eight sessions being held every Wednesday 7pm – 8.30pm from 21st October to 9th December. Each session builds upon the topics from the previous sessions.

Topics covered include;

- Tips and tricks to keep going
- Live online events
- Local stories on winning
- Chat rooms for sharing ideas
- Linking for collaboration and more...

JOIN TO PIVOT NOW!

Funding opportunities...

Grants for Bushfire recovery and Indigenous Fire and Land Management

Guidelines are now available for two new grant programs totalling \$12 million that will help native wildlife and habitats recover from the devastating impacts of last summer’s bushfires.

\$10 million will be available via the Bushfire Recovery for Wildlife and Habitat Community Grants Program, with community organisations, conservation groups, Traditional Owners and local governments eligible to apply for grants from \$5,000 to \$150,000 for eligible projects.

Applications close on 27 November 2020. Guidelines and application criteria are now available at <https://www.business.gov.au/brwhc>

\$2 million will be available via the Indigenous Fire and Land Management Workshops Program with Traditional Owners and Indigenous enterprises eligible to apply for grants from \$20,000 to \$200,000 for eligible projects.

Applications open on 2 November 2020 and close on 10 December 2020. Guidelines and application criteria, along with a sample application, are now available at www.business.gov.au/iflm



EASTERN BRISTLEBIRDS

With the only population of Eastern Bristlebird in Victoria threatened by oncoming fires in the Croajingolong National Park, DELWP, Parks Victoria and Zoos Victoria, working with Currumbin Sanctuary, Fisheries Victoria and Monash and Wollongong universities, have flown a team of experts into Howe Flat on a Singapore Defence Force Chinook helicopter.

15 Bristlebirds were extracted as insurance against the threat of the continuing bushfire emergency and are in the care of Zoos Victoria until it's safe to return to their natural habitat.

15 Eastern Bristlebirds were extracted from Cape Howe post the 2019/2020 summer bushfires, cared for by Zoos Victoria. Source: DELWP Biodiversity Response and Recovery [monthly newsletter](#).



The big finale!

The December 2020 North Central Chat will be the final edition for this year.

If you have any stories, contributions, group photos or updates you'd like to share, we'd love to include them.

Email your submissions through to tess.grieves@nccma.vic.gov.au before November 20.

A reminder from Landcare Victoria Inc.

Membership renewals

Landcare Victoria members who have not yet renewed their 2020/21 memberships are requested to give the matter prompt attention. It is important to remember that non-financial members are not entitled to the benefits of membership, including insurance. If you have any questions, please contact the Landcare Victoria office by email at info@lvi.org.au.

