



Waterwatch volunteer Peter O'Toole

North Central Waterwatch Achievements Report 2015 to 2020

Our Waterwatch program supports community volunteers to actively care for their environment by participating in programs that monitor and report on the health of our regions land, water and biodiversity resources.

Since 1993, Waterwatch Victoria has been a successful community engagement program connecting local communities with river health and sustainable water management. North Central Waterwatch focuses on building community volunteers' knowledge and skills and raising awareness about the condition of our region's land, water and biodiversity resources.

Over the past five years, the North Central Waterwatch program has had a focus on connecting volunteers with other on-ground works programs delivered by North Central CMA and partners.

This has increased the value of water quality data collected by the community in helping to inform waterway management decisions. This important work provides a baseline regarding water quality and with ongoing monitoring allows us to report on changes in ecological condition over time.

The Waterwatch team is passionate about increasing the knowledge and skills of community members by supporting them to become custodians of their local waterways. This report highlights their achievements and tells a compelling story about the value of the work our citizen scientists are undertaking across the catchment.

Acknowledgment of Country

The North Central Catchment Management Authority acknowledges Traditional Owners within the region, their rich culture and spiritual connection to Country. We also acknowledge the contribution and interest of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations in land and natural resource management, and pay respects to Elders past, present and emerging.



Aunty Marilyn Nicholls

at Wanyarrem Dhelek frog ponds at Knight Street



Waterbug sampling, Bendigo Creek

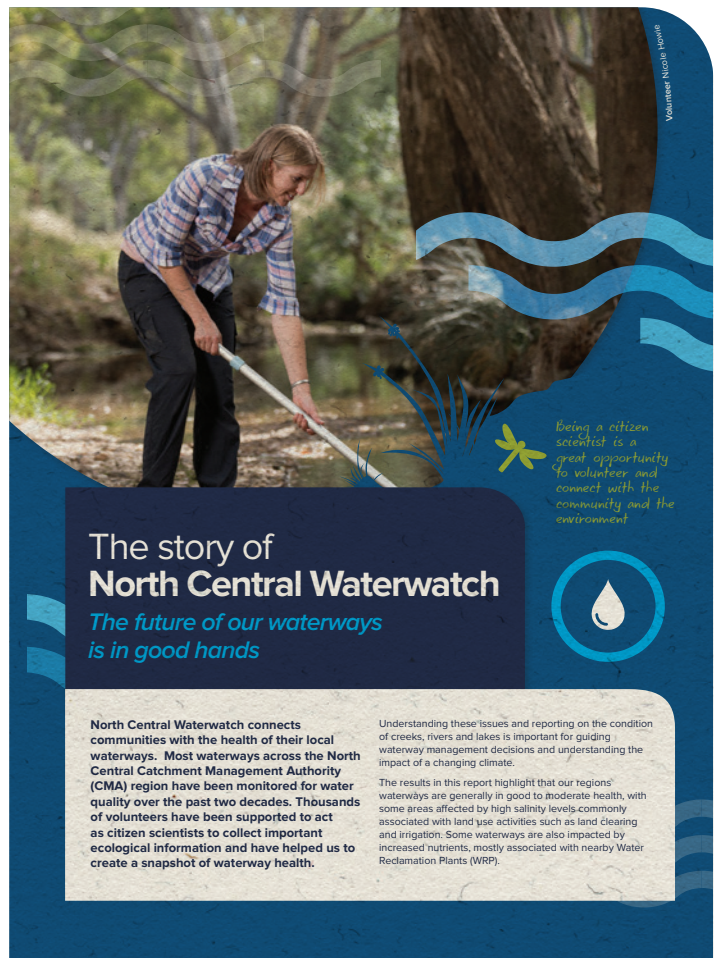
The story of North Central Waterwatch:

The future of our waterways is in good hands

Since 1993, Waterwatch Victoria has been successfully connecting local communities with river health and sustainable water management.

In July 2018 North Central Waterwatch hosted a small but significant event to celebrate 25 years of Waterwatch with our fabulous team of community volunteers and to launch the first regional report that highlighted the region's waterways and their current condition.

The event was an extremely proud moment for our Waterwatch volunteers as they were recognised for their efforts and gained a deeper understanding about the data they collect and the link to guiding waterway management decisions particularly in the context of a changing climate.



A good read – the story of North Central Waterwatch

The story of North Central Waterwatch

The future of our waterways is in good hands

North Central Waterwatch connects communities with the health of their local waterways. Most waterways across the North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) region have been monitored for water quality over the past two decades. Thousands of volunteers have been supported to act as citizen scientists to collect important ecological information and have helped us to create a snapshot of waterway health.

Understanding these issues and reporting on the condition of creeks, rivers and lakes is important for guiding waterway management decisions and understanding the impact of a changing climate.

The results in this report highlight that our regions' waterways are generally in good to moderate health, with some areas affected by high salinity levels commonly associated with land use activities such as land clearing and irrigation. Some waterways are also impacted by increased nutrients, mostly associated with nearby Water Reclamation Plants (WRP).

Volunteer Nicole Hewitt

4,195

people have been involved in our program!

2015-2020 Achievements

We are excited that we have exceeded many of our engagement targets. Why? We continue to support a network of dedicated and passionate community volunteers, educators and students across our region who contribute meaningful information about our region's resources, we share our stories and acknowledge their contribution in all the work we do!

Here a snapshot of what we have achieved with our region's community

Field Days
1,563
Participants
Target: 320



- 26** National Volunteer Week Avoca Catchment Tour
- 970** National Gone Fishing Day Annual Campaspe Carp Catch
- 100** Connecting to Country Event Dja Dja Wurrung Traditional Owners Cultural Heritage Event
- 100+** Elmore Field Days Agricultural Field Day
- 85** Girl Guides Victoria Women in Recreational Fishing
- 282** National Water Week Annual Partnership event to raise awareness of 'Water' with our youth

Presentations

1,556
Participants

Target: 0



- 200** Recognising Waterwatch Contributions 20 years of Waterwatch to Rob Loats
- 120** River Detectives program Launching the new regional program
- 16** Rakali (Water Rat) Roadshow Australian platypus Conservancy
- 37** Water Science Forum Launching the new NatureBlitz App
- 22** State-wide River Detectives program Launching the new Pilot Program
- 43** You, Me & Biodiversity Introducing community to Waterbugs
- 22** What is Citizen Science? Presentation to Castlemaine Landcare Group
- 23** Celebrating 25 Years of Waterwatch North Central Waterwatch recognition event
- 110** It's a Frog Life presentation Introducing Frogs to Camp Hill Primary School
- 23** What is Citizen Science? Presentation to the Healthy Coliban Catchment Community Reference Group
- 940** NAIDOC Week Voice. Treaty. Truth. Let's work together for a shared future Introducing Waterbugs to children at the NAIDOC Week Children's Day



Our greatest achievement was sharing the work our wonderful waterwatch volunteers do through 'the story of Waterwatch, 20 years of data'



Training

684

Participants

Target: 385



- 3** **Habitat Assessment**
With Waterwatch Volunteers
- 24** **New Volunteers**
Provided induction and training to new volunteers
- 202** **Quality Assurance and Quality Control**
Making sure our equipment and methods are consistent
- 171** **Professional Development** Provided training to River Detectives educators (North Central)
- 36** **Water quality and Waterbugs**
Provided training to Traditional Owners across the region
- 248** **Agreed Level Taxonomy Waterbug Workshops**
Provided accredited training to community and citizen scientists

Workshops

249

Participated

Target: 20



- 108** **City of Greater Bendigo Environment Strategy**
Engaging students in planning for our future
- 10** **Passions and Pathways program**
Introduction to future employment opportunities
- 14** **Data Management and Interpretation**
North Central Waterwatch Volunteers training in the use of the Waterwatch Victoria database
- 95** **Reimagining Bendigo Creek**
Engaging our Bendigo Creek River Detective students in planning for our future
- 22** **Bendigo Creek Litter Trackers Launch**
Educating our Bendigo Creek River Detective students about litter

Publications

65

Target: 68



- 2** **Booklets**
Field Manual and the Monitoring and Methodology manual
- 1** **Pamphlet**
North Central Waterwatch Program
- 42** **Newsletters**
North Central Chat, Landcare and Waterwatch News
- 7** **Certificates**
Recognition and mile stone templates designed
- 1** **Poster**
Raise awareness about Salinity
- 1** **Radio**
ABC - Launch of the Pilot State-wide River Detectives program
- 8** **River Health Snapshot Reports**
RiverScan, Birch's Creek and Bendigo Creek
- 1** **Waterwatch Achievements Report**
Highlight the year of achievements
- 1** **The Story of Waterwatch**
A celebration of the our volunteers work and summary of 20 years of data
- 1** **Action Plan**
North Central Waterwatch Action Plan 2020 - 2025



Water Assessments

528

Target: 320



Management Systems

3

Target: 3



- 1** **Waterwatch Victoria database**
- 1** **NatureBlitz App**
- 1** **River Detectives website and database**



Aunty Marilyn Nicholls

Traditional Owner Engagement

North Central Waterwatch has been working with Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation and Taungurung Clans Aboriginal Corporation to share knowledge and understanding of waterway health.

Waterwatch staff attended a day on the Campaspe River with both groups while they undertook Aboriginal Water Assessments. Waterwatch provided training regarding methods for monitoring water quality and waterbugs. The learning was two-way, as the Waterwatch team gained an insight in to understanding water quality indicators from an Indigenous perspective. There is a lot to learn from each other and are working on creating further opportunities for our community to become more Culturally aware and to learn from Traditional Owners on Country.

Aunty Marilyn Nicholls is a descendant of the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans people of the central Bendigo region and has multi-clan connections to the Ngarrindjeri Nation in South Australia of the Coorong Coast and the Murray River, Swan Hill area.

Aunty Marilyn is working with us to develop a framework to create culturally appropriate and safe resources for North Central Waterwatch. She is also providing guidance regarding future project development ideas to ensure we are working towards reconciliation by acknowledging First Nations people in the work we do.

A key component of Aunty Marilyn's work is developing our Kia Dhelk Gatjin (Speaking Healthy Water - Dja Dja Wurrung language) school event. Through her involvement, we are partnering with Djandak, Parks Victoria and the City of Greater Bendigo.

The event will be a day to celebrate Dja Dja Wurrung Culture and the work of our River Detectives students. Kia Dhelk Gatjin will be held at the Knight Street Wanyarram Dhelk Frog Ponds later in 2020 (April date postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions).

Students will participate in a 'kids teaching kids' activity, presenting their results and monitoring programs to students from other schools. The afternoon will also include round-robin style activities led by Dja Dja Wurrung Traditional Owners.

We are proud to partner with the region's Traditional Owners in planning and delivering this exciting event.

Pete's Story: RiverScan

When Peter Rose joined the North Central CMA, the North Central Waterwatch team were excited to have another waterbug nerd on-board!

Peter works as a Project Officer on the Native Fish Recovery Plan (NFRP) and teamed up with Waterwatch to develop a robust Citizen Science monitoring program across four key waterways; the Loddon River, Gunbower Creek, Little Murray River and Box-Pyramid Creek. Together with the Waterwatch team, Peter has been supporting volunteers for the past three years to monitor these waterways on a program aptly named 'RiverScan'.

We asked Peter what he loves about working with us; "Since being involved with Waterwatch through RiverScan, the NFRP project now has a cost-effective way of assessing waterway health in response to onground management actions over time. It's extremely important to monitor the works we do and is something that otherwise would be difficult to achieve through fish monitoring using NFRP funds alone."

Peter also spoke about the benefits of the programs working together. "Being involved with Waterwatch has brought another avenue of community, recreational fisher and educational engagement to the Native Fish Recovery Plan".

"Community members value being able to make real contributions to our project. Our project now has comprehensive river health data being collected, which will become invaluable over time to inform the success or otherwise of management actions, demonstrate the value of the works to the community and create opportunities for further investment into the plan.

"There is already some evidence of improvement in river health in the data collected, most likely related to flow management and instream habitat installation, particularly in the Little Murray River. There is also evidence, through informal conversations, that volunteers enjoy being involved and contributing towards the project".

Finally, we asked Peter what he enjoyed most about the program?

"Being out by the waterways and seeing the results of the management actions we are putting in place and watching volunteers discover the wonderful world of waterbugs!"

Thanks for all your contributions to RiverScan and the broader Waterwatch program Pete!

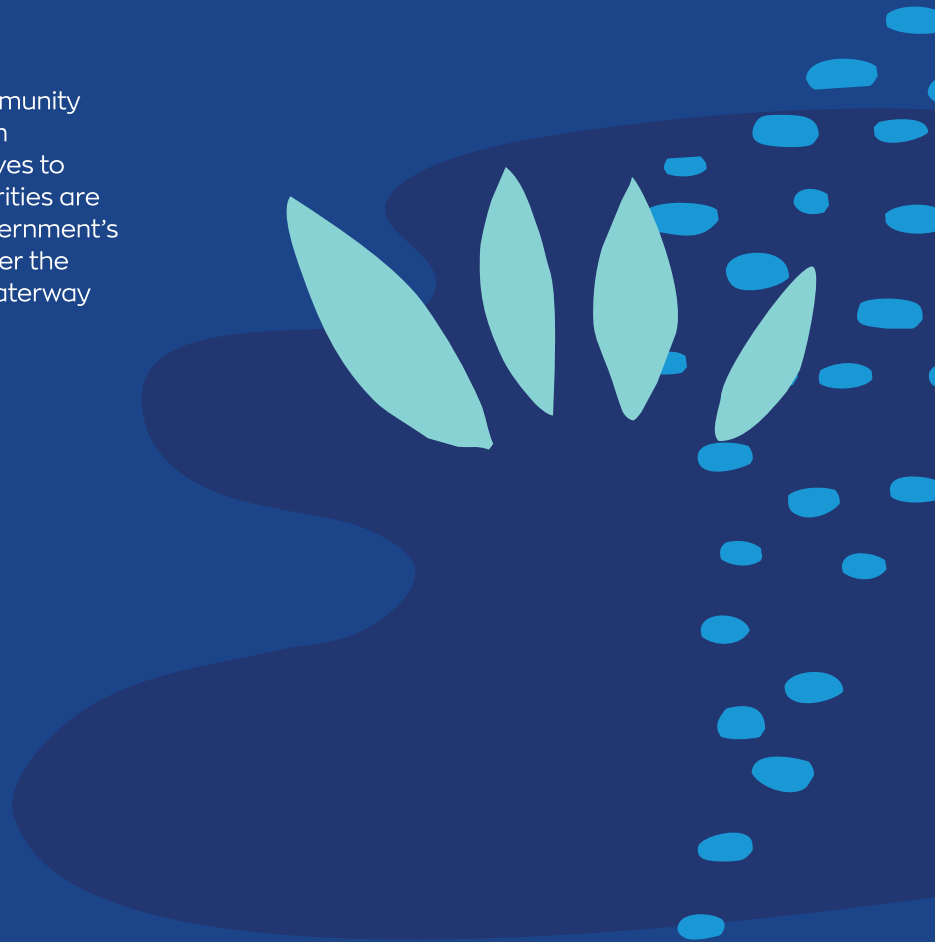


Acknowledgments

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Statement from the Victorian Government

The Victorian Government is supporting community partnerships over the next four years through Waterwatch and other citizen science initiatives to address local waterway priorities. These priorities are being addressed as part of the Victorian Government's \$222 million Water for Victoria investment over the next four years to improve catchment and waterway health across regional Victoria.



How to get involved

Contact your local **Waterwatch Coordinator** at the **North Central Catchment Management Authority**

✉ Via post: **PO Box 18, Huntly VIC 3551**

📍 Main Office: **628-634 Midland Hwy
Huntly Victoria 3551**

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Or follow us on:   