



Latrobe Catchment Landcare Network Annual Report 2018/19

Chair's Report LCLN 2019

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 continued in aspects of the role of Regional Landcare Project Officer while Kathleen returns in a restricted fashion. My thanks to Phil for his treasury efforts (he has warmed to the role) and the other board members especially for involvement with the development of our Prospectus (led by Ian) and the review of our Strategic Plan (led by Margaret and Eric). Due to the projected funds available the ESC reviewed our staffing arrangements and as a result John's official hours (EFT) have reduced to two and a half days. We thank the WGCMA for their flexibility so that John remains fully employed between LCLN and Statutory Waterways.

I note the wildfire that threatened lives and properties, destroying houses and sheds etc. This occurred in Yinnar, Yinnar South area and we feel for those affected. But fire has been part of the Australian landscape for millennia; It has a cleaning and a regenerating effect on native vegetation. It is important that our efforts to care for the land acknowledge the risk of fire and use it as a regenerative mechanism when it does occur. We need to be ready to plant up areas where necessary during the damper months immediately following the fire if the need is there. Where possible, local properly planned and executed fuel reduction burning will mitigate the effects of wildfire and aid in their control.

The year has been one of continued consolidation of ongoing projects and the further development of the network by our staff. John enjoyed some well-earned holidays and I thank Marnie for stepping up and carrying his role. We have been actively working with our partners including Energy Australia, local councils and other Landcare networks in the delivery of activities, education and training. I acknowledge the solid and ongoing support of WGCMA in our organisation and activities.

As mentioned last year, as an organisation we need to better understand how trees can 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. GAN has received a VLG grant to help run a Master Tree Growers course, scheduled for autumn 2020. This follows courses run in 2018 and 2019 in Gippsland involving WPCLN, BCLN and GAN. I might be biased but it is a great way to get an understanding of how trees grow and how you can manage them. Participants bond together and remain connected following the course. So we are developing networks within networks throughout the region. A great story!

As a board we have much talent but few numbers. A couple of us will be dropping off the LCLN perch in the coming years so now is an opportunistic time to join and become part of an important and necessary part of Landcare. Ideally one person from each group would ensure the board is aware of what the groups are doing and conversely the groups can find out what is happening at a board level. Please consider this and take it back to your groups. I look forward to a flood of applications. We have vacant positions to fill.

Peter Devonshire RPF October 2019

Coordinator's Report

The past 12 months have seen some positive developments for the Latrobe Catchment Landcare Network (LCLN) network with the one exception being a reduction in staffing hours due to funding circumstances. Currently both the Landcare staffing positions are 0.5 EFT positions and are likely to remain there until State Government Facilitator funding increases or the network is successful in securing project funding. Project funding is a crucial component of improving financial security for the network. Currently management fees secured through project funding from the organisations listed below is crucial in enabling the network to continue delivering its services.

2018 - 2019 LCLN's Project Partners:

AGL, Energy Australia, Gippsland Lakes Coordinating Committee, Federal Government

Energy Australia have been a long-time supporter of LCLN with funding from Energy Australia being crucial in LCLN being able to support scores of National Tree Day activities every year as well as providing support to schools and other community groups to do valuable environmental works.

Throughout the past 12 months the Network has strengthened its relationships with local councils, businesses, government agencies and non-government agencies. There has also been steady growth in the network's social media presence with the continued operation of the LCLN website Facebook page.

Partnering with the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority and Latrobe Council to bring to Gippsland the Climate Change/Adaptability Forum was a definite highlight of the year as was the visit by David Holmgren the Permaculture guru. The Networks increasing involvement in sustainable farming practices has been a very positive development.

The second series of workshops of GrazFert (fertiliser management course), was a success and is something that the network will build upon in the future as it continues to promote sustainability and the importance of looking after our soils.

I'd like to thank the LCLN Board for their support and my colleague Marnie Ellis who has been instrumental in promoting Landcare through social media, strengthening relationships with member groups, sourcing funding for projects and equipment and organising training for Board and landcare members.

John Crosby
Latrobe Catchment Landcare Network Coordinator

A summary of Network events and activities

Grazfert

The Network ran its second Grazfert workshop in February 2019 This popular program enables landholders to better manage the fertiliser inputs for their properties through soil testing and the development of a nutrient plans. The goal is to reduce fertiliser costs and reduce nutrient runoff into waterways that can damage the environment.

Projects

Currently the Network has active projects.

Information Van

Makes regular appearances at the Rokeby and Hill End markets. The van has environmental displays and information from landcare as well as local shires.

Tree Day

National Tree Day was again sponsored by Energy Australia. In 2018/19 five local primary schools and six landcare groups participated in Tree Day activities.

Network Training

In October 2018 the Latrobe Catchment Landcare Network hosted a workshop to bring together Landcare members to contribute to future planning. Members reflected on achievements across the network, shared ideas and challenges. It was a valuable opportunity to contribute to future planning for the Latrobe Network.

Facilitator Michelle Croker of Mach 2 Consulting

Facilitator Report - October 2019

National Tree Day funded by Energy Australia



School students from across the Latrobe City, Wellington and Baw Baw Shires were involved in this years National Tree Day events.

More than 800 people including students from 13 different schools, Landcare and community members have planted more than 10,000 trees at 20 different sites from Neerim to Rosedale. Double the number that were planted in 2018.

School involvement ranged from the big to the small with 210 students from Lavalla Catholic College and 15 students from St Michaels PS, Traralgon.

Rail Trail at Glengarry



Lavalla Year 9 Students – ‘Cold Day at Flynn’

Retrosuburbia – David Holmgren

David Holmgren is the permaculture co-originator, lead teaching practitioner and globally renowned ecological thinker. David presented to a large audience at Morwell's Kernot Hall and his message was around sustainable living and making positive changes in your own homes. In his book, RetroSuburbia, David demonstrates household and neighbourhood living systems built upon permaculture ethics and principles. There was enough interest in this event to consider running permaculture / sustainable living workshops in the future.

Landcare Training – March 2019

This training held at Wilsons Promontory was an opportunity for all Landcare Network Staff from across West Gippsland to come together to share information about current and future projects and look at opportunities for collaboration across the region. It was a very successful couple of days which also included sessions on building relationships, as well as providing practical tools for communication and collaboration.

Landcare Member Training

LCLN was successful in gaining \$18,175 funding from State government to deliver training to Landcare members during 18/19.

Training was well attended across the board and included the following topics:

- GIS
- Citizen Science (bug blitz)
- First Aid
- Water Quality Monitoring
- Landcare – where to from here? (a facilitated discussion with members and network)



The Bug Blitz at the Railway Conservation Reserve was a two-hour session included getting up close to local spiders and insects, as well as collecting water bug samples. The event also included a one-hour water bug sampling session. Parents and children came along on the day, with 28 children taking part in the sessions. It was particularly great to see so many young families involved.

Bug Blitz is a not-for-profit initiative, integrating scientific, educational and creative opportunities to stimulate an active interest in biodiversity.

The '**Landcare – Where to from here**' workshop was a chance for members to discuss what they would like to see in the Network moving forward. A series of phone interviews conducted by Mach 2 Consulting facilitator Michelle Croker, was also an opportunity for the Network to learn from members what is working well and what areas we could improve. Using this information, the Board have since updated the Network Strategic Plan.



Foundation Grant - Wild Action Zoo

In December 2018, Wild Action Zoo was invited to present their show to the Glengarry Primary School students. Marnie was required to deliver a foundation project (as part of her employment funding) and decided to engage young people in Landcare with a difference. The Glengarry PS had been part of National tree Day activities and were learning about habitat preservation and revegetation during class time. To add to their learning the Wild Action Zoo delivered a series of short presentations that included sugar gliders, snakes, ring tail possums, lace monitors and even koalas. All the children were able to get up close and personal with some of the (not so dangerous) animals.

Social media updates

The Network webpage www.lcln.com.au is a work in progress and continues to be updated as new material and resources come to hand.

There has been a 40% increase in Facebook followers to the Latrobe Catchment Landcare Network in the past 12 month period. This is due to an increased number of regular posts and relevant material making its way onto the page.

Our monthly E-News is being sent to over 364 subscribers and is a great way to bring the most up to date Landcare Network information directly to the subscribers inbox.

Funding applications

This past year saw some smaller funding opportunities come our way and as a result the Network has been able to purchase a petrol driven handheld tree auger and 2 Power planters. These tools have proven invaluable for the tree planting and enabled the Network and our volunteers to plant more quickly and efficiently.

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

Cowwarr Landcare Group

Our Landcare group has operated for 12 years and has 15 members.

Our principal on-going projects on public land are:

- Revegetation at Swing Bridge Reserve, Cowwarr Weir
- Expanding bio-links on Rail Trail in Cowwarr area
- Gardening and plant propagation at Cowwarr Primary

Swing Bridge Reserve

For several years we have conducted annual plantings as part of National Tree Day in association with Planet Ark

In 2019 600 seedlings grown by Glengarry Tree Farm and from Cowwarr Primary were planted at Swing Bridge Reserve with help of 40 volunteers, this included a large number from Traralgon Scouts. This enjoyable morning contained plenty of enthusiastic young workers.

Following the planting everyone enjoyed a BBQ and soup lunch, friendship and not forgetting the chocolate cake. Thank you to Alinta Energy, Loy Yang B for the donation of funds which enabled us to run the event. We're now running out of space for mass plantings.

Kurt Grieve has been updating our Swing bridge Reserve Design. A magnificent effort with many hours involved, including meeting with Southern Rural Water Matthew Cook and Jess (Environment office). We Still need to do some editing so we can use it also for future Grant applications.

The Fulham Correctional Centre have been supporting us with Mowing, whipper snipping, watering, moving mulch and general maintenance. While the Works gangs have become less available, their contribution will help keep on top of the woody weeds. A local apiarist has placed and is looking after bee-hives. This is boosting pollination, but possibly in competition with the native varieties.

Tree plantings are now providing habitat for native animal such as frogs, birds, dragonflies. and snake and lizards. The entire project is a joy to work in.

Primary School and Rail Trail

The Cowwarr Primary School planting took place on the Rail Trail at Cowwarr, 22 Students planted 250 Tube seedling home grown by the students with the assistance of Landcare members. The students are proud of their efforts and happy to show off the previous year's plantings. The planting areas are being mowed and weeds controlled. This year's plantings have been mulched.

With Cowwarr Landcare members assistance, students will continue to grow indigenous plants for future plantings along the Rail Trail.

The continued efforts in maintaining the school garden, hen run, veggie patch and hot house the students have pleasant surrounds to learn how to produce vegetables and form friendships.

Promotional and fund-raising activities

Recently Trisha Sadian has been added to the Admin group for Facebook. Trisha is going to update the Facebook site each month with upcoming events and things of interest. Great to have such support of our youngest member.

We ran a very successful Wood raffle last winter, raising about \$500.00 The Lucky winner is a Cowwarr Landcare member (draw not rigged).

Roslyn Evans – President Cowwarr Landcare Group.

Tanjil Valley Landcare



It's been steady as she goes for Tanjil Valley Landcare with a slight increase in membership. The group's main focus is the upkeep of the walking track at Blue Rock Lake in Willow Grove. Funding from Energy Australia with the support of the network has allowed the tree planting along the walking track to continue into its 5th year. In that time approximately 5000 plants have been planted which has created a great bird habitat. An annual event is National School's Tree day. Every year Willow Grove Primary school, community members and Energy Australia staff come together on the walking track to plant indigenous species alongside the track. A BBQ, thanks to the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority, completes the event.

The group were successful in attaining Federal Funding to purchase some equipment which consisted of two wildlife motion sensitive cameras and one inspection camera to check

nesting boxes. Pam Whiteley from 'Wildlife Health Victoria' was a guest speaker at one of the monthly meetings. Pam and the team at Melbourne University are keeping tabs on Victoria's wildlife to monitor health threats from the likes of introduced diseases and mites.

A farm walk was conducted at a member's property on the Latrobe River at Tanjil South which included a man-made wetland, agroforestry, riparian plantings and beehives. In the future the group aims to extend the track to incorporate some remnant bushland that lies immediately to the north of the town.

Charlie Pinch President

Boolarra South Landcare

Alison Craven: President

Our membership is steadily growing and we have gained several new members this year.

Our year began with an evening Picnic on Australia Day at Fox's Hole, our local swimming spot. It was great to see so many members relaxing, swimming and enjoying the camaraderie at this beautiful natural pool on the Morwell River. We would prefer it to be heated of course; is there a grant for this? (NO)

The Boolarra, Boolarra South, Budgeree, Yinnar South areas were threatened by bushfires again this summer and we devoted one of our Landcare meetings to a debriefing session which we all felt was very useful and hopefully we'll all be better prepared for next time. Another meeting was devoted to seeking solutions to help wildlife survive the dry. We explored various strategies to deliver an accessible supply of cool water for our vertically challenged friends, lizards, skinks, insects etc and to create a cool refuge for the birds.

Boolarra Sth Landcare hosted an agroforestry field day at Craven's farm on Fox and Fanckes Rd, Boolarra South which had recently harvested part of their pine plantation. Peter Devonshire from Gippsland Agroforestry Network gave us valuable insight into the growing of trees for profit and the environment.

The year continued with constant weed eradication and tree planting in the area, especially along the Upper Morwell River, Apex Park, The Mill Site, the Falls and on our own properties.

Monthly working bees always end with a very social lunch as a reward for all our hard work. The recently purchased Billy Goat mulcher (purchased with a FRRR grant) has been very good at keeping the 6km of walking tracks open and clearing big clumps of weeds and blackberries throughout the site, though there's always more to do. Our collaboration with Corrections continues. We are very grateful for their regular mowing and whipper snipping of the grassy areas which allows us to spend much needed time elsewhere on the site.

Latrobe Field Naturalists conducted a plant identification day in part of the State Forest along Barktown and Fisher's Roads for us. We were pleased to find an area of unburnt forest there with a huge amount of biodiversity and very few weeds away from the tracks. An area of bushfire affected bush was blessed with an abundance of orchids and grass trees. A testament to nature's resilience. The data from this survey will serve as a baseline for further studies in the Boolarra State Forest conservation area.

Alison and Keith attended the Water Monitoring Training and are assisting Alan Hall monitoring water quality in the Upper Morwell River. Alan spoke on his water monitoring at one of our monthly meetings and was able to provide us with data going back over 11 years.

Members also attended David Holmgren's talk on Sustainability and purchased his book for our Library. We also purchased a smart TV for the Multi-Purpose Building where we hold our monthly meetings so that we can download videos, photos etc and watch them when we do not have a guest speaker. We taught ourselves to make insect hotels using information gathered from the internet and were able to display lots of awesome 'hotel' ideas on our new toy.

We have recently been advised that our grant application to Latrobe City was successful. This grant will enable us to install an antenna so that we can also use our smart TV as a television, especially in times of emergency.

On National Tree Day 700 trees were planted and more Bluegums and Strzelecki Gums have since been distributed to members for planting on their properties and at Apex Park.

Denise took Gerard Callinan, Communications officer from the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority around the Mill Site and out to the Morwell River Falls as he made a Podcast to publicise the projects in which Landcare Groups are involved.

It's been an interesting year with much achieved but, as always, we can see we have a long way to go.

Springsure Hill Landcare Group Stephanie Carr President

The 2018 AGM was held at Crossover School with a great meal and informative talk from Pam Dawson, wildlife carer. A change of office bearers occurred, and Eric Smith was thanked for his 5 years of service as President.

2018/2019 has brought many opportunities and challenges to our patch. We lived with the knowledge that there were fires in the area over summer and then (some) had significant rainfall over winter. As new President, I find it heart-warming to see our community connect through Landcare. I would like to thank our Secretary Eric Smith and our Treasurer John Coulson for their dedicated service this year and thank those that I affectionately call 'the brains trust' for their invaluable knowledge and guidance over the last 12 months. Thankyou also to the members who have volunteered and opened their properties to us for events.

Springsure Hill Landcare Group is in its 22nd year and with new members entering the group, a new energy is starting to reinvigorate the group. To pick up our momentum however, we do need members to volunteer their time to organise and attend events.

In communications, we continue to circulate the SHLG Newsletter to approximately 250 households. A big thankyou to Eric for curating and collating the newsletter, to Carolyn Ferguson for facilitating production and our local postie for distribution.

We began a new email account this year – springsurehilllandcare@gmail.com – and will be utilising this account and Eric's account for communications. Eric continues to circulate opportunities passed onto us by the wider Landcare Region.

The West Gippsland Seedbank continues its important work through a group of dedicated volunteers but is requiring an injection of new members to continue this work.

Activity within the group is on the rise. We got together at Neerim South Pub for Christmas, facilitated an informative talk by the Game Management Authority (attended by multiple Landcare groups), and visited the Henderson's for a new year BBQ. We continue to have members be successful in being awarded grants from both the group itself and the wider Landcare network and I can see that getting together more often will spur on the creativity of the group.

It's been a big learning year for me as a new President, but the future of the group looks bright and I look forward to seeing what 2019 / 2020 brings!