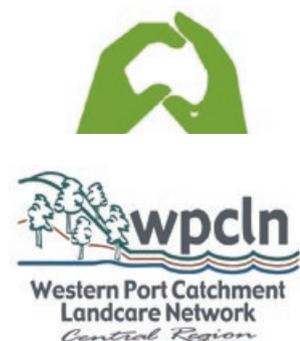


# Western Port Catchment Landcare Network ANNUAL MAGAZINE / 2022



## VISION STATEMENT

The Western Port Catchment Landcare Network seeks to enhance the biodiversity of ecosystems within the catchment to ensure they are connected and protected in perpetuity. This will be done by promoting regenerative land management practices to landholders and in collaboration with an empowered, diverse and supportive community.



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Cover Images: Bandicoot Mum and Davies Farm Planting  
Graphic Design: Leap Creative Co.

# NETWORK FLOWCHART

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## NETWORK GROUPS

# ABOUT WPCLN

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## BACKGROUND

- The Western Port Catchment Landcare Network (WPCLN) was established in 1999 and incorporated in 2012. It comprises 14 groups and covers an area of 129,241 hectares with natural, rural, semi-rural, peri-urban and urban landscapes.
- The WPCLN facilitates landholder education, knowledge sharing and behaviour change through field days, planting days, trials and workshops to support landholders to revegetate areas to increase biodiversity, protect waterways and adopt sustainable land management practices.

## OUR MISSION

We will work to:

- Collaborate and share our vision to the broader community
- Facilitate communication between Landcare groups and the Network
- Maintain relationships with key stakeholders and establish new ones
- Provide opportunities for landholder education and knowledge sharing to help foster positive behaviour change
- Secure funding for and manage catchment-wide projects
- Grow Landcare and Landcare activities across the Western Port region
- Help Landcare groups to plan and collaborate, be responsive to their needs
- Provide a representative voice for natural values e.g. native vegetation, soils, waterways, and wildlife

## OUR VALUES

We will be guided by these values:

- Passion & Commitment
- Inclusion & Empowerment
- Collaboration & Building Successful Partnerships
- Clarity of Purpose
- Honesty & Integrity
- Respect of Community & Culture

## PAST PROJECTS

- Demonstrating Sustainable Farming Practices in Western Port
- Clyde Rail Bandicoot Habitat Corridor
- Connecting and Increasing Habitat for Nectar Feeders in Western Port
- Cannibal Creek Catchment Biodiversity Project (ongoing)
- Linking Native Pollinators and Sustainable Food Systems
- Western Port Fire Recovery Vegetation
- Cardinia Shire Biodiversity Grant (ongoing)

## NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES

- Climate Change
- Loss and Fragmentation of Habitat
- Pest Animals and Plants
- Maintaining Soil Health
- Degradation of Waterways
- Sustainable Water Use
- Loss of Farming Land to Urbanisation
- Land Use Conflict
- Biosecurity Issues
- Plastics in the Environment
- Ageing Farming Community
- Expansion of Extractive Industries

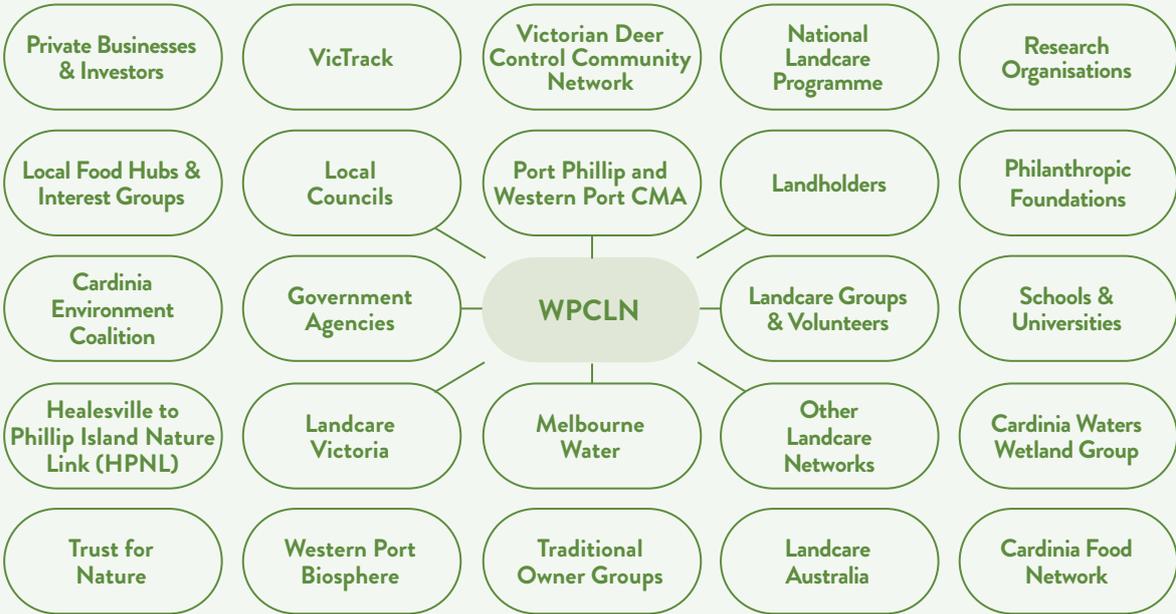
# NETWORK MAP



# NETWORK MEMBERS

- 1. Back Creek
- 2. Bessie Creek & Ararat Creek
- 3. Bunyip
- 4. Cannibal Creek Catchment
- 5. Cardinia Deer Management Coalition
- 6. Cardinia Waters Wetland
- 7. Healesville to Philip Island Nature Link (HPNL)
- 8. Intrepid Landcare (ages 18-35)
- 9. Jindivick
- 10. Labertouche Sustainable Farming
- 11. Neerim & District
- 12. Toomuc Valley
- 13. Western Port Swamp

# KEY PARTNERSHIPS



# KEY FOCUS AREAS

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## CARING FOR THE LAND

- The WPCLN empowers community members to focus on caring for the local landscape by promoting the adoption of new techniques to assist with protecting our environment
- The total area of land protected or better managed is increased through the participation of landholders in conservation activities to improve the condition of their land

## SUPPORTING OUR LANDCARE GROUPS

- Provide a Landcare Group Calendar of Events – publish in eNEWS (monthly) or on website
- Landcare Facilitator to attend at least one group meeting (per group) and at least one group event per year
- Identify funding opportunities for groups - once a month via eNEWS or email
- Provide networking opportunities for groups - four times per year
- Provide training opportunities for groups to increase their capacity – twice a year
- Increase the number of groups within the Network area to include non-traditional or special interest groups (establish 1-2 new groups a year)

## PARTNERSHIP & COLLABORATION

- WPCLN adopts a collaborative approach to support member groups to grow their base
- Landcare seeks to identify opportunities to collaborate with other groups on projects where there is a mutual benefit e.g. Traditional Owner groups
- Landcare shares skills and resources to support other groups to fulfil our mutual vision

## PROMOTION & COMMUNICATION

- Communicate the Landcare message to individual groups and the broader community using social media
- Promote the activities of the Network using social and traditional media (social media at least monthly, 5 articles in local newspapers per year, 1 Annual Magazine and 1 article for the Victorian Landcare and Catchment Magazine per year)
- Encourage Landcare related research through collaborative partnerships with at least 3 research institutions

## FUNDING

- Secure funding to maintain current staff levels for a minimum of 3 years
- Diversify funding sources by identifying and collaborating with a variety of funders such as philanthropic, government (all levels), corporate as well as through carbon offsets
- Projects – identify and secure funding for on-ground works that engage landholders to increase biodiversity by 5% across the Network area over three years

## GOVERNANCE

- That the Network has a properly constituted Board in accordance with its Constitution
- Provide an induction kit for new Board members
- New Board members to participate in governance training within 12 months of commencement in role
- Staff are required to have Working with Children Check (current for 5 years)
- Staff are required to have First Aid training every 2 years
- Every position within the Network has either a Position Description or an agreement between the Network and independent contractors
- Network policies to be reviewed by WPCLN Board every two years

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2022

## PHIL DARTON PRESIDENT

This year has been one of change and emergence for the Network. We farewelled Marijke De Bever-Price from the Board. Marijke had led the Board and the Network with a passion for the environment and enormous energy. But all good things come to an end, and we thank her and recognise the contribution she made over many years to Landcare across the Network, and through her time on the Board.

Others to leave the Board over this shorter reporting period since the last annual report in February 2022 were Alan Forte, Michael Walker, Joy Carberry and Gerry Cunningham. I acknowledge their contributions to the running of the Network. In particular, Gerry's long service to the committee and Alan's time as treasurer which was unfortunately shorter than Alan or the Board would have liked. We are now quite a small Board and need to increase in size to provide the best governance and support for the Network, its programs and our member groups.

The Network wide programs have continued through the year as we all learn how to operate safely and confidently in this post-vaccine and emerging variants phase of COVID environment. This has been in no small part due to the professionalism and dedication of our staff and contractors. Elsewhere in this annual report, the staff have outlined their programs and achievements. I commend you to read the reports. They detail the reason we continue to get up in the morning, put on our gumboots and come to work (in a voluntary capacity) at the Network. The Network's contributions to an improving environment in the catchment are entirely down to the staff and the volunteers across our member groups.

I want to thank Cecilia Imre, our Victorian Landcare Program Facilitator, for her work throughout the year with our member groups. As I alluded to before, coming out of the more exacting lockdown phase of our COVID journey has been difficult for some volunteers and groups. It has been challenging for many to reengage in group activities and Cecilia has led our effort to energise our volunteers. Cecilia has now decided to pursue work elsewhere and we wish her well and thank her for her time with us.

The Network would not have operated as well as it has without the significant contribution of our Executive Officer, Anne Burke. Anne's employment has allowed the Board, small as it is, to start to focus on improving Governance, including a review of the constitution to be completed next year. It will also give the Board free air to develop new partnerships and work to increase Landcare awareness and participation across the catchment. There is more that can be done and we are actively looking for funding to support a widening of activities. Anne has brought a discipline matched with enthusiasm to the operations of the Network.

The Network's financial position is healthy, firstly because of the significant work of our staff to apply for and attract grants for



the programs outlined in their reports. But secondly, because of the financial oversight provided by our Finance Manager, Carol Hoskins, in conjunction with our Treasurer. Special thanks to Geoff Hudson, for coming back onto the Board as Treasurer when Alan Forte had to step down.

The Network has been well served by the relationships and partnerships it has. These include Melbourne Water, both as a partner in its own right and since it stepped into the role of the previous Catchment Management Authority. We also work closely with the state Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), particularly on the Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program. We have had a long and productive partnership with Cardinia Shire, which we value deeply. We are working to strengthen our relationship with Baw Baw Shire, particularly following constructive discussions with their senior environmental officer. We have a Memorandum of Understanding with the Western Port Biosphere and will explore joint opportunities with them in the year to come. We also have links with our neighbouring Landcare Networks. These offer the opportunity for region-wide programs such as the Farmers Digging Deeper program run and managed by Peter Ronalds. Landcare Victoria Inc (LVI) is the umbrella body for all networks and groups in the state. Board member, Jim Armstrong, and Bunyip Group member, Sue Anderson, are on the Members Council of LVI.

The year ahead is full of promise and your Network is intent on fulfilling that promise through its existing programs, the development of new programs and in support of you, its member groups.

**Phil Darton**  
**President**  
**Western Port Catchment Landcare Network**

# STAFF REPORTS 2022

## ANNE BURKE EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The first year of the one day a week Executive Manager role entailed examining systems, and along with the Board building and documenting business processes, revisiting and updating existing policies in line with current requirements and evaluating social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram and our webpage.

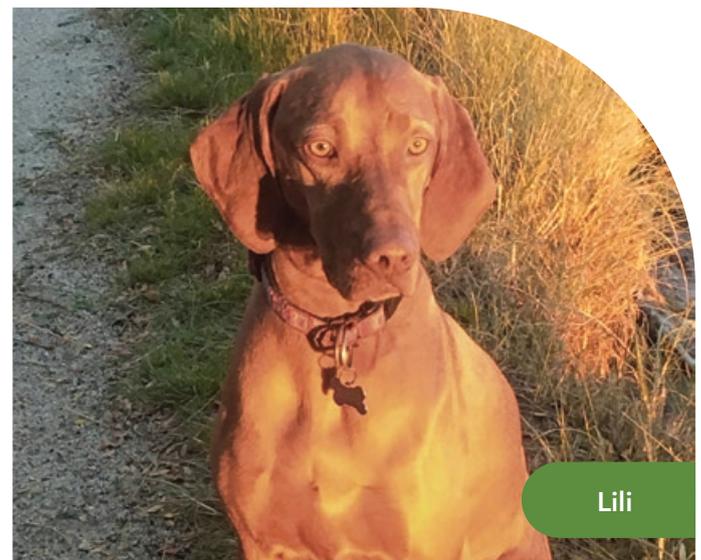
Creating connections through partners including Baw Baw and Cardinia shires and Melbourne Water was also a component of the role along with building and submitting grant applications. Then with the return of face to face delivery of workshops, there was a plethora of events undertaken by the various Landcare groups under our WPCLN banner. Finding a sweet spot with the blend of virtual and in-person events, the future looks promising.

The 3000 indigenous trees I mentioned in last year's report have tripled in size, revegetating wet areas has been tricky and Lili my therapy dog continues to attend all venues including the WPCLN Koo Wee Rup office.

During COVID I was involved in the development and delivery of a project for The National Centre for Farmer Health. It was referred to as #SnapshotRuralVic and I thought it was particularly applicable to WPCLN members. The project turned to social media to connect farmers, creators, thinkers and makers from all over the state. Distanced socially but connecting through the platform of social media. It entailed the posting of one image from the farm. Check it out. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/snapshotruralvic>

The November newsletter will include screen captures of how to take an image then to upload and share the image through our WPCLN social media platforms. Or alternately, if you would prefer, email me the image and I will post it for you.

**Anne Burke**  
**Executive Officer**  
**Western Port Catchment Landcare Network**



# STAFF REPORTS 2022

## BRIDGETTE SULLIVAN

### LANDCARE PROJECT FACILITATOR

2022 has been a fantastic year for achieving great outcomes along our waterways. Without interruptions from COVID-19 restrictions as the previous two years had provided, a great amount of work has been achieved. I feel so incredibly privileged to have the job that I do, I love going out and meeting with landholders and in some cases community groups to develop projects that improve our waterways.

Throughout the year I have completed 60 mid-term project reports, 17 new project assessments (not including the Capital Works projects), 7 12-month audits, 41 audits and ongoing projects, 4 extra property visits to answer landholder questions and transfer of 6 old projects that did not get transferred during the migration from the old grants project to the new grants project (internal Melbourne Water project system).

Once again in March and April, Geoff Lockwood and I were engaged by Melbourne Water to scope two Capital Works Projects over seven properties, including working with several landholders that are either new to the area or new to waterway improvement projects. Capital Works projects are large-scale waterway improvement works usually involving the removal of Willows and other invasive weeds, installing stock-proof fencing and revegetating the waterway, these projects are generally over several kilometres long. Capital Works projects are long term projects with maintenance being undertaken by Melbourne Water for three years after the initial weed removal and revegetation works. Geoff's incredible knowledge and ability to map the project sites with the amount of detail he does is invaluable and I am very lucky to be able to work beside him.

The new Incentives Program, Liveable Communities, Liveable Waterways has been live for 12 months now and I feel that the

program is helping to streamline the process of applying for funding, I believe that it will continue to be a successful way of delivering funding and outcomes as per Melbourne Water's Healthy Waterway strategy.

During August and September, Melbourne Water held several workshops to help shape future project works including identifying potential Capital Works projects. These workshops also showed how the incentives projects are tracking in relation to the outcomes expected to be achieved in the current Healthy Waterways Strategy. It was very insightful and great to see where targets are being met and where there are still gaps.

If you own land that fronts onto a river or creek, you may be eligible for funding to help you manage the land. Melbourne Water's Liveable Communities, Liveable Waterways supports work that protects or enhances riverbanks, such as weed control, fencing and planting native vegetation.

If you are interested in knowing more about Liveable Communities Liveable Waterways please contact Bridgette on 0407 205 749 or visit: Liveable Communities, Liveable Waterways Program | Melbourne Water.

Once again, thank you to all of the support that is offered to me by Peter, Geoff, Carol, Cecilia, Anne and WPCLN Board. A huge thank you to all the landholders that commit to improving our waterways, it is a joy to work with you. Thanks to Melbourne Water staff that offer so much support, it sure makes life so much easier.

**Bridgette Sullivan**  
**Landcare Project Facilitator**  
**Western Port Catchment Landcare Network**



Willow Removal Drouin West

# STAFF REPORTS 2022

## CECILIA IMRE

### LANDCARE GROUP FACILITATOR

With the relaxing of COVID restriction, groups were able to again run activities that they have had in the planning. So with great enthusiasm, many groups were ready to get back into running some activities including planting days, community engagement and education, pest animal education and more.

Although the struggles were still present as COVID still would appear to alter plans with a moment's notice making planning activities a great challenge and risk for some. It is going to take some time for us to all adjust to our new norm for the time being and the struggle to once again motivate and grow our Landcare groups once again.

From this year's health report taken in June, the Western Port Catchment Landcare Network is just short of 400 members within the current 13 Landcare groups that make up the network. The 13 groups contributed an incredible 8722 volunteer hours. Which I'm sure is a conservative figure as it does not include all the extra volunteer hours of planning, organising and admin of running a Landcare group.

Even though it has been another challenging year with limited funding opportunities available for Landcare groups to apply for and Landcare groups struggling to recruit new members, there have been a few groups that have had an increase in membership. Many of these new members are residents that have recently moved to regional Victoria who have joined in the search for support in managing their properties.

Groups are still making good use of online tools that we found necessary during COVID restrictions. Zoom and Teams have been valuable tools to allow groups to meet and adapt to our busy lifestyles while still allowing us to take part in Landcare meetings.

It is wonderful to see groups having an educational focus and working with the younger generation to teach them about their local environment. Some of these activities included tree planting, propagation activities, eDNA water sampling and Bug blitz environmental education where the students took part in activities including bush walks, soil testing, invertebrate awareness and more.

Also, I have been assisting Peter Ronalds in running the Regenerative Agriculture Course for 2022. It has been wonderful meeting and listening to farmers wanting to make changes to benefit their enterprises and for future generations. There is a thirst for knowledge to learn more on ways to run a productive and sustainable farm/business, and many farmers are ready to make changes by putting in the hard work, which is not necessarily an easy process but a rewarding one. Many friendships were developed, and productive discussions and networking took place.

I encourage you to keep at it, you are all making a positive impact big or small to our local environment and community. Well done on all that you have achieved this year and its wonderful to hear all the plans you have for another year in Landcare.

I would like to thank the Landcare groups for inviting me along to meetings and planned activities to be part of the incredible work that you all do and for enabling me to support you. Thank you all members and staff for being so welcoming and supportive over the last 12 months, it has been a pleasure.

**Cecilia Imre**  
**Landcare Group Facilitator**  
**Western Port Catchment Landcare Network**



Bug Blitz Huntsman



Dung Beetle Bed

## GEOFF LOCKWOOD

### LANDCARE PROJECT FACILITATOR

As communities move on from almost two years of complex social restrictions to respond to the pandemic; we are faced with new and some novel challenges to protect our unique and diverse local environment. Global disruptions have impacted the supply and cost of resources; demands on Federal and State Government budgets have limited the allocation of funding to the environment, grants are more competitive and with restrictive criteria; we are rehabilitating our ecosystems in a highly dynamic and evolving climate.

Amid the doom and gloom, there are still positives: all of the volunteers affiliated with groups within the Landcare Network or community members that have participated in group events display a high level of resourcefulness and resilience in their efforts to help protect and restore their local environment. More school groups are participating in environmental activities, either on their school grounds or participating in community events. A teacher told me the highlight for students involved in planting activities was "meeting with and helping Landcare group members, and listening to recitations of poetry while having lunch." Regardless of the size of the activity, where it is located, or what is involved; members of Intrepid Landcare are there, pitching in and providing valuable support.

While there is presently a paucity of funding from traditional government sources for environmental works, new opportunities are emerging to support landowners for their environmental stewardship via payments for Carbon credits or biodiversity offsets. Although previously considered controversial, selection of climate-resilient plant species or provenances has the potential to enable revegetation sites to be resilient to future climate regimes and continue to provide a full range of ecosystem services into the future.

#### Cannibal Creek Catchment Biodiversity Project

The Cannibal Creek Catchment Biodiversity Project is now lapsing after seven years during which the stakeholders and local communities endured fire and disease, but fortunately no incidence of flood or pestilence of significance. The project and activities were very much driven by the stakeholder groups for the duration of the project; even when faced with major setbacks such as bush fires and pandemic restrictions.

The deer and fox control program has been a highlight of the project, all activities were conducted by volunteer controllers under the supervision of Gary Burns as the program coordinator. Over three years the input by controllers was conservatively estimated as 3,100 hours for 229 property visits to remove 388 deer and 183 Red foxes. While project staff within DELWP have recognised the valuable contribution of coordinated volunteer

pest control programs; the upper hierarchy within DELWP still "need persuading" to appreciate the benefits and professionalism of volunteers; much to the detriment of the environment.

Control of environmental weed has been a key objective for the project with support provided for landowners, and weed control on roadsides and riparian areas. The total area covered 1,780 hectares, as roadsides 13 ha, riparian areas 47 ha, and 65 properties or reserves 1,720 ha. Forestry mulchers were trialled on one site to remove a very dense stand of Sweet Pittosporum, which to date has shown to be very successful. Three sites involved the removal of very large mature trees (Radiata Pine and White Poplar).

Stakeholder groups were able to complete a number of revegetation activities with support from the project and local groups. Funding provided by DELWP following the 2019 bushfire provided additional assistance to support landholders to rejuvenate shelterbelts and replace fencing. The fund supported 6,300 metres of replacement fencing to protect 24 hectares of remnant or riparian vegetation and 2.5 hectares of shelterbelts.

A novel approach proposed by project stakeholders and supported by DELWP funding was the establishment of a deer exclusion fence totalling 950 metres to protect a high-value vegetation community (7.4 ha) which included rare or threatened plant species. The site is very steep and constructing the fence was challenging for the volunteers and contractors involved. Monitoring has been ongoing to evaluate the benefits of the fence.

The project was able to partner with Parks Victoria to revegetate two sites that had been impacted by the 2019 bushfire and historically been subject to varying grazing intensities. Other assistance has included support for weed control at a high-value riparian site within the lower reaches of the Cannibal Creek near the confluence with the Bunyip River. The planting day Tonimbuk in April organised by the local Landcare groups was a fitting finale for the project with over 70 people from a wide range of Network groups participating to plant 2,695 tubestock plants for the day.

The success of the Cannibal Creek Catchment Biodiversity Project is a culmination of the vision, motivation and drive of the local community members, and particularly their dedication when the project and community were subjected to significant challenges. I continue to acknowledge and thank the group leaders and members of Bunyip Landcare, Cannibal Creek Landcare, Cannibal Creek Reserve CoM, and Friends of Mt Cannibal Reserve, Intrepid Landcare and the many volunteers for their efforts to deliver the project. Staff from Cardinia Shire and Melbourne Water have maintained an ongoing commitment to the project as have staff

# STAFF REPORTS 2022



White Poplar Removal

Radiata Pine Removal

and the committee of Westernport Catchment Landcare Network. Project funding was provided by Melbourne Water, DELWP and PPWCMA and Federal Government.

## Cardinia Shire Biodiversity Grants

We are fortunate that Cardinia Shire has continued to provide funding for the Biodiversity Grants scheme to assist local landholders to improve their local environment. This fund has been able to support a diverse range of projects to enable landowners in Cardinia Shire to create, protect or rehabilitate environmental assets on their properties.

Please contact me if you would like further information on these projects or would like to discuss a proposal to address a specific environmental issue in your area.

**Geoff Lockwood**  
**Landcare Project Facilitator**  
**Western Port Catchment Landcare Network**

# STAFF REPORTS 2022

## PETER RONALDS SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE MANAGER

After 2 years of COVID restrictions and lockdowns, 2022 was the year that we appreciated putting 'Zoom' back in the 'bottom drawer' and started meeting again on farms with farmer discussion groups, field days and training!

My role with WPCLN is to increase farmers' understanding and uptake of sustainable and regenerative farming practices in the region, and this is achieved through 2 projects that I am currently delivering;

'Smart Farming in Western Port' is a 5-year Australian Government funded project running until June 2023. This is a region-wide project, and I work closely with several partners who co-deliver the project in other parts of the catchment. These partners are; Bass Coast Landcare Network, Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, South Gippsland Landcare Network, AGVIC & Melbourne Water. We also utilise the services of farm consultants and scientists to assist with specialised support as required. Farmers are supported through; farmer discussion groups, field days, farm planning programs and on-farm trials/demonstrations. These are proven methods of engagement, with a strong emphasis on farmer-to-farmer learnings and practical application.

'Farmers digging deeper' is a 2-year project funded by the Australian Government. This project is supporting 315 farmers across the region to increase their knowledge of soil health and to better understand the links between soil health, farm productivity and profitability. The program includes soil testing and training which is targeted towards landholders who are at an early stage in their learning about soils and soil testing.

In 2021-22, both projects engaged 2,045 people. Activities included; 8 field days, 2 Regenerative Agriculture Training programs, 48 farmer discussion groups/farm walks, and a range of other activities.

Interest in regenerative farming practices is very strong, and there are many farmers in the region who are experimenting with and transitioning to practices that rely more on natural systems and processes. Our project extension activities are focused towards regenerative management systems, and we engage a number of experienced consultants to assist farmers to understand regenerative principles, and how they can be applied on farms. This is reinforced through the 7-week regenerative agriculture training program we developed, and the series of 8 videos we created that focus on the key principles of Regenerative Agriculture. These regenerative agriculture videos are hosted by Declan McDonald (soil scientist), and, have had over 33,000 views. They can be viewed on our YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/c/WPCLN>

Over the past couple of years, there have been many families who have moved into the region, with some of them joining Landcare groups and becoming involved in the activities that we run. The Farmers digging deeper program has a component specifically designed to assist new landholders to understand their soils and interpretation of soil test results. This program will roll out in late 2022 & into 2023.

It is over 16 years since I started working with Western Port Catchment Landcare Network (where has that time gone!) It has been a privilege to work with so many inspiring farmers, community members, staff and partners over that time. Your friendship and generosity in opening up your farms for field days, discussion groups and farm visits are greatly appreciated. Thanks for your support over the past year.

**Peter Ronalds**  
**Sustainable Agriculture Manager**  
**Western Port Catchment Landcare Network**





## ONE TREE FARM

**Each year, Landcare staff come across interesting people doing incredible work on their farms. This is the story of John Clements and 'One Tree Farm'.**

### HISTORY

John and his wife Faye were married in 1965 and built a house in Cheltenham. Faye was a teacher at Narre Warren North Primary School, which in 1962 was a 3-teacher school, surrounded by dairy and beef farms and apple orchards. Faye was invited to many of the student's birthday parties, and John was also invited. Many of the students were living on farms, and John became interested in farming when he visited the students' farms, and 'was hooked'

In 1968 in partnership with John's father-in-law they purchased their first farm – a 7acre property in North Road, Pearcedale for \$5,000. They sold that in 1972, and in 1973 purchased a larger 38acre property in Clyde. They kept that farm for 8 years before selling it in 1981 and purchased a larger 130acre property in Cranbourne which they sold in 1990. Two very good friends purchased an adjoining farm during that period.

In 1990 interest rates rose to 17.5 % and the families decided to sell the farm at Cranbourne and purchased a 1,000acre farm at Yea on the Goulburn River. As the years passed with the others retiring, John & Faye purchased the remaining shares of the Yea farm. They still own this farm and their son Rob manages a large Angus breeding herd on this farm.

During this time, John had a number of jobs to help pay off the farms, and even set up a business to recycle 'yellow pages' phone books into kitty litter! Faye was a primary school teacher.

### 'ONE TREE' FARM - CALDERMEADE

In 2009, John & Faye purchased 'One Tree Farm' at Caldermeade. When the farm was purchased, it was a bare block with 1 solitary cypress tree (which has since fallen over), 6 paddocks, chest-high phalaris pastures, and some derelict chicken sheds! It would be fair to say it was an 'improvers' property. The property was named 'One tree' Farm in recognition of its beginning.

The farm is 370acres in size, and the Monomeith drain runs beside the property. The farm has 1.5km of frontage to Western Port Bay and a man-made sea wall divides a portion of the property from the coastal frontage. This sea wall was constructed to stop the bay from encroaching onto the surrounding farmland in the area. John has fenced off the area beyond the sea wall to the cliffs on Western Port Bay, excluded livestock grazing, and turned it into a conservation area. The conservation area is approximately 45 acres, and comprised of native coastal vegetation and wildlife. In the time that John has managed the land, he has noticed a dramatic difference in the quality of native coastal vegetation returning.

Due to its location, the property is very exposed to the weather. It can be very wet in the winter, with strong southerly winds blowing off the bay, and hot northerly winds in the summer. Temperatures can vary significantly across the farm, and Rob measured a temperature variation of 10c on a very hot day

*Continued On Next Page...*



between the front of the farm and the back of the farm near the coast where there was a coastal sea breeze.

The soil has a high clay content and is very black with high magnesium levels. In winter it is a wet 'gooey' soil that sticks to your boots, and in summer it cracks open, with deep fissures. When the clay soil fills with water, the water can't drain away and forms large pools of water, so waterlogging is a real challenge. Being located on the bay on the lowest point of the catchment all the water from the surrounding hills drains across the property into the bay.

### A PROPERTY FOR JOHN TO WORK ON – FIRST STEPS

The first thing John did after purchasing the property was to draw up a farm master plan. The farm master plan set the foundation for establishing fences, water points, laneways, stockyards and hay sheds.

The farm was then fenced into smaller paddocks, with the original 6 paddocks divided into 43 paddocks over the 325 acres of usable grazing land. This has significantly improved pasture management, and as a result, improved pasture species such as clover are now being observed.

The 45 acres of conservation area was also fenced, and livestock was excluded, however, in more recent times, deer have been observed in the coastal conservation area. Many properties in the area have not fenced the area off between the sea wall and the cliffs, and there is a noticeable difference in the quality of native vegetation and the banks on John's farm when compared to neighbouring farms. Erosion of the Lang Lang Cliffs is constant from high tides and wave movement, and the exclusion of livestock from this fragile environment is assisting to reduce the impact of cliff erosion.

John then installed water troughs in every paddock, so the cows didn't have to walk far to water.

Shelter belts for livestock and pasture protection were also a high priority, as the '1 tree' wasn't really effective! Over the past decade, John has been planting about 1500 indigenous species a year in shelter belt formation to provide shelter and protection

on the property John has planted approximately 15,000 trees over the last 10 years and has had a very high success rate. He is very passionate about planting more trees on the property and is looking at ways he can do some infill plantings where required to add diversity and fill any gaps. The vegetation is planted along the paddock fence lines to reduce fencing costs and most are positioned north-south. Initial plots were 10m wide rather than single rows scattered over the farm. This gave them a higher success rate. Recent plantings are 13m wide and John prefers using milk cartons over plastic guards. Boobialla have been very successful at taking off and providing shelter. Swamp paperbark, Swamp gums, wattles and sedges and grasses have also been included in the mix of indigenous species.

The mature plantings have made a difference where the cattle have been using them for shelter against the harsh conditions.

Some of the key learnings are in site preparation. Pasture grass is very competitive, so John begins by cutting the grass in the area to be planted, then sprays a spot, and uses weed mats and guards to protect the plants from pests. Fertiliser tablets are used when planting to assist growth in the harsh conditions, and John also maintains the planting site by keeping the grass down. Once the plants are established the plants out compete the pasture grasses.

Spitfire bugs have caused some issues, and the plots closest to the coast have been slower to take off possibly to the harsher conditions on the coast, such as stronger winds and salt in the soil. Rabbits have not been a problem, and John has noticed that wildlife has increased significantly on the property since planting – especially small birds.

### REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE

John and Rob were participants in the WPCLN 2020 Regenerative Agriculture Pilot Program. With COVID lockdowns, the participants and trainers used Zoom, and this was a big new world for John, who had never used a computer before! Over the 7-week program, the principles of regenerative agriculture were discussed, along with the practicalities of implementing them on farms.

The program really helped John understand the complexity of soil life, how important it is to look below the surface of the soil,



and learn how the micro and macro biota in the soil are important in growing grass.

After the sessions – John decided to do soil tests on the property and found there was an imbalance between the calcium and magnesium. The ground was hard and the grass/tree roots were unable to penetrate through the hard soil very well. As a result, a liming program was implemented, and John has already noticed a difference with an increase in grass growth and soil coverage over the property. There are no bare patches apart from where cracks appear in the dry months.

John doesn't use conventional fertilisers in his farming. Since the program, he has been liming and using chicken manure, and is planning to conduct more soil tests to see the improvements after completing the lime program.

## LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

For 40 years John has been rotational grazing, using long rest periods to allow time for the plant roots to recover. He used to run two mobs but now he runs a single mob to allow for a longer rest period between each grazing. The cattle generally spend 2-3 days in each paddock before being moved on. The pastures were comprised mainly of chest-high Phalaris when purchased, but through controlled grazing, many more species of pasture have become established, and there are now significant quantities of clover which fix nitrogen from the atmosphere. There is still Phalaris in the pastures, and it can take off in spring, but with the combination of the other mixed species, a balanced pasture can be offered to the cattle.

The Angus cattle are very quiet and are run as a breeding operation. It is a closed herd, with no cattle being brought onto the farm from outside properties. Between the farms, they run a herd of 600 cows, plus 600 calves, plus replacement heifers and bulls. They peak at approximately 1,500 head. The cattle are keenly sought after at the Yea sales, with many repeat buyers.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

Since meeting the Narre Warren North community and seeing the farming lifestyle and becoming hooked, John gets a lot of enjoyment out of farming and enjoys learning as he goes.

*“Do things right, and do them once. Learn from others, and always keep learning”.*

He is a regular participant in one of the WPCLN discussion groups run by Peter Ronalds. In the 50-odd years of running cattle, John has learnt many things along the way. The 2020 Regenerative Agricultural Program opened up his eyes as to what is happening under the surface of your farm. John and his son Rob have since discussed that 'if you don't go beyond the farm gate you will never learn'.

John is now in his 80s and had a stroke recently, but before that, he was doing much of the work himself. Since then, he has had some assistance so he can continue to manage his farms. He regularly attends 'One Tree' farm and his 3 leased farm properties. John is on one of the farms most days, which keeps him busy, and he also travels regularly to Yea to visit the farm Rob manages. Farming keeps John active and out of the house.

His biggest regret is never living on a farm. To be able to just walk out the back door and be on the farm was a dream that never eventuated. He travels each day to his farms. Now that he has 'retired' ("I don't think he knows what that means" – editor), he has more time to enjoy the farm life and focus his attention on that.

We asked John if he had any nuggets of wisdom, that he would like to share with other farmers. He said, "There are many peaks and troughs in farming with the market and weather conditions creating many challenges and opportunities. Do things right, and do them once. Learn from others, and always keep learning."

The farm life keeps John going. He gets up early and comes home late after being out on the land. He says it does him good as he keeps moving and feels less tired being up and about than sitting around at home. John loves coming out to the farms to breathe in the fresh air. "It's marvellous once I get out to the farm", John says!



Shelterbelt



Coastal Vegetation



Coastal Vegetation

# MARIJKE'S LANDCARE JOURNEY

It is difficult to put my Landcare journey into a concise story as there have been many facets to my growth and involvement in the environment.

Like many of us who become volunteers in Landcare, it is usually because Landcare funding or volunteers have been on our properties to improve biodiversity and mitigate degradation. I was one of those landowners and had no idea who or what the organisation was. This was a mere 8 years ago.

From childhood, the Australian landscape was never too far away from my everyday experiences. After immigrating from Europe, we often ventured out to enjoy the bush, either walking, fishing or picnicking. This love of the outdoors influenced my involvement in the Guiding movement and professionally as an Outdoor educator.

As a landowner, having received a few grants to introduce local native species on our Jindivick property I decided to give back and became a Landcare member in 2012. I thoroughly enjoyed the camaraderie around attending weed removal and planting activities as well as other events such as the various workshops that enhanced our knowledge. It was here that my involvement grew as a committee member and then President.

This involvement enabled me to connect with local people who were like-minded and enthusiastic. Although I was learning a great deal in this role, I sometimes wondered if I had sufficient expertise to drive growth and interest in Landcare – however, I was passionate.

Not long into my journey I was encouraged to become a member of the WPCLN Committee and attended my first meeting early in 2014 feeling very much like a fish out of water. There was so much history to catch up on and understand, particularly that the Network was part of a bigger organisation – State and National.

Early in my membership, there were committee member resignations, a movement away from the CEC at Pakenham and a transition to a closer association with Melbourne Water in Koo Wee Rup. During this time I had been voted in as President and the pressure was on for me to learn more and with greater speed. There were discussions around policies and procedures, induction and the need for a transition pack for new Committee members. In addition, the subject of improved governance was always at the forefront.

The Network grew with MOU's between PPWCMA and Biosphere signed. However, we lost a few Landcare groups for various reasons – succession planning being of importance. We have, however, welcomed new groups that have joined us such as the Cardinia Deer Management Coalition, Cardinia Water Wetland Group, and Intrepid, and we welcome the possibility of reigniting or reinventing those groups in areas that have been left unsupported.

Working with staff resulted in many achievements including the development and maintenance of our web page (thanks to Nicole and Peter), successful grants (predominantly belonging to Peter, which made our Network the 2nd most financial in the

state), the wonderful work of our Facilitators (Bridgette, Geoff and Natalie) who support our groups, and the financial guidance of Carol our Office Administrator. Appointing an Executive Officer (Anne) also boosts the Network potential.

There were forums, carts, caps and conferences to attend. The annual tasks of Incorporation also took up much time, along with managing staff contracts, having regular catch-ups and/or meetings/or quick phone calls (which were never quick). I also regularly dropped in on Group meetings and passed on 'What was happening' in the Network space and later the LVI space as I took on a role on the State Board. My role with the board focussed on Communications, which necessitated my involvement with Australia Landcare International (ALI) and the DELWP Magazine Committee. These were the most inspiring and engaging commitments over 2 years, however, they were also daunting.

There is so much more that I could add, however, this space does not allow for it. Working with Committee and staff has been an absolute pleasure and while at times challenging as President, I have fully respected and appreciated the role that each individual has played in the growth of the Network. I also appreciated the frequent and continuous discussions I had with sooo many people that fed my passion and alerted me to what needed to be done. On reflection, each connection I made was invaluable. There were also many experiences and innovations that I was privy to and involved in that have also had a valuable impact on my growth.

I thank all who know me for giving me your time in sharing your knowledge, passion and friendship. I am away but not gone, so we will see each other again in the Landcare space.

**Marijke de Bever-Price**



# CANNIBAL CREEK LANDCARE GROUP ANNUAL DUNG BEETLE REPORT - 2022

On the 1st March 2022, a Dung Beetle Workshop was organised by Cannibal Creek Landcare Group in conjunction with Melbourne Water and the WPCLN agricultural facilitator Peter Ronalds. Russ Barrow from the Dung Beetle Ecosystem Engineers gave a very informative talk, followed by Dr Nikkie Chadee, District Veterinary Officer and a Q and A session with members of our dung beetle group.

In early May we obtained some *Geotrupes spiniger* from Simon Feillafe, facilitator for the Northeast CMA, who was collecting them in Tasmania for groups at half-normal cost. In late March we obtained some more *G. spiniger* in a swap deal organised by Karen Thomas from Melbourne Water. We are to send them some of our *Onthopagus taurus* in the summer.

Our *Bubas bison* emergence success was varied, but there were sufficient to set up nursery beds for 2 new members who joined our group. We also received some *B. bison* from Russ Barrow, some were set up in beds and the rest were released into paddocks with cows.

Now the *Onthophagus vacca* and *Bubas bubalus* are starting to emerge from our nursery beds, however warmer weather is needed as soil temperature is supposed to be over 14 degrees C.

The *Geotrupes spiniger* should be emerging later in the year and hopefully, with the larger number of nursery beds we have set up and the field releases, we are hoping for some good numbers.

In May we were fortunate to receive around 40 *Onitis caffer* from Russ Barrow, enough for one nursery bed, to trial in our region. If we could build this species up it would be great as their tunnels are over a metre in depth.

In September, Melbourne Water invited the Minister for Water, Harriet Shing, to visit Alan Forte's dung beetle nursery beds at Tonimbuk. Melbourne Water currently have 16 nursery bed sites that they are supporting of which Cannibal Creek Landcare Group has 6 sites. Harriet seemed impressed with the set-up and the dung beetle project in general.

Our group appreciates the help we receive from Karen Thomas (M.W.), Russ Barrow (DBEE) and Greg Dalton (Creation Care) with advice and supply of beetles.

**Cecilia Imre**  
Landcare Group Facilitator  
Western Port Catchment Landcare Network

*"Melbourne Water invited the Minister for Water, Harriet Shing, to visit Alan Forte's dung beetle nursery beds at Tonimbuk."*



Harriet Shing MP & LC Members



Nursery Beds



Dung Beetle

# GROUP REPORTS



Barry Freeman

## BESSIE CREEK + ARARAT CREEK LANDCARE GROUP

In September BCAC Landcare group held a planting day at a member's property on Harvie Road in Upper Pakenham. Seventeen volunteers attended, which was an excellent turnout even though it was quite a wet day.

The activity had been well organised in advance with locations for all the trees and shrubs planned, and items required laid out in place. This enabled us to get straight into the planting and 500 plants were in the ground in about 2.5 hours.

Afterwards, we shared a lovely morning tea/lunch in front of a very welcome fire. The day was enjoyed by all.

**Kate Holmes**  
**Secretary**  
**Bessie Creek + Ararat Creek Landcare Group**

*"500 plants were in the ground in about 2.5 hours."*



Planting Day

## BUNYIP LANDCARE GROUP

In several ways, this has been a disappointing and frustrating year. We kicked off well enough with our AGM kindly hosted at a members' Trust for Nature property. The committee was re-elected after a walk through the land and a very pleasant lunch.

Several members had established dung beetle nurseries during winter, and Karen Thomas from Melbourne Water visited in December to oversee the transfers from nursery pens to tents. This was our first disappointment as the Vacca species seemed to have reduced dramatically in numbers, possibly due to the very wet and cloudy La Nina conditions. On the bright side, some of us found that our pastures are supporting other species in abundance. We attended the Cannibal Creek Landcare Dung Beetle Workshop in March and the trials are continuing.

To build on our relationship with the Bunurong Land Council, we planned a walk in March to learn about the cultural uses of native plants. Unfortunately, this event was a COVID casualty and had to be postponed to September. That was again postponed and we are expecting that the event can finally take place on 11 October.

A further postponed event was planned in May with Melbourne Water along with scientists from the Arthur Rylah Institute to discuss the benefits of environmental flows. Melbourne Water decided to delay the event until February 2023 in the hope of attracting more than the 15 participants that had already registered.

In June we were pleased to host Rob Jones, environmental Planner from Cardinia Shire, speaking about the council's new Biodiversity Strategy.

The good news was that we were able to join Cannibal Creek Landcare in planning and joining in a mass planting day in May



How to Plant

on public land in Tonimbuk. We also joined other groups to support a planting at Pakenham South. This is what we are so good at, and it was a wonderful feeling after the lockdowns to enjoy the Landcare spirit in action once again.

We look forward to more successful events in 2023 and hopefully some planting days. Our planting trailer is still ready to go!

**Sue Anderson**  
**President**  
**Bunyip Landcare Group**

# CANNIBAL CREEK LANDCARE GROUP

It was a very busy year for the members of the Group, enabling us to put 3845 trees and understory in the ground and putting in 510 hours of voluntary work.

In February we held a planning meeting for the year's event plus our 25th Anniversary Celebration.

On the 10th of April, we celebrated our 25th Anniversary at the Gumbuya World Function Room. The event was well attended by current and ex-members plus members from 7 other Landcare groups, Cardinia Shire and Parks Victoria. A video showing some of our plantings from 1997 to 2021 was shown plus our booklet on 25 years was launched by Cr Graeme Moore.

Our first planting was in May at Mawley Wood (part of Gumbuya World) with 22 students and teachers from Pakenham Secondary college. After lunch, the students visited the wildlife section of Gumbuya and a good time was had by all.

June saw us returning to the Parks Vic site in Jolley Road, Tonimbuk to finish off guarding the trees planted at the Community Planting in May and adding another 575 plants

In July we worked at the property of the Sommer family in McInnes Road, Tynong North putting in and guarding 750 plants. On our initiative, a large area of remnant bush on the property is fenced off using a grant from the Cardinia Shire Biodiversity Funds written up by Geoff Lockwood.

August saw us at another previous agricultural lease of Parks Vic this time in Ellis Road, Tonimbuk, only needing another 495 plants to fill up the site which had regenerated well after the 2019 bush fire.

In September we met with 22 Barenbrug volunteers from their not-for-profit foundation Helping with Hands which is dedicated to giving back to the Communities. This was Alan and Angela Forte's property. The planting was around a reclaimed sand pit area, and despite a small shower and the cold 1500 plants were put in the ground. LVI organised this group for us. Barenbrug are hoping to come back again next year to give us a hand.

As well as these plantings involving only Cannibal Creek members, we were also involved in two larger Community plantings.

In May the combined planting attracted 76 people from many Landcare groups drawn from the WPCLN and the general public who planted over 2700 plants on a previous agricultural lease of Parks Vic Land. Having a coffee van and sausage sizzle made it an enjoyable morning and it was great to work together as a large team.

On the 9th August, we met with 4 other Landcare groups to assist the students from Pakenham Secondary College to plant at a property in McGregor Road, Pakenham South.

October has our group doing some weed control in the remnant bush at Sherwood Park Orchard, followed later in the month by a propagation workshop with Intrepid Landcare Group.

*"On the 10th April we celebrated our 25th Anniversary at the Gumbuya World Function Room."*



Tree Guarding



Student Planting

In 2023 our group has an Incentives grant with Melbourne Water to revegetate the drain on Lovers Lane and also the 5-acre paddock. This will be done partially as a Community Planting Day on 7th May at 0930 and another 2 plantings in 2023. This will be a 2 – 3-year project.

**Pam Cunningham**  
Secretary  
Cannibal Creek Landcare Group

# CARDINIA DEER MANAGEMENT COALITION

What a wild ride the past 12 months have been. Though it has been good to have some relaxation from the restrictions imposed to reduce COVID spread, this has been tempered by the number of people coming down with COVID and the resultant complications. And the weather! CDMC had big plans for vegetation surveys during the past 6 months, but the weather had other ideas.

The CDMC-run deer vegetation impact-faecal scat survey is coming to an end. We had hoped to complete it by late June, but COVID and weather have stretched this out to mid-October. A report will be produced by Matt Lefoe, Deakin Uni researcher, which will be available to anyone interested. Huge thanks to Melbourne Water, firstly for funding the survey, and secondly for being so accommodating as changes were made and delays incurred due to COVID and other complicating factors. A big thanks also to all of the 30 volunteers who turned up for the survey induction sessions, who conducted the surveys and joined in on our group survey, and social days, which were a great success. In the end, we surveyed over 30 transects, which will give us a great baseline for when we repeat the survey in 3 or 4 years' time.

In May, we collaborated with Labertouche Landcare, Cannibal Creek Landcare, WPCLN and Shannon Everndon from the National Deer Co-ordinator's office in applying for a grant of \$23,000 for hunter support and education. Though the application was unsuccessful, it was a good opportunity to network with Shannon and the other groups – to see how other people are tackling the same problem in different ways.

The Victorian Deer Control Community Network (VDCCN - see <https://vdccn.org.au/>) initiated by one of our members, Johannes Wenzel, has gone from strength to strength and now has 130 members from across the state. This has been an immense success and an extremely valuable resource, giving up-to-date information, holding webinars and enabling interested parties to connect across Victoria.

CDMC facilitated a community meeting of the Emerald community and surrounding areas to discuss how their local community was being impacted by deer. This was attended by over 100 people either in person or via zoom. This brought together experts from VDCCN, DELWP, Parks Vic, Cardinia and Yarra Ranges councils, Landcare and local landowners, who gave harrowing accounts of their personal experiences with deer. It was a very successful night, with a strong resolve by the community to act on reducing the local deer impacts. Many thanks to Johannes again, for his efforts in putting this together.

The funding from the Victorian Deer Management Plan is finally hitting the ground, but regrettably will be of little help to groups such as CDMC, Labertouche or Cannibal Creek in our efforts to curb the deer menace due to their focus on professional controllers. Hopefully, this will change with the second round of funding.

*"Cardinia Council are beginning to make some significant steps in addressing the deer problem."*



Community Meeting



Mike & Caro Surveying

Our principal goal for the coming year is to markedly increase the number of private properties culling deer. Cardinia Council are beginning to make some significant steps in addressing the deer problem and we hope the creation of the new Land Management Officer at the council may lend some support to our cause.

**Mike Hall**  
**President**  
**Cardinia Deer Management Coalition Inc.**

# CARDINIA WATERS WETLAND GROUP

Our Cardinia waters wetland group at the Cardinia Waters Village has 20 volunteers that manage surrounding bush land around the lake and wetlands in the village.

These areas are colour coded into four sections (Blue, Green, Yellow and Orange). We use these markers to manage our activities working on one area at a time. These activities include weeding, pruning, and planting.

We are always planning for future work in the areas to beautify them for all and to create habitat for wildlife. We, along with the management of the village, are looking into obtaining funds to do some upgrades on the lake.

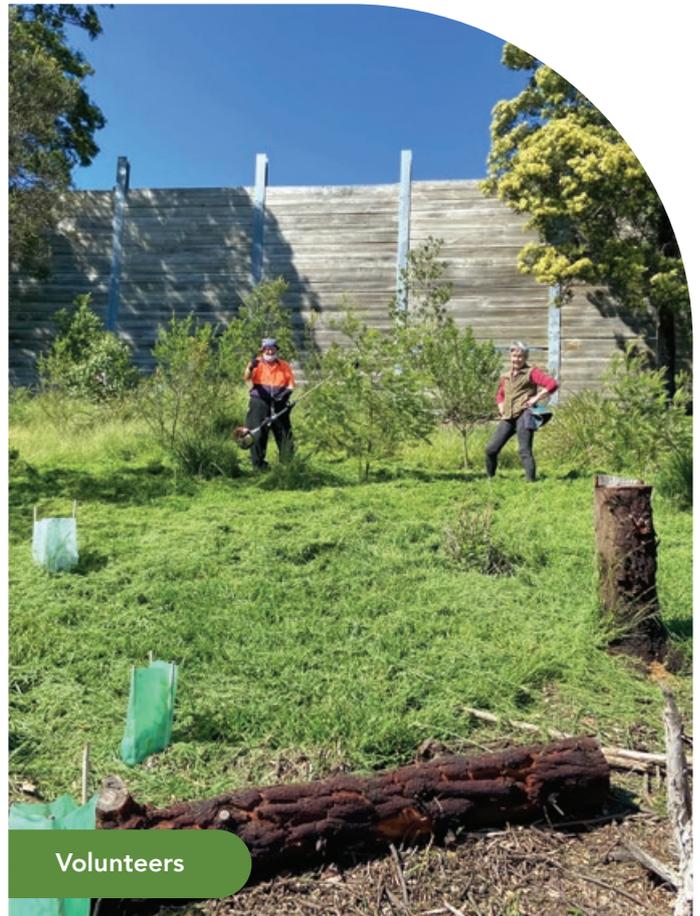
**Jim Harrison**

**Cardinia Waters Wetland Group**

*"We, along with the management of the village, are looking into obtaining funds to do some upgrades on the lake."*



Volunteers



Volunteers



Planting



Planting

# HEALESVILLE TO PHILLIP ISLAND NETWORK LINK

We had our AGM on 28 September with the following committee elected:

President – Pat Macwhirter

Vice President – David Young

Secretary/Treasurer – Gavin Brock

Committee – Marlene Hargreaves, Brian Hughes, Graeme Phipps, Andrew Kelly, Neil Rankine.

A big thank you to our retiring Vice President Mary Cole, Treasurer, Glenn Brooks-McMillian and Committee person Andrew Titterington for all of their hard work and input over the past few years.

Our organisation emerged in 2017 with a vision to create a nature link between the Yarra River catchment and Western Port so current and future generations will be able to live sustainably with Victoria's unique flora and fauna, mitigate climate change and enjoy the positive benefits of connecting with nature. We sought to do this by serving as a nimble, collaborative, citizen advocacy group to foster biodiversity and promote bio-links on waterways and overland to create an integrated, connected, Healesville to Phillip Island Nature Link.

These have remained our vision and mission in our 2022-2025 Strategy and, arising from our Strategy meeting, we set up goals under six headings. To date HPNL has 'filled gaps' and made progress with:

**Advocacy and Planning** - Being focused on making connectivity and wildlife corridors happen as opposed to focusing on individual separate revegetation projects. Being a nimble citizen's advocacy group to encourage government agencies to this end e.g. promotion of the Tooradin Environment Centre and biolinks in Casey and Cardinia

**Collaboration and partnerships** – Working with government and non-government agencies to promote the HPNL concept e.g. connecting with the Boonwurring Foundation and the Bunurong Land Council, input into the Cardinia Biolinks Plan

**On-ground habitat improvement** – While we have carried out several projects along Cardinia Creek, as an organisation this has not been a strength. Landcare does this well.

**Research** – we are proud of the work we've done with Monash University in producing the Regenerative Park Report and our Nature of Tooradin Book which can be downloaded from our website and is currently being printed in hardcopy

**Knowledge Sharing** – Brian Hughes has done a great job with our website and video promoting the HPNL concept and we've had multiple events and webinars promoting wildlife corridors with both public and private agencies.

**Governance** - We are stable and functioning as a separate, incorporated, NFP organisation.

We have, of course, had challenges, e.g. the wide geographical stretch of the proposed nature links makes it difficult for our few

*"There was discussion at the AGM about whether HPNL might be better served by joining up with another group but this was met with an emphatic 'no'."*



members to effectively connect, or have knowledge of, all the local government areas along the proposed HPNL. Our greatest success has been working with Cardinia Shire but Yarra Ranges and Bass Coast also have strong groups that are working on biolinks and our new committee members Andrew Kelly and Neil Rankine have links with these groups.

There was discussion at the AGM about whether HPNL might be better served by joining up with another group but this was met with an emphatic 'no'. With our new committee, we are continuing to reach out to Landcare, Western Port Biosphere Reserve and other government and non-government groups to promote the HPNL project and concept. There was consensus that HPNL has become a recognised 'brand' and we would most effectively be able to continue our work by promoting links with other groups where we have overlapping goals and pushing forward with these. An example is the proposed pilot area for the Cardinia Biolinks Plan in the Koo Wee Rup-Western Port Area. This would link up with both Casey and Bass Coast LGAs and involve Landcare, Western Port biosphere Reserve and Save Western Port Woodlands. We are currently in discussions on how we can use the talents and strengths of all concerned to flesh this out and make it happen. Watch this space...

**Pat Macwhirter**

**President**

**Healesville to Phillip Island Nature Link**

# WESTERN PORT INTREPID LANDCARE GROUP

It has been a fairly quiet year in the scheme of things however as warmer weather arrives and enthusiasm for participation increases, lots of great things will happen.

Intrepid is always happy to touch base and catch up with young people between 18 and mid/late 30s and share the value that Landcare brings and then work with other groups to support valuable projects being established.

We are always looking for project ideas and finding opportunities to support what's going on in the Landcare space. To touch base and catch up with other like-minded young people is so important!!

Conversations we would like to have with groups in the Network would be around project ideas, thoughts about how to approach designing and executing a project and where to find advice if someone has done something similar.

Last month, a bus load of 10 Intrepid's left Maryknoll to meet with 50 or so other local residents, with a mission to plant 2,700 native trees on the boundary of Bunyip State Park – a group, of young people wanting to do "Stuff that Matters".

The group also participated in removing weeds from the forest at a local Maryknoll location, concentrating along a track along Back Creek. The group achieved a great deal during the morning. The afternoon was spent bush walking in the Bunyip State Park along Tomahawk Creek and later to Shiprock Falls. The feedback from group members was positive and a direction to participate in more activities such as this was discussed and plans were made.

However, it is not just about working in the environment but also stopping, listening and breathing it in. The Intrepid's will be immersing themselves in the atmosphere of a morning in the forest to listen to birds, the wind, perhaps a frog, a kangaroo pounding through the undergrowth, or the whispering of the trees themselves. To stop, listen, and breathe in the environment as we engage in quiet contemplation and connect to nature is so important to our health and positive sense of self. Geoff Lockwood from Southern Fauna Resources will engage his audience with wildlife that we hear during a fascinating soundscape activity.

Intrepid is looking forward to participating in more valuable events such as those mentioned as well as outdoor adventures, in the coming year.

**Richard Price and Marijke de Bever-Price**  
**Secretary + President**  
**Western Port Intrepid Landcare Network**

*"To stop, listen, and breathe in the environment as we engage in quiet contemplation and connect to nature is so important to our health."*



# JINDIVICK LANDCARE GROUP

Over the past 12 months, we have held numerous activities, and it is great to be able to meet in person again after a couple of challenging COVID limiting years.

In the past year, we have had a number of families move into the community and join the Landcare group, and we also lost a number of members who sold their properties, and moved to other places!

Activities were varied over the past year. About 12 members completed a chainsaw safety course at Drouin, through some volunteer funding provided by the federal government, so we appreciated the opportunity to increase our skills.

Our AGM was held via Zoom, but we appreciated 3 new members joining the existing committee which will help to reduce the load.

Some of our activities included;

A pizza and presentation night with the Jindivick Primary School students. A group of students conducted a science project on their farms to monitor what is living in their creeks and dams through eDNA sampling methods. This was a great night, and the students did an excellent job presenting what they found to our Landcare Group.

Chris McMahon from 'Bird Habitats' spoke to us about the new hollow log hollow carving tool, the locally manufactured 'Thermal Haven' nest boxes, and the user-friendly citizen science-based monitoring system. Chris founded the business in memory of his daughter Rose who was passionate about tree planting and birds.

One of our local members is an electric nut - or at least emerging to be one. He drives an electric car, powered his house with solar and batteries and in last year's lockdown converted his ride-on lawn mower to electric power! We were entertained as Andrew shared his learnings with us.

We also organised a tree planting on a local dairy farm with a corporate group, and some of our members attended the Landcare network tree planting at Tonimbuk.

We have some more activities planned for 2022, and always welcome new members. If you want to join our happy bunch of volunteers, then please contact our president Brian Morphet on 0407 341 595.

**Brian Morphet**  
**President**  
**Jindivick Landcare Group**

*"In the past year we have had a number of families move into the community and join the Landcare group."*



Jindivick PS Students



Bagot's Farm



Protected Laneway

# LABERTOUCHE + DISTRICT SUSTAINABLE FARMING LANDCARE GROUP

Since our last AGM, life has been steady. With COVID hanging around, members have been hesitant to meet in person regularly. Nevertheless, all report being busy working on their farms.

Many of our members have attended field days to improve their knowledge of Regenerative Agriculture, particularly with multi-species crops and good ground cover. Several members expanded their interest by attending Declan McDonald's Regenerative Agriculture 2022 course, facilitated, and run by Peter Ronalds, Sustainable Agriculture Manager Western Port Catchment Landcare Network.

We are developing a member's social night at the Community Centre where we can workshop ideas for the coming year – opportune as we have had several new members join this year. As always, the Committee are looking to innovate with new ideas to keep our members meaningfully engaged.

Along with many other local Landcare groups, we supported the Autumn planting program at Tonimbuk, which, despite the weather, was a successful day.

As a Victorian first, we are finalizing the partnership with the newly formed Labertouche & Districts Pest Management Team. Under the banner of Labertouche Landcare, this skilled and registered team will work with property owners to actively reduce pests and vermin. With the rising population of foxes, deer and rabbits this program has the support of Landcare Victoria and will expand the range of support that Landcare can offer in managing feral pests of all species. It is hoped this will form a working framework that can be used by other Landcare groups.

We all enjoy reflecting on how far we have come over the years and look forward to what we can achieve in the future.

**Jim Armstrong**  
President  
Labertouche + District Sustainable Farming  
Landcare Group



Multispecies Crop



Deer Issues



Deer Issues



Deer Issues

## NEERIM + DISTRICT LANDCARE GROUP

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While the group has been quiet this year, some initiatives are in planning for 2023.

The group has ordered 1,000 indigenous trees to be grown by volunteers at TreeProject for local landholders to plant in autumn 2023. Members have already taken up this offer and more are expected with this program next autumn. The group is also developing a community engagement program for 2023 as part of the Tarago Catchment Healthy Farms project.

### Tarago Catchment Healthy Farms project

NDLG continues its important ongoing work, funded by Melbourne Water, with approximately 80 landholders, covering 2,800 hectares of private agricultural land in the Tarago Reservoir Catchment. The project aims to improve water quality through land management practices such as stream protection with fencing and revegetation. Significant on-ground works and maintenance are currently being undertaken on 7 properties in the Tarago Reservoir catchment including specific weed control and infill planting.

*“The project aims to improve water quality through land management practices such as stream protection with fencing and revegetation.”*

Over the life of the project, more than 60km of new stock-proof fencing has been built, almost 120 hectares of unproductive land revegetated, 18 hectares recovered from willow infestation and 228,000 native plants established.

**Phil Darton**  
**Secretary**  
**Neerim + District Landcare Group**

## TOOMUC VALLEY LANDCARE GROUP

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On Saturday, July 30, Toomuc Landcare, (which has also been asked to consider the 141 ha. R.J. Chambers Reserve as part of our ‘territory’), held our 10th Annual R.J.Chambers Reserve Lyrebird survey. Owing to COVID restrictions, it has been nearly three years since the last survey so we were anxious to know if the Reserve was still home to a number of superb Lyrebirds in its wetter section.

We met at the picnic grounds in the dark of pre-dawn at 6 am on a clear, but very cold (minus 2 degrees) morning, ready to be allocated in pairs to various stations around and within the Reserve. These had been carefully set out and marked by Don Petty, the chief organizer of the survey. We were all to be at our stations by 7 am, when, just after dawn, the male Lyrebirds would call, each marking its territory. We were each armed with a pen, a watch, a compass and a recording card (printed and supplied by Landcare member John Lorimer). We would note the time of each call, whether it was near or far and the compass direction. This would enable us to later cross-reference the recordings and thereby estimate the number and whereabouts of the male Lyrebirds. We can assume each is visited by interested females!

The pleasing result was that there are six males, each in its territory. Assuming even more females, we are confident that the Reserve’s Lyrebird colony is thriving as well as it was some three years previously.



Lyrebird

After our freezing-cold monitoring, we all proceeded to our reward: a fireside BBQ breakfast at the picnic ground. Again, it is Don Petty and his partner Sue Robertson who provide all the necessary equipment and supplies, cook the sausages and veggie burgers, make the toast, boil the kettles and generally make this the highlight of the morning. Toomuc Landcare is most fortunate to have such members!

We are also fortunate to have the goodly number who came. It was most successful.

**Joy Carberry**  
**Secretary/Treasurer**  
**Toomuc Valley Landcare Group**

# WESTERN PORT SWAMP LANDCARE GROUP

We have 30 members. Our area covers the Greater Koo Wee Rup Swamp from Tooradin to Lang Lang. We hold four meetings a year interspersed with field days. Our aim is to restore the local landscape to protect stock and wildlife including the endangered Southern Brown Bandicoot. Finances are in good shape. During the year we successfully held three working bees, three planting days plus the Bug Blitz sessions.

## Planting Day Tooradin North

In June a group of 16 Koo Wee Rup Secondary College sustainability students planted 750 plants at the Clarke's 100-acre Manks Road farm for wildlife and stock shelterbelts.

## Planting Day Monomeith

In September a group of 18 Koo Wee Rup Secondary College Year 11 students planted 700 poas and sedges at Sue Davies' 50 acres farm for bandicoot habitat as part of a Melbourne Water grant to improve River Ecosystem Health. One is never too young to enjoy Landcare!

## Bug Blitz at Lang Lang Primary School Arboretum

A grant from Beach Energy has provided interpretive signage, artwork, plumbing, seating, picnic tables, and a shade sail for this 5-acre precious patch. In August the Bug Blitz environmental team was engaged to run sessions for Grades 3, 4, 5 & 6 over two days, on terrestrial invertebrates, soil testing, bush fire boomerangs, connecting with nature and discovery walks.

## Sue Davies

### Secretary

### Western Port Swamp Landcare Group

*"During the year we successfully held three working bees, three planting days, plus the Bug Blitz sessions."*



Bandicoot Mum



Bug Blitz with Dr Caldwell



Tooradin Planting



Bug Blitz Walk



Dante Davies

The WPCLN gratefully acknowledges all the Landcare group members and farmers who have contributed to the 2022 WPCLN Annual Magazine.

We would like to thank the funders of the projects WPCLN have been delivering in 2022:

1. *'Smart Farming in Western Port'* – National Landcare Program 2 – Commonwealth Government
2. *'Farmers Digging Deeper – Smart Farms Small Grants: Soil Extension Activities'* – Commonwealth Government
3. *'Sustainable Table Fund'* – Community Grants Program
4. *'Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program'* – Victorian Government
5. *'Stream Frontage Program'* – Melbourne Water
6. We also acknowledge other partners who have funded WPCLN projects during this past year. These include the Port Phillip and Western Port CMA, Ripe for Change, Cardinia Shire Council, Landcare Australia, VicTrack and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

Western Port Catchment Landcare Network acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land making up the lands upon which we meet. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present, and emerging. We acknowledge that their connection to Country is both ancient and ongoing.

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