

# North Central chat

DECEMBER 2013

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

## A message from the Regional Landcare Coordinator

Hi everyone,

I hope this last edition of the North Central chat for 2013 finds you well. Hopefully it will provide some light reading over the Christmas and New Year break!

I didn't want to mention it but unfortunately I have to...there are still some outstanding 2012-13 Victorian Landcare Grant final reports. Having said that, there are only a few groups that are yet to submit reports, so please get them to me ASAP otherwise you will be hearing from me again shortly.

The end of the year is a time to reflect on our achievements. 2013 has been another great year for the North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) Landcare team. We have hosted some fantastic events including the Annual Water Science Forum, Chicks in the Sticks, the Grass Identification course, Property Planning for horse owners, Future Farming Expo and quite possibly the highlight of my year, Trees for Mum, an event held in partnership with the Loddon Plains Landcare Network at Boort P-12.

Next year is shaping up to be just as big with another Farming Expo, the Annual Water Science Forum, World Wetlands Day, cultural heritage training and some special interest workshops.

Congratulations to everyone who has worked with their local group to undertake activities throughout the year. I would like to thank you all for your tireless and often thankless efforts towards improving the health of our catchment and making our local environment a healthier and more enjoyable place to live. Also thank you to everyone that has contributed to this newsletter in some shape or form over the year.

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Lastly I would like to wish you and your families a very happy, safe and prosperous festive season. I hope you get to enjoy some time off over the silly season so that you can relax and recharge the batteries. I look forward to working with you all in 2014.

Take care and stay safe out on the roads.

Until next time,

**Jodie Odgers**

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### Weed of the month...

Herb

## DODDER

Cuscuta spp.



**(Beggar Vine, Golden Dodder)**

**Description:** Twining parasitic herb which reproduces by seed.

**Flowers:** White to creamy pink, bell shaped, 4 mm diameter. Formed in clusters in spring through to autumn.

**Leaves:** Reduced to tiny inconspicuous scales.

**Stems:** Bright yellow to green, thread like, twining and much branched. Twists tightly around host plants.

**Fruit:** Globular capsules containing up to 4 tiny brown-grey seeds.

**Note:** Dodder damages both agricultural and native plants. It has been recorded on over 60 different host plants in Victoria.

Restricted Weed



CONTROL OPTIONS

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Annual



VECTOR OF SPREAD

J F M A M J J A S O N D

20

## News...

### Cultural heritage in Gunbower Forest to be mapped

A new project to survey cultural heritage important to local traditional owners has begun in the lower Gunbower Forest.

The project, delivered through the North Central CMA, will work closely with the Barapa Barapa community to identify and map sites of cultural significance such as scar trees, shell middens, earth mounds as well as food, fibre and medicine plants.

“Archaeological and traditional owner knowledge indicates that the Gunbower Forest is rich in cultural heritage” said North Central CMA Indigenous facilitator Bambi Lees. “However a large proportion of the forest remains unsurveyed leading to the potential destruction and degradation of sites.”

The 12 month project, led by a steering committee comprising Barapa representatives and North Central CMA staff, has been funded through the Australian Government’s Indigenous Heritage program.

Survey work will be conducted by traditional owners with training in modern survey techniques by a bio-anthropologist (archaeologist) and ecologist.



Barapa people sharing knowledge on Country. photo: Image Link.



Information gained through the project will support the North Central CMA to develop annual environmental watering priorities for the Gunbower Forest that reflect the social, spiritual and cultural values of the traditional owners.

An important focus for the project will be to provide opportunities for Barapa people to come together to work and share knowledge on Country. Elder Uncle Neville Whyman says the project will help to look after both environmental and cultural values of the Gunbower Forest. "Water is important to make our connection to Country" he said. "The project will learn from the historical evidence - and we need to bring our young ones along with us. If we don't, we've got no generation behind us that's got the knowledge. We can only do that by bringing them out on Country - and there's got to be something here (for them to see)".

### Campaspe willow removal works

Contractors employed by the North Central CMA are currently working to remove a one kilometre stretch of dead Crack Willow trees along the Campaspe River.

Mrs Angela Gladman, North Central CMA Project Manager, said people travelling past Windmill Bridge on the Kyneton-Metcalf Road will, or may have already, noticed a change in the landscape. "Works are being carried out as part of the Victorian Government-funded 'Caring for the Campaspe' project that aims to protect and enhance the river's riparian vegetation.

"The key aim of the project is to improve the quality of vegetation along the river banks on both private and public land. In the Kyneton area, willow removal works will initially focus on the Parks Victoria managed reserve immediately downstream of the Kyneton-Metcalf Road with follow up weed control and revegetation to occur in 2014.

"Parks Victoria, together with many volunteers and students, has already achieved positive results at the Windmill Bridge site that has a population of threatened Hairy Anchor Plant."



*Willow removal works are progressing near Windmill Bridge.*

Mrs Gladman said a recent survey of river landholders indicates a strong interest in willow removal in the Kyneton area. "The removal of a further one kilometre stretch of willows on private property upstream of Windmill Bridge will commence soon and complements the long-term work of Kyneton's Campaspe River Walk Committee," concluded Mrs Gladman.

To find out more about willow control works in the Kyneton area, contact Mrs Angela Gladman on (03) 5440 1825.

### Watch Out! Turtles About

Drivers are asked to take special care over the summer months as turtles in the Gunbower Forest area begin their annual breeding season.

Trent Gibson from the North Central CMA said a number of turtles have already met with a tragic end on the roads in recent weeks.

"We're lucky enough to have three species of turtles living on our doorstep in the Gunbower Forest area. One of these species, the Broad-shelled Turtle, is listed as endangered in Victoria whilst the Murray River Turtle is identified as vulnerable and the Common long-neck Turtle as potentially threatened."

The CMA has joined with Turtles Australia Inc. in an effort to limit the number of turtle fatalities in and around Gunbower Forest.



Turtles Australia spokesperson, Graham Stockfeld said the best thing drivers can do is to slow down and keep their eyes open especially when it's raining or in the evening after rain.

"If it's safe to do so, drivers can also stop and help turtles cross the road by gently picking them up by the shell and placing them off the road in the direction that they're headed," Mr Stockfeld said.

"When you pick them up keep them clear of your body - that way, the claws can't scratch you and you're less likely to get wet as turtles can hold water."

Unfortunately, these turtles live a precarious existence, with not only cars to contend with but also predation by foxes.

Recent surveys undertaken by Victoria's Arthur Rylah Institute (ARI) for Environmental Research (DEPI) and the University of Western Sydney, found that juvenile turtles are in decline.



**Common Long-necked turtle retreating into its shell. Photo: Jodie Odgers.**

"Reduced juvenile numbers pose a big issue as they are the breeding stock for the future. Findings from recent surveys in the Gunbower Forest and associated lagoons also support previous studies that indicate that fox predation of nests can be as high as 50 - 93 % along sections of the Murray River," said ARI's Kate Howard.

Ms Howards said given the longevity of turtle species, declining juvenile recruitment may not be recognised until populations are at risk of crashing. "It is important to act before this happens, and develop a feasible long term management option to control nest predation rates.

To address the situation, the North Central CMA has an ongoing program to protect turtles within Gunbower Forest, including management options to reduce the threat of foxes such as fox baiting, nest protection and providing habitat through environmental flows.

To report any sick or injured animals, including turtles, please call RACV Wildlife Connect on 131 111.

## Growlers on the prowl in the Campaspe!

*Written by Tanya Loos, Upper Campaspe Landcare Network Landcare Facilitator*

### Ashbourne Landcare Group finds a rare Growling Grass Frog on their Campaspe River project site.

Ashbourne Landcare Group is thrilled to announce that a federally listed threatened species has been discovered on their Campaspe River project site. Naturalist and ecological consultant Garry Cheers heard the distinctive call of the Growling Grass Frog or 'growler' whilst inspecting the site last week. Ashbourne Landcare Group invites members of the community to a river walk on this site of the Campaspe, with Garry Cheers leading the walk on Sunday morning Dec 1st.

The Growling Grass Frog is a large green frog who specializes in eating other frog species. If Growlers are present, then you know that you have a healthy river or dam system, because these frogs need plenty to eat. The Growling Grass Frog is listed as nationally vulnerable under the Environment Protection and *Biodiversity Conservation Act* 1999. In Victoria it is listed as Threatened under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act* 1988 and classified as Endangered.

'We are thrilled that Garry has heard the Growling Grass Frog on our project site. We are hoping that this sighting helps us attract more funds and community support to continue the Upper Campaspe River Riparian Project for years to come', says Ashbourne Landcare Group secretary Libby Peck.





Ashbourne Landcare Group received funding in 2012, and again in 2013 through the Communities for Nature program, and has been very busy erecting fences, removing woody weeds and planting as part of the project. Garry Cheers, the project's expert Flora and Fauna consultant has made two visits in recent months towards preparing a Report for the project, and for the Ashbourne Landcare Group.

For more information, contact the secretary of the Ashbourne Landcare Group, Libby Peck on 03 5427 2840 or mobile 0419 396 6741.



**Secretary Libby Peck holds a photograph of a Growling Grass Frog and President Alan Denehey stands near a recently erected sign on the Campaspe River. Photo: Tanya Loos.**

### Snap of the month!

The sounds of Cicadas are associated with summer in Australia. This one was snapped by Anthony Sloan, North Central CMA Catchment Restoration Officer, in Harcourt as it was coming out of its nymph stage.

Did you know that Cicadas are the loudest insects in the world! It is thought that the sound they produce can act as a defence against predatory birds and some are even loud enough (120 decibels) to be painful to the human ear. Cicadas often sing in chorus, which makes it more difficult for a predator to locate an individual.



Some other facts that you may not know about Cicadas include:

- Only male cicadas sing. They do this in an attempt to find a mate.
- Adult Cicadas have short lives, usually only a few weeks.
- Most of their lives are spent as nymphs underground. For some species this can be up to several years.
- Cicadas feed only on plant sap using their piercing, sucking mouthparts.
- Cicadas feed on a huge range of plants, including eucalypts and grasses.
- Birds, bats, spiders, wasps, ants, mantids and tree crickets all prey on cicadas.

Facts taken from the Australian Museum website: [www.australianmuseum.net.au](http://www.australianmuseum.net.au)

Don't forget to send your photos to: [iodie.odgers@nccma.vic.gov.au](mailto:iodie.odgers@nccma.vic.gov.au).



Hello everyone,

I hope you are all organised for the Christmas break and taking some time out to relax with your family. In the last edition of the chat I mentioned the Waterwatch celebration event that was held on Saturday 23 November at Newbridge Community Hall. I wanted to share some photos with you.

For everyone who couldn't be there, I will catch up with you early next year. I have a little gift for you to say thank you for participating in the program.

Below is a photo of the River Detective students from Baringhup Primary School who preformed a couple of songs and talked about the Loddon River and the importance of looking after our local waterways.



After this performance, Waterwatch participants were presented with a special plaque and an umbrella by the North Central CMA's CEO, Damian Wells in recognition of their invaluable contribution to the program.



After the presentations everyone gathered around to have a group photo and cut the cake, before sitting down for a lovely lunch. The day was beautiful and highlighted how extremely lucky I am to work with such a wonderful giving group of individuals. Thank you.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year everyone, see you in 2014!

Until next time,

**Cass Davis**

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## Events

### Rockstars of soil world heading for Bendigo

Four representatives from one of the most important soil science think tanks in the world will come together in Bendigo early next year for an international policy and technical workshop on soil change.

Dr Luca Montanarella (Italy), Dr Helaina Black (UK), Dr Dominique Arrouays (France) and Dr Neil McKenzie (Australia) - all members of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations' Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils - will join Australian and other international experts at the Soil Change Matters workshop at the Capital Theatre from March 24 to 27, 2014.

"The workshop will be a gathering of minds to discuss what is known about soil change, how critical it is and how to measure it," event organiser Richard MacEwan, of the Department of Environment and Primary Industries, said.

“It will have a particular focus on agricultural land use and how the work of soil scientists around the globe is playing out in the paddocks.

“While changes to the soil asset such as erosion, salinization and acidification have occurred as a result of societal pressures, it is in agriculture that we are seeing positive changes in soil quality, achieved by addressing deficiencies through fertilizers, composts and manures.

“Farmers should be excited about further possibilities leading from soil research.”

The Soil Change Matters International Workshop is being organised by the Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) in partnership with the International Union of Soil Sciences, British Society of Soil Science and Soil Science Australia.

Policy and technical discussions will focus on priority action areas as set by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations' Global Soil Partnership, and there will be a one-day symposium during which farmers, land managers and anyone interested in soil science will have an opportunity to hear world leaders speak on their research.

“Soil is a finite, non-renewable source that is essential for life and society,” Mr MacEwan said

“We rely on it for food production and it is the key to determining what activities can be undertaken and supported on different types of land.

“Australia is a world leader in soil science research and this workshop will provide the opportunity to link global outcomes to what is happening at the local level through some of the best soil science minds in the world.”

For further information on the event go to [www.soilmatters.org](http://www.soilmatters.org)



## World Wetlands Day - Tour of Gunbower Creek

In recognition of World Wetlands Day, the North Central CMA invites you to attend a bus tour and discover how to integrate wetland conservation with agriculture.

The tour begins in Koondrook, where Traditional Owners will welcome the group onto Barapa Barapa Country and then travel to three wetlands along Gunbower Creek.

**Date:** Sunday 2 February 2014

**Time:** 10.00 am – 2.00 pm  
(including lunch)

**Location:** Koondrook Community Hall  
Main Street, Koondrook Victoria

**What to bring:** Attendees are encouraged to bring their binoculars and a camera

**RSVP:** Thursday 30 January 2014

Michelle Casanova, wetland ecologist and farmer, will discuss why wetlands are important to agricultural productivity and how communities and wetlands can be more connected. Local farmers and North Central CMA staff will also be on hand to discuss local projects and experiences.

Bookings are essential and can be made at [info@nccma.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@nccma.vic.gov.au) or 03 5448 7124.

This wetlands tour is part of the North Central CMA's Waterwatch program, Gunbower Key Asset Protection project, the Gunbower Lagoons Environmental Watering Plans Project and the Living Murray Indigenous Partnerships project.



## 2014 FTLA Annual Forum and AGM

Farm-Tree and Landcare Association (FTLA) Member Groups are invited to send a representative to the Annual Forum and AGM. Additional members and observers are also welcome so save the date in your diary.

Invited speakers will include 2013 Heather Mitchell Fellow Anthony Dufty on Analog Forestry and Lisette Mills from Basalt to Bay Landcare Network on their Native Shelterbelt project.

**Date:** Wednesday 26 February 2014

**Location:** Level 16, Marland House,  
570 Bourke St, Melbourne.

For more information contact FTLA on 03 9207 5527 or [ftla@vff.org.au](mailto:ftla@vff.org.au).

## Courses and resources

### Australian native plants info in your pocket

The 'Native Plant Guide App' for your iPhone, iPad or iPod Touch has had an update and is available from the industry respected book and desktop application The Australian Native Plant Guide by Dr Peter Yau and Tim Langdon.



The guide delivers specific information about Australia's wonderful native flora to a global audience via a multitude of delivery platforms and its now had a general content update, been upgraded to work on Apple's latest operating system iOS7 and in addition now offers the capacity to enlarge images.

Suitable for the iPhone, iPad and iPod Touch, The Native Plant Guide App has already changed the way many in the industry communicate information.

To purchase the 'Native Plant Guide App', please click <http://itunes.apple.com/au/app/native-plant-guide/id402131549?mt=8> or enter "native plant guide" in the search box at the App Store on your iPhone.

### Secrets to successful groups: EOI

FTLA are very pleased to have received funding via the Community Landcare Grants for a further five sessions of the Secrets to Successful Groups program we ran last year. Three areas have expressed interest in hosting sessions in March and April, being the Mallee, Lakes Entrance and Rutherglen. The two other sessions are currently unallocated.

As previously, FTLA will be running full day session, either on a weekday or weekend, with two or three modules out of a larger selection including:

- Legal Duties of Committee Members
- Volunteer Recruitment
- Succession Planning
- Legal Issues in managing volunteers
- Effective Decision-making
- Managing the Books
- Employment & Employer Responsibilities
- Top legal tips for community organisations

FTLA will be assisted by with practical legal expertise from PILCH and recruitment expert Kim Boswell. Feedback from the 2012 program was highly positive, with many participants being surprised by which topics were most useful to them.

FTLA are currently looking for five groups or networks who would be interested in 'hosting' a session before 30 June 2014. FTLA will go where there is the most demand so locations will be chosen on anticipated participant numbers, timing and availability of trainers, and spread of locations. Preference will be given where the host organisation can contribute to the cost of running the program (including in-kind) as we would love to be able to stretch the funding to more sessions.



If you would be interested in hosting a session, please let FTLA know and include:

- Estimate of participant numbers
- Preferred location & timing
- Preferred session topics
- Where applicable, cash or in-kind contribution

For more information contact FTLA on 03 9207 5527 or [ftla@vff.org.au](mailto:ftla@vff.org.au).

## Sustainable Grains

Applications are open for Trimester 1 entry into the University of New England's Diploma, Graduate Certificate and Masters in Agriculture (Sustainable Grains Production) course.

This online course will equip you with the knowledge and skills to fast track your career in the grains industry, meet and learn from grains industry experts and advance your promotion prospects.

Trimester 1 areas of study are:

**Grains Industry Systems** - socio-economics of grain production, grain processing and products, marketing and finance, QA systems, OH and S, and human resource management and/or;

**Grains and the Environment** - ecology and sustainability of grain systems, crop and pasture rotations, environmental impacts and management, native vegetation and soil conservation, legal issues and property management planning

Our Diploma, Graduate Certificate and Masters in Agriculture (Sustainable Grains Production) are specifically tailored for grain growers and advisors and provide:

- The latest in grains industry research and development
- An opportunity to network with leading experts, researchers and fellow students

**On time direct applications for Trimester 1, 2014 close in mid-February.**

To apply on line go to [www.une.edu.au/apply](http://www.une.edu.au/apply). Further information about the course can be found at [www.une.edu.au/grainproduction](http://www.une.edu.au/grainproduction).

**AskUNE** - You can visit [www.study.une.edu.au](http://www.study.une.edu.au) for instant answers to many questions about the enrolment process and contact our Future Student Advisors directly. AskUNE is UNE's comprehensive online help facility, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

**AskUNE Chat** - Our live web chat channel is also accessible via AskUNE.

**Phone** - 1800 818 865 between the hours of 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday to Friday (AEDT).

## Funding

### The Ian Potter Foundation Grants

**Sir Ian Potter was one of Australia's most visionary and internationally-minded business leaders in the decades after World War II. He played a leading part in financing the growth of the manufacturing industry in the 1940s and 1950s...and made a significant contribution to the advancement of Australia in business, the arts, science and medicine. The Ian Potter Foundation and The Ian Potter Cultural Trust are his legacies to the community.**

Sir Ian Potter established the Foundation with the intention of making a difference. It requires good people with excellent ideas to make a genuine, significant and lasting difference on key issues and in areas of greatest need.

To commemorate the Foundation's 50th year in 2014 we are running a special anniversary grants program. There are two overarching themes within this special \$4 million program: Building Communities and Effective Organisations. Our hope is that this program will draw out transformative ideas which will deliver positive, sustainable change in our communities.

Other program areas are: Arts, Community Wellbeing, Education, Environment & Conservation, Health & Disability, Medical Research, Science, Travel, and Conference.

For more information about the dates and criteria for each category go to [www.ianpotter.org.au](http://www.ianpotter.org.au).