

# North Central Chat

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



November 2022

## A message from the Regional Landcare Coordinator

Hi everyone,

This is a very challenging period for our catchment's community, and those neighbouring us across northern Victoria and riverine NSW.

The 2022 floods in many places, peaked above previous historic records. The waters from the Campaspe, Loddon, Avoca and Avon-Richardson Rivers in some cases have caused immense destruction to livelihoods, towns, homes, farms, flora and fauna.

The North Central CMA is acutely aware of the stress and strain flooding causes, and we've has staff at the Incident Control Centre, for the past few weeks, 24/7 under the direction of the SES, to provide flood analysis, intelligence and information during this flood emergency.

It is vital, that while some of you may not live within a typical flood zone, this 2022 event has shown that no flood is the same. Be it flash floods in the upper catchments, or riverine flooding further downstream, it is important you and your household are flood ready should there be a time you may be living, working or travelling in a flood impacted area.

The SES has clear messaging to support us all:

**Bag it:** Get your sandbags ready and in place to prevent water from entering your property.

**Block it:** Block drains, toilets, and doorways.

**Lift it:** Lift your valuables up high.

**Leave:** Get on your way to a safe destination as soon as possible.

We have seen hundreds of emergency rescues to save people driving through flood waters. Each community meeting CMA staff attend during flood events echoes the same message from Victoria Police - *never drive through floodwater*. It can take just 15cm of water to float a vehicle.



The Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES) is the control agency for flooding in Victoria. They are responsible for planning for floods, supporting community preparedness and managing flood response if they do occur.

Graphic: Courtesy of Vic SES

With La Niña and negative Indian Ocean Dipole continuing over the coming weeks we can expect further rainfall across the catchment

To support you and your family to better prepare for floods, understand how to access information and for what to do during the flood, I have put many of the necessary resources into this newsletter. Taking the time to plan for emergencies helps you think more clearly, have a greater sense of control, and make better decisions when an emergency happens. You can use the [VICSES flood checklist](#) to prepare for a flood.

Enjoy the read,

Tess Grievs

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North Central CMA

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## Connecting rivers, landscapes, people

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

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



## News...

### Financial help for south-eastern floods

The Australian Government is making help available for people in Victoria, Tasmania and New South Wales affected by the ongoing extensive flooding.



#### Victoria

The Australian Government's **Disaster Recovery Allowance** is now available in the 46 Victorian LGAs of Alpine, Ararat, Ballarat, Benalla, Boroondara, Brimbank, Buloke, Campaspe, Central Goldfields, Colac Otway, Corangamite, Gannawarra, Glenelg, Golden Plains, Greater Bendigo, Greater Geelong, Greater Shepparton, Hepburn, Horsham, Hume, Loddon, Macedon Ranges, Manington, Mansfield, Maribyrnong, Melbourne, Mitchell, Moira, Moonee Valley, Moorabool, Mount Alexander, Moyne, Murrindindi, Northern Grampians, Pyrenees, Strathbogie, Swan Hills, Wangaratta, Warrnambool, Whittlesea, Wodonga, Wyndham, Yarra Ranges and Yarriambiack.

- **The Disaster Recovery Allowance (DRA)** is to assist employees and sole traders who experience a loss of income as a direct result of a major disaster and is payable for a maximum of 13 weeks. DRA is taxable.

In addition, the one-off, non-means tested **Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment** of \$1000 per eligible adult and \$400 per eligible child is available to people who live in the Victorian LGAs of Benalla, Boroondara, Buloke, Central Goldfields, Campaspe, Corangamite, Gannawarra, Golden Plains, Greater Bendigo, Greater Shepparton, Hepburn, Loddon, Maribyrnong, Macedon Ranges, Melbourne, Mitchell Shire, Moonee Valley, Mount Alexander, Murrindindi, Northern Grampians, Pyrenees, Strathbogie, Wangaratta and Yarra who have suffered a significant loss as a result of the floods, including a severely damaged or destroyed home or a serious injury.

- Equivalent financial assistance will also be available to eligible New Zealand citizens ('non-protected' Special Category Visas, subclass 444 holders) affected by the floods.
- Information about the payments, including all eligible local government areas is available at: [servicesaustralia.gov.au/disasterevents](https://servicesaustralia.gov.au/disasterevents)

### 2022 Victorian Landcare Grants announced

Victoria's Landcare volunteers are receiving more support thanks to this year's Victorian Landcare Grants and Victorian Junior Landcare and Biodiversity Grants.

Minister for the Environment and Climate Action Lily D'Ambrosio recently announced the recipients of \$3.6 million in Victorian Landcare Grants and Victorian Junior Landcare and Biodiversity Grants to support volunteers and young Victorians in caring for the state's natural environment.

The grants will fund 327 on-ground and educational projects focused on biodiversity protection and provide additional financial support to more than 280 environmental volunteer groups.

Funding will support a diverse range of hands-on projects and educational activities, helping young Victorians learn more about Victoria's biodiversity and protecting native plants, insects and wildlife.

Landcare grant projects include the planting of thousands of new trees and plants at Wodonga, expanding habitat for koalas on the Mornington Peninsula, controlling weeds in the Mallee to protect native woodlands and grasslands, and installing nest boxes and bat boxes in East Gippsland for local wildlife.

Junior Landcare grant projects include a 'Biodiversity Boardwalk' at the Bass Coast Specialist School, a bush school program at Christmas Hills Primary School, an Indigenous Garden at Derinya Primary School and construction of nesting boxes for wildlife at Woori Yallock Farm School.

The Victorian Landcare Grants and Victorian Junior Landcare and Biodiversity Grants support the implementation of *Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037*, the Victorian Government's long-term plan to protect the state's environment.

These grants are part of the Andrews Labor Government's long-term plan to protect the environment, which has invested over \$560 million in protecting the state's biodiversity and the environment since 2014.

For a full list of grant recipients go to [environment.vic.gov.au/grants](https://environment.vic.gov.au/grants).



## POSTPONING Donald Regional Roundtable

Due to the extensive flooding in northern Victoria, the Regional Roundtable that was planned for Wednesday 2 November in Donald has been postponed. This event will be rescheduled in early 2023.

## Vale Aunty Esther Kirby OAM

**North Central CMA is deeply saddened to learn of Aunty Esther Kirby's passing. Our heartfelt condolences extend to Aunty Esther's family and the wider community.**

Aunty Esther was a proud Barapa Barapa Elder, a talented storyteller and artist. A kind and generous person, mentor, and well-respected friend of ours whom we had the honour of working alongside over many years.

We will be forever grateful for Aunty Esther's friendship, wisdom and her generosity in sharing traditional knowledge about caring for Country.



## Gumboots Galore- 2022 Chicks in the Sticks recap

Story and Photography -Sandy Scheltema

**After days of torrential rain, it was lucky the dress code included gumboots for the tenth anniversary of the North Central Catchment Management Authority's *Chicks in the Sticks* event on October 8 at Camp David Farm, Spring Hill.**

COVID-19 restrictions prevented the event from running in person for the past two years so it was great to see almost 100 women meet face-to-face in the beautiful gardens at Camp David Farm in Spring Hill. The event was all about celebrating a decade of women in agriculture and the environment and their achievements.

Regional Landcare Coordinator Tess Grieves said "It was wonderful to see almost a hundred inspiring women, from flower growers to chook farmers, croppers, and creatives, from all over central Victoria, gathering in person for the first time in two years. It's been a privilege to bring women with a diversity of skills and leadership together to share and learn from one another over the past 10 years. We started Chicks in the Sticks because the CMA's demographic data showed that women weren't as present as men at our events. I thought we should do something about that, so my colleagues and I designed Chicks in the Sticks for women."



The women explored the beautiful extensive gardens, learnt botanical drawing from artist Paula Zetlein, and were inspired by speakers such as farmer Madeleine Jenkins from 3 Bears Farm, author, gardener and Landcarer Dr Jill Teschendorff, and producer of Hemp products from Bunjil Farm Lyn Stephenson before enjoying lunch in the spring sunshine.

Writer and presenter on ABC TV Gardening Australia, Millie Ross, also spoke at the event and said: "Women are like the natural landscape, resilient, complex and diverse. So often in the past they've been undervalued and overlooked."

## Sustainable Ag Snippet...

### Building Johnson-Su Composting Bioreactors

Johnson Su composting bioreactors were being constructed by farmers from the Mt Alexander Regenerative Agriculture group last month.

The Johnson-Su bioreactor composting method is a no turn, self-aerating compost system that breaks down the compost material aerobically. The end product is a microbially diverse fungal and nutrient rich compost product which has the consistency of clay.

This product has many uses, it can be mixed into a slurry and used as a seed coating prior to sowing. The product can also be used to make a liquid extract that contain a rich and diverse community of soil microbes, especially fungi. The extract needs straining to remove all the solids before being sprayed onto the paddock or directly into the seed furrow.



Participants building a Johnson-Si Bioreactor

The participants all contributed to building a Johnson-Su composting bioreactor either for themselves or helping others. The workshop was run by Ross Davey and Michael Mason from Central Victoria Regenerative Farmer group. They have built many of these units for themselves and other group members using the compost extract on their own properties. The participants had an enjoyable sunny day and were looking forward to getting their bioreactors home to start composting.



Deane Belfield and Ross Davey with completed Johnson-Su bioreactor.

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### Final 2022 Chat edition

The final edition of the Chat for this year will be December 2022.

Please make your story submission before Tuesday November 22 to have it included in the next newsletter.





**Communities Caring for Catchments**

**Spring Macroinvertebrate Monitoring**

Spring is a busy time of year for Waterwatch, and this year is no exception. Our team, together with our project partners and Waterwatch community are immersed in waterbug monitoring for our priority waterways. By identifying the critters that live in our waterways, we can learn a lot about how healthy these water bodies are.

Waterbugs an important part of the food chain and are a good indicator of the health of the ecosystem by their presence, absence, abundance and their tolerance levels (to pollution and other unfavourable conditions).

We still have a few places available for volunteers and community members wanting to participate in Waterbug monitoring activities in November. Please contact Britt, [britt.gregory@nccma.vic.gov.au](mailto:britt.gregory@nccma.vic.gov.au), if you'd like to join us.

Tullaroop Catchment Restoration Project 17 Nov



The team busy counting and keying out the waterbugs of Castlemaine's urban waterways on October 4.

**2023 River Detectives Registrations**

We are excited to announce that registrations for the 2023 River Detectives program will open on **Monday November 28** for schools and youth groups in the North Central CMA region.

As in previous years, priority will be given to schools that are within CMA priority project areas. These are;

- Bendigo Creek Citizen Science project
- Tullaroop Catchment Restoration Project
- RiverScan Native Fish Recovery (Gunbower and lower Loddon area)
- Caring for the Campaspe
- A Healthy Coliban Catchment
- Ramsar Kerang and Gunbower
- Castlemaine Urban Waterways

If you are a current River Detectives school, you will receive a registration pack over the coming weeks. New schools are encouraged to apply by heading to the River Detectives website after November 28 and clicking on the 'apply now' link.

To find out more about the program and how it could work in a school near you visit [www.riverdetectives.net.au](http://www.riverdetectives.net.au)

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**Water Storages Update**

Region	Water Storage	% full at 29 Sep	% full at 25 Oct
Murray Storages	Dartmouth Dam	100.88	↑101.25
	Hume Dam	96.00	↓93.00
	Reedy/Middle Lk	97.30	↑114.85
	Kangaroo Lake	91.39	↑99.60
	Kow Swamp	85.24	↑105.76
	Lake Boga	80.09	↑82.22
	Lake Charm	90.90	↑91.33

Loddon Storages	Cairn Curran Res	97.35	↓92.21
	Tullaroop Res	101.17	↑104.50
	Laanecoorie Res	108.69	↑114.88
Bullarook Storages	Newlyn Res	101.55	↑102.12
	Hepburns Lagoon	105.40	↑108.81
Goulburn Storages	Lake Eildon	98.84	↓97.08
	Waranga Basin	96.39	↑98.06
Campaspe	Lake Eppalock	98.52	↑105.42
Coliban Water Storages	Upper Coliban Res	101.30	↓101.20
	Lauriston Res	95.60	↓90.70
	Malmsbury Res	115.40	↓111.60

[www.g-mwater.com.au/water-resources/catchments/storage-levels](http://www.g-mwater.com.au/water-resources/catchments/storage-levels)

[www.coliban.com.au/about-us/our-reservoirs](http://www.coliban.com.au/about-us/our-reservoirs)

### Upcoming Events and Special Days

<b>November</b>	
<a href="#">Pollinator Week</a>	12-20 Nov
<a href="#">National Recycling Week</a>	7-13 Nov
<a href="#">World Science Day for Peace and Development</a>	10 Nov
<a href="#">World Fisheries Day</a>	21 Nov
<b>December</b>	
<a href="#">World Soil Day</a>	5 Dec
<a href="#">International Volunteer Day</a>	5 Dec
<a href="#">International Mountain Day</a>	11 Dec

## Flood Resources...

### Financial support for flood-affected farmers

**Agriculture Victoria has advised of the 'Victorian Primary Producer Flood Relief Program' support package available for flood-affected farmers:**

- Primary Producer Clean-Up Relief Grants:** \$10,000 grants to cover the cost of the clean-up and get businesses up and running again
- Primary Producer Concessional Loans:** Up to \$250,000 to restore or replace damaged equipment and infrastructure, or to cover the short-term business expenses.
- Primary Producer Transport Subsidies:** Up to \$15,000 to support the transport of emergency fodder or stock drinking water, and the movement of livestock.

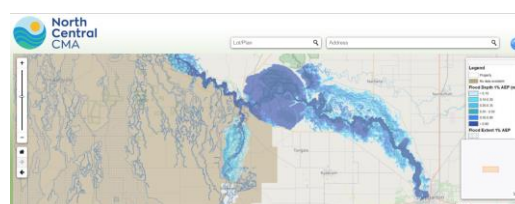
To find out more and understand eligibility and application processes, visit: [Rural Finance](#). Please contact Rural Finance on [1800 260 425](tel:1800260425) if you have any questions.

## FloodEye

**North Central CMA has developed an online mapping tool – Flood Eye – that enables you to obtain a free report that contains flood information specific to your property.**

Flood information is useful for:

- Residents/ businesses wanting to understand the risks and prepare for future flood events.
- People looking to buy or rent a property.
- Property owners looking to renovate their house or build an extension.
- Developers looking to subdivide a property; and
- Farmers looking to undertake works on their property or develop a whole farm plan.



\*Please note: *Not every property parcel of our catchment has available data on FloodEye*

## Emergency Information during Floods

### Useful contact details

#### Triple Zero 000

- Life-threatening Emergency

#### SES 132 500

- Providing flood advice
- Protecting essential services
- Helping to protect properties
- Rescuing people from floodwater

#### Vic Roads

**Road closures** VicRoads - VicTraffic  
<https://traffic.vicroads.vic.gov.au>

#### Other

<https://emergency.vic.gov.au/>

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

## Flood Recovery Hotline - Call 1800 560 760

Anyone in Victoria can call the Flood Recovery Hotline on 1800 560 760 for help with:

- navigating available supports
- clean-up
- temporary accommodation
- mental health and wellbeing support

The recovery hotline is open from 7.30am-7.30pm everyday. Press 9 for an interpreter.

For recovery support and information, visit the [Emergency Recovery Victoria webpage](#).

If you require assistance relating to insurance matters, please call the Insurance Council Australia's disaster hotline on **1800 734 621**

## Register. Find. Reunite.

This service helps reunite families, friends and loved ones after an emergency.

Use **Register** to let people know you are safe. Use **Find** to look for people you know may be affected by an emergency. **Reunite** shares details, with permission, to connect family, friends and loved ones.

Register for this service at [www.register.redcross.org.au/](http://www.register.redcross.org.au/)

## FAQs

### Where do I get information about weather warnings and river levels in Victoria

[Victorian Warnings Summary \(bom.gov.au\)](http://Victorian Warnings Summary (bom.gov.au))

[Victoria Rainfall and River Conditions \(bom.gov.au\)](http://Victoria Rainfall and River Conditions (bom.gov.au))

### Who do I speak to about levees during a flood emergency?

Queries about levees in the current flooding emergency should be directed to SES 132 500.

### How do I report poor water quality (hypoxic blackwater) or fish deaths?

The community is encouraged to report fish deaths to the Environment Protection Authority on 1300 372 842.

### Who do I call if there is damage to past North Central CMA works on my property?

Contact the North Central CMA on 03 5448 7124 so we can record details and contact you.

### Will there be funding available to repair past North Central CMA works on my property?

We are unsure at this stage if funding will be made available. Flood Damage assessments may be undertaken to seek government assistance.



## Damage caused by recent floods

**Over the month of October, some parts of the North Central catchment received up to five times the average rainfall for the month. With water storages at capacity, the result was widescale flooding with devastating impacts to homes and property.**

Our waterways were also impacted, along with the protection and enhancement works (such as fencing and revegetation) that we have partnered with landholders and community to achieve over the last two decades.

With prevailing wet conditions anticipated for the remainder of the year, the road to recovery may be a long and bumpy one. However, as an important first step along that road, we are asking our catchment community to let us know about damage to waterway fencing, revegetation, and significant streambank erosion. This information will aid us in the development of a funding application to support waterway recovery works.

It is important to note that at this stage we are uncertain as to the level of funding we may receive and the activities that we will be able to support.

If you have noticed damage to waterway fencing, revegetation or streambank erosion, please let us know by completing our online survey which you can access via the link below or QR code. Alternatively, please call our office on 5448 7124.

<https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/7087622/Flood-damage-along-waterways-in-the-North-Central-CMA-region>

## Events...

### Workshop: The art of fundraising for Landcare Groups

**Landcare Victoria Inc is pleased to invite you to a Fundraising Workshop - 'The art of fundraising for Landcare Groups' being held on Wurundjeri Country in Melbourne in November.**

This event is addressing increasing interest from our groups to learn more about "unconventional" ways of fundraising for their organisations. It's a workshop where groups, volunteers and experts can come together to discuss options around fundraising.

#### Enjoy a conversation with Esther Abram

With more than 20 years' experience in the not-for-profit sector and working in senior leadership roles for environmental and philanthropic organisations, Esther's focus is on building the capacity of environmental organisations.

**When:** 3:00pm - 5:30pm, Tuesday 8 November 2022  
**Where:** The Multicultural Hub, 506 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne.

**Cost:** Tickets are FREE for members and volunteers from Landcare Victoria Inc Member Groups, or \$50 for non-members

**RSVP:** [Click here for more information and to book tickets](#)

### November 2022 - Gunbower Island turtle nest protection project

**Turtles Australia invite volunteers along to be on site for the nesting of the Murray River turtles, they nest during November/December.**



They will be checking out known nesting sites and searching to identify previously unknown sites.

This will involve visiting farms and bushland and doing a lot of walking. Accommodation will be near Gunbower, details will be emailed after you register.

You do not need to commit to the whole time Turtles Australia is there. You are welcome to come for a single day, weekend or anytime you have spare. All help is most appreciated.

**When:** Sunday 6 November 2022

**Where:** Gunbower Island

**What to bring:** Bedding, Food, Outdoor Clothing

**RSVP:** [Turtles Australia Inc - November 2022 - Gunbower Island turtle nest protection project.](#) ([wildapricot.org](http://wildapricot.org))

### Seed Collection Day

**Dan Frost from Seeding Victoria will be the speaker at the upcoming seed collection event on Thursday 17 November hosted by the Upper Loddon & Avoca Landcare Network.**

The group will meet at outside the Avoca RSL 157 Sunraysia Highway from 10.00am sharp (carpool to visit sites)

**When:** Thursday 17 November from 10.00am

**Where:** Avoca RSL 157 Sunraysia Highway, Avoca.

**What to bring:** Bring packed lunch, drinks etc. You will be going bush so dress appropriately

**RSVP:** Chris Pollock (Facilitator, Upper Loddon & Avoca Landcare Network) 0421 372 545 or [chrisspollock7@gmail.com](mailto:chrisspollock7@gmail.com)