

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NEWS

Vol: 34 Autumn/Winter 2022

FEATURES

Farewell to Kaye and David
Landcare Profile - Dallas Wyatt
Why Biochar?
Oh Deer!!!



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AGM REPORT

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

Newsletter design and production is driven by volunteers on behalf of the Landcare Community. If you have any stories, questions or great photos we look forward to hearing from you.

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Deadline for next issue

October 21, 2022

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Cover photo

Kaye Proudley and David McAninly planting along Billy Creek Road in 2009
Photo courtesy: Archives

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MC FOR THE NIGHT, FERGUS IRVING, INTRODUCING DAVID MCAULAY FOR TRIBUTE TO DAVID MCANINLY



GUEST SPEAKER: CHRIS MCEVOY FROM RADIAL TIMBER AUSTRALIA



ANDREW MACLEAN FROM LANDCARE VICTORIA

It appears that we are getting into the habit of having our Annual General Meeting some three months after it's due date.

We have Covid to thank for that.

The AGM that was meant to be held at the end of October 2021 was actually held on 21 January, 2022.

The good news is that it was extremely well attended by members, visitors and surprise guests.

Our MC for the night was the very able Fergus Irving from Woodside Landcare Group. He did a wonderful job controlling the rowdy crowd and introducing the ever expanding range of speakers.

On top of the programmed speaker, Chris McEvoy from Radial Timber, we had an unexpected presentation from Andrew Maclean from Landcare Victoria Inc, who came down from Melbourne to get to know some of the members from rural groups.

Also on the agenda was an impromptu short farewell to Scott Elliott who, due to covid, never got to say a proper goodbye before heading to the Bellarine Peninsula. It was great to see him again and provided a perfect segue into the formal introduction of our new Facilitator, Emily Physick, to network members.

There was a moving tribute to David McAninly by his old pal and fellow farmer, David MacAulay with a photo memorial of David shown on the night.

Other than the Chair, Helga Binder's shoe exploding on arrival the evening went very smoothly with the two course dinner provided by the Country Club being enjoyed by all.

More than anything, the evening was a wonderful first step back into catching up with each other again after so many years of lock-downs, angst and cancellations of events.

We hope this will be the last delayed AGM we see for some time and look forward to celebrating the next one at the end of October this year.

It will be an election year, with many positions becoming vacant so we hope to see a return of the membership on a grand scale. ■

FROM THE OFFICE

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK



By John McClumpha

It never rains but it pours.

This is not referring to the weather but to the number of unscheduled events that our Network has encountered since the issue of our last magazine.

Tragic losses

We have lost 2 long serving members and Board members in **David McAninly** and **Kaye Proudley**. Both of these members contributed greatly to our Network in their own way and will be sadly missed by all who knew them. Articles later in this edition outline their passion and achievements to the environment and the Network.

Staff changes

Emily Physick, our recently recruited Facilitator, resigned in April this year. Emily put in a great effort to her position however she stated that she was not able to fulfill the requirements of the position and she considered it in the interest of the Network that she resign from the position. We thank Emily for her contribution during her short period of employment and wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

Following Emily's resignation, the Network have advertised for a new facilitator however the response to date has been disappointing with all applicants not being suitable for the position for varying reasons.

So, if you know of someone who is looking for a part time appointment and whom you believe would be suitable

for the position, please talk to them or notify the YYLN office. Refer to our website www.yarramlancare.org for details.

Until we are able to employ a new facilitator, **Jason Pickering**, our project officer, has stepped up to the plate and has taken on some of the Facilitator duties.

He is being assisted by **Tony Gardner**, a WGCMA employee, who attends our office one day a week. Jason is still available to discuss ongoing and new projects however, due to his busy schedule and extra commitments we request that any contact with Jason be kept relevant and to the point.

Climate impacts

The El Nino weather pattern experienced last year prevented the seagrass at Corner Inlet from seeding. Hence there was no seed collected to allow our ongoing seagrass planting project. This is the second year running that this project has been affected by weather conditions, which is most disappointing.

Pandemic delays

Our 2021 AGM held in January this year (delayed due to the pandemic) was well attended and presented the opportunity for members

from across the Network to catch up with each other over a great meal at the Yarram Country Club. It was a bright spot on the horizon.

Board rejuvenation

Several Board members are stepping down from their executive positions and some are leaving the Board later this year, so there will be several positions available for new Board members.

Please give consideration to joining the Board or nominating others whom you believe would be a suitable candidate.

Board nominees do not have to be current members but it would be expected that they become members on nomination. The Board is a very important aspect of our Network and among many other roles, manage and determine the direction of the Network. So, if you are interested or wish to nominate somebody, please let our current Chairperson, Helga Binder, know.

Victorian Landcare

The next round of Victorian Landcare Grants project grants applications should be available by the time you receive this magazine. If you have an idea for a project, up to \$20,000, please get in touch with Jason.

Sponsors needed

In the distant past this magazine was distributed by email, however the general consensus among members was that a printed magazine was the preferred option. Although the writings and editing of the magazine is carried out by volunteer members the cost of publishing is relatively high. Part of this is paid from membership subscriptions but we are always looking for sponsorship to allow continuation of our magazine. If you are able to nominate any possible sponsors, it would be most appreciated and will ensure the continuation of our publication.

Enjoy the read! ■





BIG BOOTS TO FILL

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By Helga Binder

What do you say when the unexpected happens? That bloke you numbered as one of your close friends suddenly isn't there anymore? That is what many people in our community were confronted with last December when best friend, Landcare Champion, community icon and beloved family patriarch died suddenly.

It was a terrible blow for wife of over 42 years, Joy, his children, Louise and Mathew and their families and close friends. For us in Landcare it was like losing of a whole section of carefully tended riparian forest.

The gap left behind in our network is huge.

The contributions David McAninly made in his 40 years of involvement in landcare went from planting trees to educating himself and others about sustainable agriculture. He represented us to local, state and federal government politicians and he was always present at any local event to keep the flag flying high.

As well as running his dairy farm at Stacey's Bridge, he became an inaugural member of the Albert River Landcare Group.

This extremely active group planted trees, ran workshops, tended local reserves, monitored local species

and was always ready to participate in any major projects that required a little more volunteer support.

David spread the Landcare word far and wide and he always knew where to go and who to talk to to get extra support or sponsorship for events. Just one example of this was the ongoing free use of the May Pavillion for our Landcare network's Annual General Meeting and dinner. This only came about because of his excellent relationship with the local football and cricket clubs.

In 2009 David volunteered to go onto the YYLN Board and there he remained until the end.

As well as serving as a general board member he willingly filled many of the necessary executive and non-executive roles. He spent six years as the YYLN Chair, four years as Vice-Chair, five years on the Employment Steering Committee and five years as Event organiser.

As if this wasn't enough, he also represented the network at the quarterly Regional Landcare Forum meetings for eleven years and always put his hand up to assist with any extra strategic planning that was required to keep the network viable.

David regularly represented the network at State and National Landcare conferences.

His energy and willingness to contribute so many volunteer hours is a very hard act to follow.



DAVID WITH ANNE COULSON AT THE LAUNCH OF THE MULLUNDUNG TO COAST PROJECT IN 2011



DAVID WITH DAN GARLICK & BELINDA BRENNAN AT THE NATIONAL LANDCARE CONFERENCE IN 2012

His passion for engaging schools in agricultural education, fostering strong partnerships in Landcare and all the work he had done on establishing the Rail Trail between Gelliondale and Hedley (one of the first in Victoria) was recognised in the Spring of 2015 when **David was awarded the highest Landcare honour in Victoria - the State's Individual Landcare Award.**

In his own words at the time: "There are lots of creative ways to see projects delivered.

I've switched my focus from private land to public land and community assets. In this area we started out as a farm tree group but quickly made the change to Landcare, so we could take up the many opportunities offered.

Campaigning so staff are secure and on-ground work continues is part of the territory.

Encouraging shared funding relationships and linking with philanthropic groups can be worth the effort.

BIG BOOTS TO FILL

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK



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DAVID, NEW LEADER OF THE BOARD IN 2011



DAVID, PROUD WINNER OF THE 2015 VICTORIAN INDIVIDUAL LANDCARE AWARD WITH HIS WIFE, JOY, IN THEIR GARDEN



ANOTHER ACCOLADE FOR DAVID WITH THE CONTINUED, STAUNCH SUPPORT FROM JOY

The main thing is to keep sharing the Landcare message - it's so positive it's difficult for people to resist!"

David made many friends during his Landcare voyage. People who respected his commitment and appreciated his gentle ways of moving forward. He was never brash or angry, just quiet and insistant. He knew when to push and when to back down, when to step up and when to allow someone else to take the floor.

We miss him greatly on the

Board. Things aren't quite the same without David interjecting with some off-topic bit of wisdom.

His passion for Landcare was supported by his wife of over 40 years, Joy, who always attended functions with a bright smile and a kind word.

David has left a big hole in many people's hearts and we continue to send our love and support to his friends and family. May the memories of all he did linger for a very long time.

It is our intention to honour David, together with other passed members of our Landcare family, along the Rail Trail created in Yarram by Landcare members in our community.

So if you happen to go for a walk one day and see a plaque in honour of David McAninly, please take a moment to remember what a great contribution he made and what wonderful man he was. ■



DAVID HOSTING ONE OF THE MANY AGM'S IN HIS ROLE AS CHAIR



LOST KNOWLEDGE

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By Helga Binder

It is always a heavy blow to lose a much loved and respected person in our community. When that loss takes with it a full encyclopaedia of natural resources information, it becomes a tragedy.

And so it is for our Landcare community with the passing of Kaye Proudley on 27 March 2022.

Kaye has been an integral part of Landcare in our region ever since her move to Binginwarri, with husband Roy, in 2006.

Very soon after her arrival she began to volunteer her time to all manner of projects that advanced the understanding and protection of biodiversity in our region.

An integral part of the **rejuvenation of the Binginwarri Landcare Group**, she drummed up support for participation in their area's **Biodiversity Blueprint** as part of the much broader JARR project, and was instrumental in engaging other landholders to consider projects that would help.

Her extensive knowledge of flora and fauna made her a critical part of the team that developed **five field guides** to encourage locals and visitors to learn to identify the beautiful native species with which we are surrounded. These guides were produced via a grant and are still free to anyone



KAYE WEARS RED AT THE LAUNCH OF THE FIRST TWO FIELD GUIDES PRODUCED IN 2011



Warren the Wise a.k.a Kaye Proudley

wishing to expand their own field of knowledge. They are a tangible legacy from Kaye.

Kaye also instigated regular **'Walk, Talk and Gawk'** outings for anyone who was interested in learning more about the environment. These outings were made on private properties, local forests and surrounding wetlands, to name a few.

It can now be revealed that, from the Spring of 2011 until the Summer of 2016 Kaye was the genius behind 'Warren the Wise', - the extremely smart wombat

that answered our readers' questions regarding all things 'nature'. She covered a lot of interesting questions through those years. Things such as *'what are the muddy bits that keep dropping out of my coat'* to ethical dilemmas regarding uncooperative neighbours to the migration patterns of honeyeaters.

In 2013 Kaye joined luminaries Celia Rosser (internationally known for a lifetime of Banksia illustration) and Andrea McCallum (renowned local artist) in judging a botanical exhibition held at the Yarram



KAYE TREE PLANTING

Courthouse Gallery.

In 2011 she accepted the **YYLN Community Group Award** on behalf of the Binginwarri Landcare Group. This award was both a credit to her leadership and the nod to the excellent activities that the group undertook.

In August 2014 she joined

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LOST KNOWLEDGE

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK



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KAYE ACCEPTS THE 2011 COMMUNITY AWARD FOR BINGINWARRI LC



JARR BIRDWATCHING DAY HELD AT KAYE AND ROY'S PROPERTY IN 2010



KAYE THE JUDGE NEXT TO CELIA ROSSER IN 2013



KAYE AND TURID LANGE AT AGM 2016

the **YYLN Board** to help support all of the groups in the network. The five year strategic plan that was developed for the network gained from her insights and her high level of intellect assisted in many of the difficulties the Board was facing in the two years of her tenure.

In 2015 she won the **YYLN Sustainable Environment Award** for all of her extraordinary work in the community.

Sadly she left the board due to a battle with cancer. It is a battle that she eventually won and one that did

not stop her continued contribution with advice on seed and plant propagation.

One of the more memorable of her infrequent appearances back in the Landcare fold was at the 2016 Landcare AGM where she wore a rainbow-coloured wig to cover her hair loss. This was so typical of the great sense of humour Kaye always showed in the face of adversity.

We were all delighted when her health improved and she once again began engaging with the Binginwarri Landcare Group.



KAYE WINS THE 2015 SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT AWARD

Her death, like David McAninly three months earlier, was completely unexpected and a great shock. One that some of us are still coming to terms with.

We will miss her greatly and wish her family and loved ones all the joy of remembering what a lot she gave to the environment and the community. ■



LOCAL LANDCARE PROFILE

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By Melissa Ainsworth

*Our Landcare profile person is someone who many members may have met through his very generous and skilled volunteer work. For the past seven years he has led the JARR bird monitoring program completing over 250 surveys to date! Who is this person you may ask? **He is Dallas Wyatt.***

Dallas grew up on a small dairy farm just out of Pakenham. Whilst he loved helping in the dairy he had a passion for all things to do with nature, especially avifauna. **Purchasing a set of binoculars when he was just 16 years old, his passion and bird observing skills began to flourish.**

After attending the Koo Wee Rup High School, Dallas went on to complete a science degree majoring in Biology at Monash University. He then spent ten years as a secondary school teacher teaching Biology and Science /Maths, before returning to Pakenham to take up dairy farming.

Dallas then moved to the Tongala/Echuca region to continue dairying. **This is where he became involved with natural resource management and the Landcare movement** – restoring native vegetation in the Tongala/Echuca area and advocating for the conservation of native

grasslands in the region.

After relinquishing dairying he moved back to Gippsland and then purchased a small beef farm near Welshpool. Later he sold the farm and moved to Inverloch to retire in 2014.

“About 7 years ago I was reading “The State of Australian Birds Report 2015” which was released by BirdLife Australia. In the report it states that there was a lack of information available about birds in the South Gippsland region because of a lack of bird survey data.” said Dallas.

Coincidentally, at this time the YYLN was looking for somebody to coordinate a bird monitoring program for restoration sites associated with the Jack and Albert River Restoration (JARR) program.

Dallas had just retired from farming and generously put his hand up and got involved. **Over 250 surveys were completed with all the captured monitoring information submitted into the BirdLife Australia ‘Birddata’ data base.**

Since then, Dallas’ valuable bird identification and monitoring skills have been recognised to allow him to do consultancy work and, in that capacity, has been involved with the South Gippsland Conservation Society as well as Greening Australia, Bass Coast and the Yarram Yarram Landcare Networks.

“Since the JARR bird monitoring program I have submitted hundreds more bird



INTREPID BIRDMAN, DALLAS WYATT, OUT IN THE FIELD

surveys into Birddata. I also regularly assist community groups and individuals with advice on bird identification and conservation and give bird presentations when requested.”

Dallas’ passion for bird monitoring has become a semi-retirement occupation! He has returned to survey 18 of the original 2015 ~ 2017 JARR bird monitoring sites to gather further data to create a longer term monitoring program, adding another 150 surveys results into Birddata.

If you didn’t think Dallas was busy enough, for the

last 4 year’s he has also been completing seasonal surveys on 5 properties, each with multiple survey sites, as part of BirdLife Australia, “Birds on Farms” project.

The importance of Dallas’ work cannot be underestimated. In his own words, “Birds are the ‘Canaries in the Coal Mine’ – they are an indicator of environmental health. After completing hundreds of surveys across the South Gippsland region, I have found that most of our birds are resilient critters. Many species will move across the landscape and colonise revegetation.

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LOCAL LANDCARE PROFILE

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK



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PINK ROBIN IN CORES & LINKS

Whether they are paddock shelterbelts, riparian or steep hillside sites, birds are benefitting from the efforts of landowners and others, who have over many years been restoring native vegetation. However, as a community we need to do more to protect our remnant bushland areas, especially those old growth trees with hollows, with 114 bird species dependent on hollows for roosting and/or breeding, as well as our marsupials like Greater Gliders".

Some of our favourite iconic birds found in the Yarram area – Australian King Parrot, Gang Gang Cockatoo (now listed as an endangered species) and the Laughing Kookaburra are examples of birds that need hollows to nest in.



GOLDEN BOWERBIRD

"It takes over 100 years before trees will naturally develop hollows. One way we can do more to assist hollow dependent birds and marsupials, is by installing artificial hollows (nest boxes) within remnant bushland and older revegetation sites".

When not doing bird monitoring work Dallas is a passionate 'twitcher', with 545 birds of the 830 birds recorded in Australia, observed to date. His favourite birding place is tropical north Queensland where he saw the magnificent Cassowary near Mission Beach and the



CRIMSON FINCH



THE ELUSIVE CASSOWARY

equally splendid Golden Bowerbird in the Atherton Tablelands in 2019. Another highlight was when he observed and photographed the critically endangered Plains Wanderer in the Terrick Terrick National Park in north of Bendigo.

Three of Dallas' children are involved with farming and the other is a keen bushwalker and involved with school outdoor activities. He also has 6 grandchildren, which now that covid restrictions have eased, he hopes to spend more time with.

One can only admire the

generosity of Dallas' time and skills as a volunteer. The importance of his work is paramount, especially in these times of unpredictable climate.

Without such a dedicated and knowledgeable observer of the birds in our environment, the data required to support changes to what we grow could cost us dearly in many more species extinctions.

We thank Dallas for his contribution to keeping our planet thriving and sustainable. ■



WHY BIOCHAR?

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By John Ballis

Biochar is an organic amendment for soil that, although it has been used for a very long time, going back to its use in the Amazon basin 7,000 years ago, its use in modern agriculture is relatively new.

Biochar is a form of charcoal produced from biomass (typically plant matter), often used in soil amendment which can be used to significantly improve land and soil management in countries with fragile top soil, like Australia. Biochar can increase cation-exchange capacity resulting in improved soil fertility. It can also help in moderating soil acidity.

Biochar has the potential ability to increase plant growth and ultimately crop yield in varying soil conditions. This increased crop yield can be anywhere from 10 to 42 percent. Biochar absorbs water due to its large surface area, as it is formed with a honeycomb structure, therefore it can improve plant growth in areas of low rainfall. It can also help improve soil structure in areas that have clay or sandy soils.

It can increase root growth by attracting beneficial soil microbes and can increase organic matter content by 50 times and Phosphorus and Nitrogen content in the soil by 3 times that of surrounding soils. Biochar can also help in reducing the leaching of nitrogen into ground water.



Biochar helps plants resist environmental stresses, such as diseases, and helps plants tolerate toxic metals, water stress and organic compounds such as the herbicide atrazine.

As Biochar can attract and absorb nutrients this can lead to a reduction in fertiliser use. Using fertilisers and other chemicals can reduce the microbiological activity of the soil, which makes soils more vulnerable to climatic conditions like strong winds, drought or flood.

One study by UNSW found how biochar improves the root zone of a plant. In the first three weeks, as biochar reacts with the soil, it can stimulate seed germination and seedling growth. During the next six months, reactive surfaces are created on biochar particles, improving nutrient supply to plants. After three to six months, biochar starts to 'age' in the soil and forms microaggregates that protect organic matter from decomposition.

Biochar can be created by

burning plant material using pyrolysis or burning wood residue products at very high heat with limited oxygen. The product created by burning wood using pyrolysis is different from burning wood in an open fire due to the lack of oxygen involved.

Pyrolysis produces a charcoal that maintains the plants cell structure and integrity, creating a highly porous, carbon-rich material, that not only acts as a sponge for water and nutrients, but also a catalyst to promote healthy soils.

Not all biochars are the same or the same quality. The behaviour of biochar in soils, however, is complex. Different biochars may react differently to the same environmental conditions – while at the same time, one type of biochar may react differently to different environmental conditions. Areas with low rainfall or nutrient-poor soils will most likely see the largest impact from addition of biochar.

Consistent use of Biochar can reverse soil degradation and therefore increase the possibility of creating sustainable food and fuel production in areas with severely depleted soils, scarce organic resources, and inadequate water and chemical fertiliser supplies. By making croplands more fertile for longer periods of time, biochar will therefore discourage deforestation.

The quality of the original plant material used will dictate the quality of the biochar produced. If you have a uniform product to begin with you will produce higher

quality biochar, however if you have multiple different plant matter sources being used, the resultant biochar may be not as good quality and may not produce the same crop improvement results. In the past this has led some people to believe biochar wasn't as effective as claimed when in reality, it is the quality of the biochar that is the issue.

Pyrolysis can be used as a value adding process by utilising wood chips and other wood residue products from timber mills or even wood thinnings from plantations, that would not otherwise be used productively.

As biochar acts as a stable carbon store which captures carbon from the atmosphere and locks it into the ground, it makes it perfect for carbon sequestration. It has been shown to remain in the soil for thousands of years. This could give farmers another income source by engaging in the new carbon capture and storage economy and utilising the growing carbon credit market. This has the result of helping to remove CO₂ from the atmosphere and has the added benefit of reducing the carbon footprint of modern farming.

Biochar can draw down carbon from the atmosphere into the soil and store it for hundreds to thousands of years.

Many people are currently doing research on Biochar and its effects in improving soil in farming and other crop trial situations both in Australia and around the world. ■

OH DEER!!!!

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK



By Helen Spittle

Are you interesting in feral deer monitoring and management?

Wild Samba, Fallow and Red Deer have been spotted across Gippsland on private and public land. But are their numbers growing and why should we even care?

An increasing number of Landcarers in YYLN's Strzeleckis have noticed an up-tick in feral deer on private properties, commercial forests and on roads. They are also counting the damage...

Six wild deer species found in Australia were released in the 19th century for aesthetic and recreational purposes. Fallow, Red, Sambar, Rusa, Hog and Chital deer are certainly pretty to look at but they are increasingly recognised as a threat to the environment if left un-checked.

More commonly seen in Victoria and the Yarram Yarram Landcare Network are feral Fallow and Sambar deer, and some Hog deer.

The impact of feral deer can be extensive. Damage to natural habitats by grazing deer has resulted in a decline in native flora and fauna, and has compromised revegetation efforts, agricultural crops, forestry and even stockfeed.

Deer create paths in dense vegetation which enables access for introduced predators such as foxes and

Fallow Deer



Samba Deer



Hog Deer



(Images from <https://www.feralscan.org.au/deerscan/>)

cats, and deer are known to spread native and invasive seeds, weeds and diseases.

Deer can be hazardous on roads, and damage fences and gates, and they are known to cause disturbance to sheep during lambing.

Growing deer numbers in Victoria has led to the

development of the Victorian Deer Control Program which recognises that "deer are impacting our state's biodiversity, water quality, public safety, agriculture, and Aboriginal cultural heritage" (see <https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/invasive-plants-and-animals/deer-control-program>).

The Program aims to minimise the impact of feral deer in Victoria and includes the Victorian Deer Control Strategy. The Strategy outlines a new approach to deer management and has three key goals:

- Reduction of the impacts of deer on key environmental, agricultural and Aboriginal cultural heritage values and public safety.
- More effective deer control through partnerships and community collaboration.
- Increased awareness, understanding and capacity to control deer.

Several community-led deer monitoring and management groups have been established across rural and peri-urban areas (including Mitta Landcare Group, and Cardinia Deer Management Coalition Inc).

South Gippsland Landcare Network through its Corner Inlet Landcare Group recently launched an (unfunded) project in South Gippsland, with on-ground control efforts focussing on two areas during winter 2022: Cape Liptrap and Mt Best.

The aim of the project is to raise awareness of the impacts of deer and facilitate control of deer in South Gippsland through an action learning approach. The Deer Action Group intends to:

- Share information. Build knowledge and capacity.

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WORDS OF WISDOM

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

by Cousin Wally

Cousin Wally



"I have heard that trees and other plants talk to each other. Is this true?"

Well, as I waddle through the bush on a windy day I hear many sounds coming from trees as the wind sways their branches, causing them to rub against other trees and loose bark scaping across tree trunks. These noises could be interpreted as plants "talking" but no they are not.

However, talking is a means of communication and **there is evidence that trees and other plants do communicate** with each other in a way other than talking.

Field experiments have shown that **trees communicate through the air, using pheromones and other scent signals**. A study in Africa showed that when giraffes starts chewing acacia leaves, the tree notices the injury and emits a distress signal in the form of ethylene gas. Upon detecting this gas, neighbouring acacias start pumping tannins into their leaves. In large enough quantities these tannins can sicken or even kill large herbivores. This dissuades the giraffes from eating from

the surrounding trees. The study also showed that in some areas giraffes appear to have sussed out what the trees were doing, so would feast in a upwind direction on trees which had not received the warning.

Similar field tests have shown that when insects start damaging a tree, they will produce a chemical to protect themselves against the insects. This chemical gives off an odour which can be sensed by neighbouring trees who produce their own defence enzymes to protect themselves against the insect.

Another way plants communicate with each other occurs below ground.

In soil there exists a vast web of tiny threads of fungal organisms. These threads are known as **mycelium**. The network of threads is known as mycorrhizal network. It has been recently given a nickname of "Woodwide Web,". The mycelium threads are very thin and are invisible to the

human eye. One teaspoon of soil in the bush can contain several kilometres of fungal filaments."

The fine, hairlike root tips of trees join together with microscopic fungal filaments to form the basic links of the network. This forms a direct connection with other plants. It is through the mycelium web that trees can also "communicate."

When sunlight falls on the leaves of plants a process occurs known as photosynthesis. This process uses sunlight, water, and carbon dioxide to create oxygen and energy in the form of sugar, which the plant absorbs. Because the mycelium does not have access to sunlight it cannot photosynthesise, so it depends upon the plant's sugar storage and consumes some of the sugar created by the plant. In return the mycelium deposits nitrogen, phosphorus and other nutrients, which it has absorbed from the soil, with the plant. It has also been found that when mycelium encounters roots of young weak plants, the plant will absorb some of the sugar and water from the mycelium hence increasing their chances of survival.

Large trees which have roots going deep into the soil will have access to water at a greater depth than young seedlings. In the dry season when the upper layers are scarce of water for young seedlings the water from the larger plants is dispersed via the mycelium to the young seedlings.



PARTNERSHIPS

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK



by Helga Binder

YYLN – WGCMA: more than a partnership!

The YYLN and WGCMA have a long history of working together. It is a natural and obvious partnership with both organisations committed to undertaking projects and activities to protect and enhance our waterways and biodiversity to support local communities and businesses. But the partnership is far more than just working together to deliver stuff on-ground.

As well as delivering joint projects such as protecting and enhancing key waterways, such as the Jack and Albert River, protection of coastal saltmarsh, weed control in our upper catchments including in and around Hiawatha, **the WGCMA and YYLN also support one another behind the scenes.**

The WGCMA provide the YYLN Board support by managing their staff, providing administrative support and strategic advice on key advocacy matters.

YYLN provide WGCMA with significant insights into local issues, engagement opportunities and innovative project ideas. **Through these things which have occurred over many years, strong relationships have formed and there is mutual trust in each other.**

A recent example of this is the sharing of staff to help YYLN to continue holding the network together under very challenging times. The loss of Scott Elliot was a bitter blow and the short tenure of Emily Physick added to the difficulties. Combined with difficulties with project delivery and a Board both tired and suffering personal loss to say extra support was required is an understatement.

In response, the WGCMA offered one of their staff, Tony Gardner (who works for the WGCMA as a



Partnership and Engagement Coordinator) to help tide us over the next few months. It gives us the opportunity to reconsider our staffing models and engage in a little strategic planning.

Tony will support the Board to meet its governance responsibilities and Jason Pickering will continue to

deliver the exciting projects that currently underway.

Tony will be based out of the YYLN office a day or so a week, so if you drop in and see someone strange lurking around it may be Tony. His picture is here so that you can recognise him and his number is 0429 629 212 if you wish to call him. ■

...continued from previous page

Hence **via the Woodwide Web plants “communicate” with each other ensuring the continuation of plants.**

Mycelium cannot produce fruiting bodies on their own, they need to mate with a neighbouring mycelium. The resulting growth from this mating occurs above ground and is what we

know as fungi – mushrooms, toadstools, etc. Hence mushrooms “communicate” with each other via their common mycelium. When a mushroom drops its spore to the ground it germinates and produces another mycelium web. As there are many different types of fungi there are also different types of mycelium.

So, plants do not talk to each other in the way animals talk to each other but they do have several means of communicating with each other and as talking is a means of communication the communication between plants is sometimes referred to as “Talking”. ■

Email your questions to mel.ainsworth@me.com and I will try to answer them for you.





AROUND THE TRAPS

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By our Landcare groups

Yarram Urban

Yarram Urban Landcare Group has continued to be active during the past six months, working to reinvigorate the Yarram Botanical Gardens beside Nightingale Park.

The group took on the challenge of returning the long neglected Yarram Botanical Gardens to its intended purpose of highlighting the plants indigenous to the local area late in 2014.

At that point the gardens were overgrown with weeds, box thorn, gorse, bridal creeper and pittosporum.

A small group of regulars has been meeting most Wednesday and Thursday mornings to remove weeds and to plant completely indigenous plantings from within the habitat of the former Alberton Shire.

Since December hundreds of volunteer hours have been spent weeding the more established garden beds and mowing and line trimming the pasture grass that had previously dominated the garden.

An ongoing effort at collecting fallen branches and bark has allowed the line trimming to be more effective, while the collected bark and sticks have been set aside to be converted into mulch for the plantings.



During January the Nightingale Park Society responded to a neighbour's concerns about one of the large eucalypts planted close to their fence, with their fear being it may fall onto their home in high winds. The society employed local arborist Warwick Testro to reduce the height of the tree by half.

Three of our volunteers spent two exhausting days cleaning up the branches and small trunks left by the arborist thereby reducing the cost to the society.

This was then converted to mulch in late February by Paul Savage who provided his tractor with flailing attachment to mulch about 100 metres of bark and branches, which we have raked up and used on the eastern mound at the rear of the gardens to provide cover for a recent planting of hardenbergia and wonga vine.

The Yarram Early Learning Centre has also resumed using the gardens for adventure and nature study activities for the children.

They have constructed a cubby house made from collected branches and bark along with using branches with leaves as bush brooms, but unfortunately don't always realise where they are running, necessitating the use of hazard ribbon to indicate recent plantings.

In March a group of members were guided by Jenny Wolswinkle, of Seeds of Gippsland, on an expedition to Langsborough, Gormandale and Longford, to select suitable cuttings to propagate for planting in the gardens and perhaps for sale to other landcare members. Jenny generously donated her time and expertise, organised the trip and supplied the needed hi-vis for access to the HVP

plantation at Flynn and Holy Plain, so our thanks is extended to her.

From Langsborough we collected *Dampiera stricta* (Blue Dampiera) and *Epacris impressa* (Common Heath). From Flynn we collected *Scaevola ramosissima* (Hairy Fan-flower), *Hibbertia acicularis* (Prickly Guinea-flower), and more *Epacris impressa* (Common Heath). From the plantation edge near Holey Plains we collected *Cyanothamnus anemonifolius* (previously *Boronia anemonifolia*) and then picked some seed of *Ficinia nodosa* (Knobby Club-rush) which Jenny will propagate.

The cuttings were delivered to WildTech nursery at Glenmaggie to be grown in small cells. These will be potted up into forestry tubes in coming months and grown on until large enough to plant in the gardens. During that cutting collection trip a sample of *correa reflexa* (Gormandale) was collected to be propagated at home in Yarram, and so far the cuttings have not died. One of the attractive things about the gardens at the moment is the blooms of the *correa* and the *wahlenbergia* (bluebells) which add colour during the winter months. During winter and spring we will continue our working bees on Wednesday mornings from 10am, as well as planning more seed and cutting collection activities

Please feel free to join us.

AROUND THE TRAPS

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK



By our Landcare groups



INDIGENOUS REGROWTH AT AN HVP HIAMDALE COUPE

During the past months we have planted:

24-3-2022

- 8 x Hardenbergia violacea (waraburra or false sarsaparilla)
- 1 x Hardenbergia violacea (happy wanderer)
- 2 x Clematis aristata (old mans beard)
- 1 x Senecio pinnatifolius (groundsel)
- 2 x Kennedia prostrata (running postman)
- 3 x Pultenaea pedunculata (matted pea-bush)
- 1 x Polyscias sambucifolia (elderberry panax)

31-3-2022

- 1 x Clematis aristata.
- 5 x Gahnia sieberiana (Red-fruit saw-sedge)
- 2 x. Daviesia latifolia (hop bitter pea)
- 3 x Pultenaea daphnoides (large leaf bush pea) ■

Have you been for a look yet?



FENCING OFF NEW CUTTINGS OF HARDENBERGIA



ANGIE GUTOWSKI WEEDING GARDEN IN THE RAIN



CORREA REFLEXA IN BLOOM

Merriman Creek

The latest meeting of the Merriman Creek Landcare Group was on March 7 at the Stradbroke Hall.

Over the past few years our group has enjoyed meeting, mainly for social purposes, with the covid situation causing much isolation within our membership.

The group discussed our dwindling numbers with

several families moving away and the difficulty in recruiting new members. The dynamics of the community is changing and there is lots of imminent change pending, due to our district now identified as a renewable energy zone (REZ).

Our group identified the need for a collective voice regarding our local environment, demonstrated during the drought. For example, when Merriman Creek ceased to flow and when the Victorian Fisheries Authority spoke to us regarding the proposal to allow camping on licenced crown water frontages.

It was unanimously decided that the frequency of our meetings would be based 'on need' and also to stay connected for continued social interaction.

Our members continue to undertake Landcare projects on their own properties and enjoy interacting with the broader Network. ■



WIRES FUNDED REVEGETATION PROJECT AT STRADBROKE WEST



AROUND THE TRAPS

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

By our Landcare groups

Wonyip Landcare

In April of this year Wonyip Landcare Group launched their uniquely designed nesting boxes for owls, gliders and other endangered species in the Strzelecki Ranges.

This project, funded under the Victorian Landcare Grants program, has seen the production of a variety of nesting boxes to be distributed and mounted on properties of members throughout the area.

These boxes, designed by Robert and Jack Spittle of the Wonyip group, are quite unique in that they are assembled without the use of nails or glue. They come in a flat pack of pre-fabricated pieces that are then assembled on site before mounting in the tree. **Watch out IKEA!!!**

At the launch Jack showed attending members how easy it was to assemble each unit and Robert explained the processes they went



ROBERT SPITTLE EXPLAINS THE NEST BOX PRODUCTION HISTORY



JACK SPITTLE DEMONSTRATES HOW EASY IT IS TO ASSEMBLE A NESTING BOX

through in original design and production of the units.

This is stage one of an overall project that hopes to integrate a remote monitoring system into each unit so that data such as

frequency and type of use can be recorded and used to help optimise the variety of boxes across different locations.

The group is hopeful that funding for monitoring will

be forthcoming at the next round of Landcare funding.

These units will also be available for commercial sale. For further information contact Jack Spittle on 0422 314 402 ■

Oh Deer!!! *...continued from page 11*

- Raise awareness in the community of the need for effective control.
- Advocate for effective policy and control programs.
- Advocate for adequate funding and resources.
- Advocate for targeted research.

- Identify opportunities for collaboration.
- The South Gippsland Deer Action Group is using Feral Scan (see 'feralscan.org.au'), a free pest animal recording and management tool available in a downloadable mobile app, to register deer sightings and evidence (such as prints), deer impact, and control activities.

Members of the Wonyip Landcare Group have been invited to participate in the project, given its shared border with Mt Best and several members have put their names down.

Calling for Expressions of Interest

It is important to understand the extent of the feral

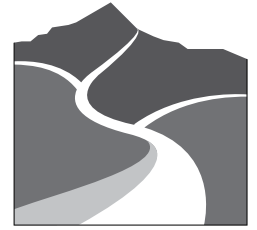
deer challenge across our Network and then to consider appropriate management strategies. If you have an interest in establishing or contributing to a deer monitoring and management group in YYLN, please email Helen Spittle at:

helenf.spittle@gmail.com



PROJECT UPDATES

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK



by Jason Pickering

Corner Inlet Credits

The 'Farmers, fishers and foresters working together to improve water quality in Corner Inlet, Victoria' project will bring together three important and very much connected components of the agriculture sector; Dairy, Fisheries and Forestry, to deliver a coordinated approach for improving water quality within the Corner Inlet-Nooramunga Ramsar site.

The project is still very much in the formative stages, but productive meetings have begun to identify the specific causes of poor water quality in the embayment and for each of the three sectors to put forward a pilot project focused on best-practice actions and management change to mitigate the adverse impacts of their typical operations.

For further information on this project contact Jason Pickering, YYLN Project Officer, and Interim Network Facilitator, Mobile: 0429 775 875, Email: jasonp@wgcm.vic.gov.au

The pilot projects are being funded as part of the National Landcare Program's Smart Farms Grants.

Corner Inlet Broadleaf Seagrass Restoration Project

We hope for our Broadleaf Seagrass restoration efforts within Corner Inlet and Nooramunga to again be the subject of intense focus throughout the 2022-2023 Summer.

The short ecological window to consistently available ripe and viable fruit of Broadleaf

Seagrass (*Posidonia australis*) means our efforts must also be concentrated in this period to achieve our best possible restoration outcomes. With this in mind, we have many preparatory tasks to complete between now and late December, which from the data of previous seasons appears the earliest we can expect to see reliable volumes of fruit appearing en masse in their floating rafts on the surface waters of Corner Inlet.

A more detailed description of our fruit collection and propagule processing using aquaculture tanks can be recounted within 'Yarram Yarram Landcare News, Vol:31 Autumn/Winter 2020'.

This summer shapes as a critical time for our remnant Broadleaf Seagrass as the entire population within Corner Inlet and Nooramunga embayment system failing to set fruit/seed for the past two summer seasons.

We had observed the absence of inflorescence months prior to each seed collection period whilst monitoring previous efforts and surveying for future restoration sites, and of course without that formation we expected and subsequently witnessed successive seasons without any natural recruitment or our targeted seeding intervention within this particular system.

We have hypothesised that it was relative to the LaNina weather system and the increased freshwater inflows into the system. These inflows carry in more turbid water, with increased nutrient and mobilised sediments. The effect of this is often visible on the seaweed assemblages closer to our estuaries with increased algae and fine silt present on the foliage. Our main mitigation for reducing the severity both impacts is through livestock exclusion

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PROJECT UPDATES

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK

by Jason Pickering

...continued from previous page

and appropriate riparian vegetation buffers to our river systems.

We also within both years of LaNina, experienced a rather inconsistent build up to our season locally with highly variable weather for short periods only and wondered if that lack of a sustained period of warmth failed to trigger a flowering event? This perceived contributing factor has been anecdotally supported by some of our Commercial Fishers who recalled similar occurrences in the past with regard to the weather and *Posidonia australis* fruit rafts appearing on the water locally.

A workshop was held early June at Port Albert with representatives from the Port Albert Commercial Fisher community to assist with future restoration site selection for this upcoming Broadleaf Seagrass seed deployment period.

Another development that I am excited to announce is that we now have a Parks Victoria 'Access Agreement for Research Activities' in place for using SCUBA and snorkel-based techniques to conduct rhizome translocation within Corner Inlet and Nooramunga.

These methods will be adapted from successful Broadleaf Seagrass restoration trials already implemented by our academic partners from the University of Western

Australia in Shark Bay, Oyster Harbour, and Cockburn Sound in Western Australia.

This important development greatly expands our window of opportunity for Broadleaf Seagrass restoration as rhizome translocation could theoretically occur at any time throughout the year and is not just limited to a short, defined period as is the case with fruit collection, seed processing, and re-distribution. It is not expected that this new strategy would replace our direct seeding process but be introduced as a complimentary restoration methodology.

For further information on this project or to register your willingness to volunteer, as we always need help filling sandbags among other tasks, contact Jason Pickering, YYLN Project Officer, and Interim Network Facilitator, Mobile: 0429 775 875, Email: jasonp@wgcm.vic.gov.au

Our current Corner Inlet Broadleaf Seagrass restoration project work has been delivered in three phases; with phase one funded by the Victorian Government (DELWP) through a Biodiversity On-Ground Action Grant, phase two and three are funded by the Federal Government's Department of Agriculture as part of the National Landcare Program's Smart Farms Grants.

Multi-species Cover Cropping

An innovative and exciting approach to cover-cropping will hopefully see farmers afforded new income streams.

Farmers can look forward to storing carbon in their soils, improving their pasture production through increases in soil biological activity, improved moisture absorption and retention, and subsequently helping to avoid the terrible landscape deflation or wind-blown erosion experienced by many landholders on the Gippsland Coastal Plain in March 2019.

Yarram Yarram Landcare Network assisted by 'Healthy Farming Systems' agronomist Jade Killoran, are continuing trials on three properties near Woodside and Seaspray to sow a varied mix of species; including tillage radish, beans, peas, ryegrass, chicory, vetch, and brassica; that is not widely used in grazing or pasture applications.

The third and final round of multi-species sowing occurred in April 2022, and we are looking forward

to the learnings from the final round of monitoring, landholder feedback and project reporting which is due shortly in October.

Multi-species sowing has proven to be flexible and can fit and improve any farming system providing benefit to both soil and livestock health. They can close animal feed gaps and animal production is typically stabilised or improved.

For further information on this project or to discuss your eligibility for future iterations contact Jason Pickering, YYLN Project Officer, and Interim Network Facilitator, Mobile: 0429 775 875, Email: jasonp@wgcm.vic.gov.au

This trial project was funded by the National Landcare Smart Farms Small Grants program.

Victorian Landcare Grant Projects

At my last update we were pleased to announce that Yarram Yarram Landcare Network had been successfully funded for four VLG projects; 'Improving bird habitat in the lower Albert River and Nooramunga Ramsar Site', 'Establishing

...continued on next page

For more information about our JARR projects please go to: www.jarrproject.org

PROJECT UPDATES

YARRAM YARRAM LANDCARE NETWORK



by Jason Pickering

...continued from previous page

new riparian zones and improving water quality for the Tarra River; 'Connecting remnant vegetation patches in the Gippsland Coastal Plain' and 'Creating and monitoring habitat for owls, gliders, and other endangered species in the Strzelecki Ranges'.

The fourth of the successfully funded projects, listed above, was applied for and will be deliverable by Wonyip Landcare Group, of the Yarram Yarram Landcare Network, with the support of the Yarram Yarram Landcare Network.

These projects are not only all diverse in the ecological improvements they will deliver, but their individual locations are also widely varied and spread throughout our network which is really pleasing.

I am also pleased to report that all four projects are well aligned with where their outputs should have them at this stage and that we expect to take delivery of a large tube-stock order later this winter.

It will contribute to a big planting season this year, with our VLG project commitment alone totalling 11,300 tubes, so I will be reaching out for volunteer support from our wider network family for assistance to achieve this.

For further information on any of these VLG projects or to offer some much-appreciated volunteer support at planting time,

please contact Jason Pickering, YYLN Project Officer, and Interim Network Facilitator, Mobile: 0429 775 875, Email: jasonp@wgma.vic.gov.au

These four projects are all funded by the Victorian State Government under the Victorian Landcare Grants program.

GTEP Pilot Program

We have been successful in gaining funding for the 'Won Wron State Forest Biolink' project.

This project will help to minimise the impacts of habitat loss and fragmentation by linking a large, disjunct remnant patch of the Won Wron State Forest to the main forest expanse through livestock exclusion and subsequent revegetation.

It will connect and build upon a now mature, riparian zone restoration completed some 15 years ago in the centre of the same property, and an important contiguous linkage of the Won Wron State Forest will be realised.

The project landowner has on numerous occasions witnessed native wildlife cautiously crossing the fragmented landscape, exposed with high vulnerability to harassment from livestock or from predation within the wider ecosystem.

Among the fauna regularly spotted are the iconic Strzelecki Koala, a remnant local Victorian species of particular conservation value, as a historically more stable population largely unaffected by the consequences of inbreeding and resultant low genetic diversity encountered elsewhere across the state through Victoria's intensive Koala re-population program.

For further information on this project or to offer some much-appreciated volunteer support at planting time, please contact Jason Pickering, YYLN Project Officer, and Interim Network Facilitator, Mobile: 0429 775 875, Email: jasonp@wgma.vic.gov.au

This project has been funded by the Department of Transport, through the Regional Roads Victoria – '2021 GTEP – Pilot Program'.

Landcare Australia Wellbeing Grant

We have been successful in securing funding for another project in Won Wron, some 12 km distant from the GTEP Pilot Program described above. The 'Won Wron Biolink and Social Connection for Wellbeing' is a small project, that has two main aims:

1. To improve the impacts



of habitat loss and fragmentation on a newly acquired property.

2. To provide an opportunity for initial and ongoing social connection for newly arrived residents, and the wider local community by hosting a community planting day and hopefully re-invigorating the dormant 'Won Wron - Devon North Landcare' sub-group as a consequence.

If you wish to be involved in energising the dormant 'Won Wron - Devon North Landcare' subgroup, or you just want offer support and further social connection or would just like further information on this project, please contact Jason Pickering, YYLN Project Officer, and Interim Network Facilitator, Mobile: 0429 775 875, Email: jasonp@wgma.vic.gov.au

This project has been funded by Landcare Australia under the 'Landcare Australia Decade of Restoration Grants 2022'



A BIT OF AUTUMN DELIGHT FOUND IN A GARDEN ON THE UPPER ALBERT RIVER

Your local contacts within the Yarram Yarram Landcare Network

ALBERT RIVER LANDCARE GROUP

Contact: Craig Moore
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WOODSIDE LANDCARE GROUP

Contact: Jane Gordon
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WONYIP LANDCARE GROUP

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BINGINWARRI LANDCARE SUB GROUP

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MERRIMAN CREEK LANDCARE GROUP

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Email: mel.ainsworth@me.com

WON WRON DEVON NORTH LSG

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HEDLEY/NINE MILE CREEK LSG

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Email: maree@skymesh.com.au

YARRAM URBAN LANDCARE GROUP

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Email: hilly52@gmail.com

MADALYA LANDCARE SUB GROUP

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