



Latrobe Catchment Landcare Network Annual Report 2017 - 2018

Presidents Report LCLN 2018

There is a report from our staff that John has compiled about our accomplishments this year. My thanks to John and Marnie for their efforts. I note that Marnie has also taken on the role of Regional Landcare Project Officer while Kathleen is on maternity leave. My thanks to Charlie for his treasury efforts and the other board members especially for involvement with the Projects subcommittee.

The year has been one of consolidation of ongoing projects and the further development of the network by our staff.

One little hiccup was the discovery that the definition of a Landcare subgroup differed between the bush and the city. I think we have been brought into line with a number of subgroups being promoted to independent status. This certainly created a little emotional and administrative activity.

Regarding Projects, we were only able to secure one major one being through "Love our Lakes" for \$111,000. We were successful with a number of lesser grants totalling a further \$100,000 including WGCMA support, VLG, Regional Community and Energy Australia. We will need to win some larger grants to maintain our present level of service to groups and subgroups beyond this financial year.

We have been actively working with our partners including Energy Australia and other Landcare networks within and outside WGCMA in the delivery of activities, education and training.

Winning Federal Grant money recently has been problematical. There seems to be a strong push on Sustainable Agriculture and specific issues. There has been a change to the methodology and we hope to hear better news later in the year. On the Sustainable Agriculture theme I can report that we linked with Peter Ronalds (WPCLN) to run a Master TreeGrowers course for farmers and landowners. Members of Gippsland Agroforestry Network Group help facilitate the course which generated 8 new members. There were 30 applications for 15 places at the course. BCLN applied for a grant to run another but were unsuccessful.

As an organisation we need to understand how trees fit into the Sustainable Agriculture story and get that message across to those who award the grants. Part of that story is that trees can be grown giving all the benefits that trees do to the farm including capturing carbon from the atmosphere and at a suitable time they can be harvested, provide an economic and/or wood product return, then replanted and the cycle recommences capturing a new lot of carbon. Some farmers have said to me the only thing that has kept the bank off their backs was a cheque from a timber company during a drought. Farm diversity.

If the landowner/farmer understands the value of the trees on their land they will manage those trees accordingly. I know one case where a property that contained a pine plantation changed hands. The Landcare planting leading up the gully (planted 25 years ago) had not been maintained as the original owners aged and was infested with blackberry; fences had disappeared. The new owners saw little value in those trees which may or may not survive future grazing and weed control burning. But they could see the value of the pines as they were motivated by money. This is not uncommon, and we need to show that trees have both an environmental and financial value to the grower.

Tonight is a melancholy night in that we say thank-you and good-bye to three board members. Judi Edwards has been a board member and Treasurer for many years, Charlie Medhurst has been board Chair and Treasurer and Joelle Champert has been a keen member of the projects committee. I thank them all on behalf of the board and the Network and wish them well with their future activities. So we have even more vacancies on the board for new people and new ideas.

Peter Devonshire RPF October 2018

Coordinator's Report

The past 12 months has been one of steady growth for our network. There have been many developments which have greatly increased the Network's presence and strengthened its relationships with local councils and government agencies. There have been significant advances in the network's social media capabilities with the development of a website and the opening of a Facebook account. There was also an increase in the number of on-ground projects, which was mainly due to funding from the Gippsland Lakes Coordination Committee for the 'Love our Lakes' project. The number of schools participating in National Tree Day events increased as extensive revegetation works were carried out along the Moe - Yallourn Rail Trail, the Gippsland Plains Rail Trail, the Blue Rock Lake walking track and Lumen Christi College. The showpiece of the Network's sustainable farming program, GrazFert (fertiliser management), was a success and is something that the network will build upon in the future.

I'd like to thank the LCLN Board for their support and my colleague Marnie Ellis who has been instrumental in promoting Landcare, utilising Information Technology and organising events.

John Crosby
Network Coordinator

A summary of Network events follows



Declan explaining soil profile

Soil Health Workshop

LCLN hosted a workshop with Declan McDonald, who provided an introduction to soil health to help farmers regain control over the fertility of their soils. The day was attended by 22 people.

Grazfert

Grazfert program was attended by 16 people who spent 2 evenings learning about nutrient budgets on farm. Those in attendance learnt to manage fertiliser input with a better understanding of nutrients moving on and off the property.

Zoo Visit

As part of Marnie's employment, a small grant was available to deliver an environmental educational experience. A local primary school was fortunate to have the mobile zoo (Wild Action) visit in mid-August. This presentation helped to tie in the previous revegetation work that the students had undertaken and during the presentation they learnt about habitat creation and restoration and biodiversity

Pleased to meet you!



Projects

Currently the Network has 43 active projects. While most of these are for on-ground works funding was also allocated to groups for a variety of activities including project mapping, purchase of and training in the use water monitoring equipment, case studies and support for community events.



Gippsland Rail Trail near Eaglehawk Creek, Glengarry

Tree Day

National Tree Day was again sponsored by Energy Australia. Glengarry P.S, Willow Grove P.S, Toongabbie P.S, Lavalla, Latrobe Special Development School and Lumen Christi College all participated in tree planting activities for National Schools Tree Day.

Network Training

The network was fortunate to receive \$18000 in funding through the community training grants earlier in the year. In delivering the training program, the Network is rolling out a series of workshops designed to upskill Landcare groups and members.

Training Available

- First Aid training Level 2- This training was run in West Gippsland and Latrobe in August and was attended by 30 people.
- Citizen Science
- Water quality monitoring
- GIS training
- Communicating in Landcare

Latrobe Catchment Landcare Network – Where to from here?

Friday October 19th 10-2:30pm

The Latrobe Catchment Landcare Network is hosting a workshop to bring together Landcare members to contribute to future planning. The aims of this workshop are to reflect on achievements across the network, share ideas and challenges and ensure that Landcare groups have an opportunity to contribute to future planning for the Latrobe Network.

Facilitator Michelle Croker of Mach 2 Consulting has been conducting phone interviews across the Network and will present a summary of Landcare work across Latrobe and facilitate opportunities for participants to discuss ideas to support their respective Landcare groups and the network.



Landcare Information Trailer at the Hill End Market

LCLN would like to acknowledge the support it receives from the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority, who provide the administration and office space, and Energy Australia and Energy Australia's Environmental Officer Nicki Kumar, who provide funding for Tree Day activities and other environmental initiatives.

Group Reports

Tanjil Valley Landcare Group

The main focus of the Tanjil Valley Landcare Group over the past 12 months has been centred around the maintenance and revegetation of the Blue Rock Lake Walking track. The track was constructed by the Landcare group in 2015 and in that time approximately 4,000 plants have been planted by the group and the local community. The track is a popular and valuable community asset and also a popular destination for visitors.

Trafalgar East bee keeper Bill Ringin was a guest speaker at one of our monthly meetings. Bill brought in a range of honey for a tasting as well as a demonstration hive which showcased the activity which occurs in a bee hive.



Farm walks were conducted at two local properties which highlight the environmental works that have occurred there. The walks featured established riparian revegetation works along the Latrobe River, stock shelter-belts and magnificent remnant vegetation including ancient Box trees and Manna Gums.

Tree Planting at Blue Rock Lake with Willow Grove P.S

An ongoing eradication program for Indian Myna birds has also been implemented to lessen the impact of these highly invasive and aggressive birds. The program has seen hundreds of the pests removed from the environment.

Charlie Pinch, President, Tanjil Valley Landcare Group

Springsure Hill Landcare Group

Presidents' Report 2017-18

The Annual dinner and meeting in September 2017 was held at Crossover School and was a great meal as usual, and included a conversation with Sean Dignum from Neerim South Landcare about their Frog Festival and work on upper Red Hill Creek. The meeting agreed the Group would continue to function in a holding pattern for a third year.

A most enjoyable evening was again held at Graham and Wendy Henderson's property to start the year with a pleasing number of our newer members present. A proposal to hold a Bat evening lapsed for lack of an organiser. We have not submitted any grant applications.

Our Newsletter is distributed to about 220 households in part of our catchment area. I have contributed a higher proportion of the content this year, utilising material from the various newsletters and reports I receive. My thanks to our local postie, and special thanks to Carolyn Ferguson for facilitating production. It is obvious that the Newsletter is read, as a number of new members have come forward this year – probably in the main due to conversations that people like Carolyn Ferguson and John Spargo have with new arrivals. Each new member has received a welcome kit and I have also had some conversation with them. There is still plenty of goodwill for Landcare and our environmental aims.

I have responded to a number of State Government Department surveys on Bio-Diversity and Landcare matters and continue to forward information to members and friends of Landcare as I receive it. Our main email list is broader than our membership and has 47 names on it. Only 2 members are not on email.

The efficient and effective work of West Gippsland Seedbank continues through the substantial commitment of its group of dedicated volunteers.

We still have available Myna traps and tube-stock planters for loan and Landcare signs for sale. A set of books of the Birds of Australia has been donated to the Group and is at our house.

Margaret and I continue as elected Board members for Latrobe Landcare Network and have been joined by Ian Hill. We are seeing substantial benefits flowing from the appointment of Marnie Ellis to work with John Crosby, and as a team more able to adequately service the whole of the network area from Flynn to Warragul. A couple of local members have discussed funding for projects through the Network.

As I see it in September 2018, the situation remains the same as when we made our decision to operate in a holding pattern in 2015. Some of the events we have tried have been really successful, but others have just never got off the ground. On the positive side, we have new members joining, expressing an interest in the aims and vision of Landcare, and we now have more financial members than in any of the last 5 years.

Love the Land. Smile with creation. Enjoy your place.

Eric Smith (President)

Yinnar/Yinnar South Landcare Group

- Stan Glowacki from Jeeralang Apiaries spoke about bees at Yinnar, Yinnar South Landcare Group's AGM at Yinnar RSL hall on August 7, 2017. Several new members joined the group.



Maple Mop Up November 2017

Yinnar, Yinnar South Landcare Group loves Budgerie Bush Reserve and we go there every year to pull out pesky sycamore maples. In 2018 our Maple Mop Up will be on Saturday November 10.



Ask and ye shall receive – we asked for a greenhouse in our local community newsletter ...and somebody gave us one! It blew over a few times before we were able to stabilize and brace it satisfactorily, and now we are able to do some of our own propagation.

Heather Enders, Joëlle Champert, Dave Egan, Bess the dog and Lucy Simnett enjoying the upright greenhouse.

In early 2018 after many meetings much agonising we sold our **spray trailer**. It needed work and more ongoing monitoring and maintenance than we thought we could manage. Other groups communicated their concerns about insurance and liability and this was also a consideration.

In March we ran a well attended '**Propagation Techniques**' workshop– funded by a Landcare education grant. The day went very well. It was facilitated by Sustainable Gardening Australia and we learned about propagation from seed and from cuttings.

We held our semi-regular promotion stall at **Churchill Market** in April after being rained off in March. Then, the May market which we'd bought tube stock for was cancelled by the organisers. All the plants have since found homes in group members gardens or re-veg; or in our planting at Hazelwood Cemetery where we held a modest community tree day event in July.

Our 2018 **Rabbit blitz** was in April over three days at six sites around Yinnar, Yinnar South and Hazelwood North. The Hazelwood Cemetery was again one of the places we went – they have terrible problems with rabbit damage and a lot of constraints on what they can do about them.

There were also a lot of rabbits in Hazelwood North. This Dept of Agriculture funded project was intended to support the release of Calici RHD K5 but there was no virus available to release. So our awareness campaign was less successful than it might have been.

Very successful 2018 **Schools Tree Day** in July at Lumen Christie Primary School in Churchill. Thankyou Latrobe City, Energy Aust & LCLN. The whole school turned out for this and students, teachers, parents and volunteers all had a great morning.

Funding success

Billy's Creek Biodiversity Community Action Grant for 2018 to 2020. It is to establish canopy and other revegetation on a 33ha block in Billy's Creek valley just upstream from the Billy's Creek section of Morwell National Park.

Our project aims to turn this:



*Yinnar, Yinnar South Landcare: Billy's Creek Project
block looking west
Photo: J Duncan*

Into suitable habitat for this [and other indigenous fauna]:



*Greater Glider
Photo Credit: David Stickney*

Friends of Land and Water Landcare Group

The 'Friends of Land and Water' is a group that draws its membership from residents of the Lifestyle Village in Warragul. Our group has been able to make only a limited contribution, in terms of the overall Landcare undertakings and projects and our work has been relatively simple and straightforward. Our group cares for the trees and bushes in the 2½ - 3 acre piece of land that we look after, removing the results of high winds and old age (removing broken timber, and replanting as required). We keep the paths clear for walkers by grass-cutting and slashing. The small creek that traverses the Village where we live, Spring Creek, also gets attention — in the sense that we keep its banks clear of unwanted growth. (The creek also figures in the work of WaterWatch, but that's another story.)



Before work started, 2011.



Clearing weeds and planting indigenous plants.



Maintenance

Mt Worth Landcare Group

The last year has been a very busy and productive one for our group. Membership remained at 2017 levels with a total of 39 families which is a great achievement for a small rural area.

Guest speakers this year have included Simon Heisler from Hancock Victoria Plantations (HVP), then two of our own members, Paul and Anne took us on a journey to Antarctica in the footsteps of Shackleton.

Planting days have included completed work on four properties with initial fencing commenced at a couple of others. World tree planting day was celebrated with more tree planting at:

- Ellinbank Primary School
- Lardner and District Primary School and
- Tetoora Road Community Hall



Planting on some of the flatter country at Trida



Our happy band of tree planters at Ellinbank Primary School

A working bee held at the Seaview Hall saw us weeding and pruning the native garden there and maintaining this historical site.

A growing plant from seed day was also well attended and run by Anne Bullen. Our annual farm walk was held at the Seymour/Dawson and Butler/Strickland properties.

Grants for the past year include:

- the \$28,600 state funded biolink project
- an auspice for the Friends of Mt. Worth for \$10,000 funded by Esso and involving the Yarragon Primary School. Some of our members also undertook first aid training with this grant.
- \$5000 from the Latrobe Catchment Landcare Network to map the on-ground works that have occurred in the past decade

On the financial front, we are in the process of acquitting a total of \$39,000 worth of grant money which has involved the plantings at member's property's plus the projects mentioned above.

Rob Waddell
President, Mt. Worth and District Landcare Group

Boolarra South Landcare Group

Our group has undertaken wide ranging activities in 2018. Community projects have covered the Morwell River Falls, the Upper Morwell River including Apex Park, the Little Morwell River and the Old Mill Site at Boolarra where we have monthly working bees. Valuable assistance from Corrections Victoria, Interchange Gippsland and Federation Training have helped our maintenance program. We were able to install a water tank there which will give us the opportunity to water vulnerable trees in Summer. The Latrobe Field Naturalists held a Moth Night there in March hoping to once again find a rare Scarab beetle which they had discovered on a previous night but no luck.

With the cooperation of HVP we had installed a long dropper dunny at the Falls camp site and when they logged the area they carefully moved it. We had to put it back so another working bee!

At Apex Park we have been cleaning up after the campers and put in a prominent sign to ask them to take their rubbish home. On National Tree Day we put trees along the bank to try to prevent the damage caused by those who drive over the edge.

A Grant of \$5,000 from FRRR enabled us to obtain a Billy Goat Blackberry Muncher to help us remove weeds without chemicals and we have had our demonstration so ready to put it to use.

Social activities have included a Christmas BBQ and a Community Picnic at Fox's Hole.

Our knowledge has been improved with firstly an Agroforestry Day held at Craven's conducted by Peter Devonshire. Dr Fred Edwards showed us how to deal with snake bites especially in the bush. Ron Irwin, an apiarist from Mirboo North, gave us insights into bee keeping and Faye Wedrowicz reported on her Ph.D. research into Koala DNA. As Robyn was her best supplier of scats this was particularly interesting to us. She had collected scats from the Mill Site and Morwell National Park too. She compared populations in the Otways, Phillip Island, Raymond Island and Flinders Island with the Strzelecki Koalas and found the all the others are related because of releases from the islands. The Strzelecki Koalas are a distinct group and the only ones which are Chlamydia free. She is now co-operating with researchers in other states and providing information to them as research continues.

We also enjoyed participating in events conducted by our Network and thank Marnie and John for their support and involvement, especially passing on information to us all.

On farm work has been continuing too with fencing and protection of vegetation and planting new shelter belts as well as the ever present weed controls. I began this report thinking we had not achieved much this year and as this is a quick summary there will be things I have omitted too.

For a small group it is a pretty good report card.

Denise Schiller, Secretary.



Green, Green Grass of home - Beginnings of a shelter belt



Cleaning up at the Mill Site – a rat barrow in action