



# South Gippsland Landcare Network

*Local communities striving  
for local solutions*

## Annual Report 2009/ 2010



PO Box 419  
Leongatha VIC 3953  
Ph (03) 5662 5759  
Fax (03) 5662 5569  
Email [sgln@landcare.net](mailto:sgln@landcare.net)

[www.sgln.org.au](http://www.sgln.org.au)



# The South Gippsland Landcare Network

thanks the following organisations for their support  
in 2009/10.

Port Phillip and Westernport



CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT  
AUTHORITY



West Gippsland  
Catchment Management Authority



South Gippsland  
Shire Council



Volunteer Recruitment Initiative



*The following local businesses support Landcare in South Gippsland and its members.  
We thank them for their ongoing support.*



Terraflora  
LANDSCAPE CENTRE



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## South Gippsland Landcare Network Annual Report 2009/2010 Executive Summary

### *Statement of Purpose*

***South Gippsland Landcare Network, through community action, helps to preserve, protect and enhance the environment of South Gippsland by working with government agencies and local businesses to achieve natural resource management outcomes.***

The 2009/10 financial year has been a busy year for the South Gippsland Landcare Network with 5 staff (4 of which are part time), a 12 member volunteer Board, delivering 13 major projects, receiving \$380,000 income and funding \$170,085 in on ground works.

Whilst it is the Network that is coordinating the work, it is a dedicated band of Landcare volunteers that undertake the on-ground work. The figures do not include funds that the individual Landcare groups may have received or account for the many thousands of hours that members put into protecting and enhancing the environment in South Gippsland. The Network currently has 19 Landcare Groups, with over 700 members – most of those family memberships. They are out there planting trees, spraying weeds, managing soil, and protecting our precious waterways. It is the Network's role to support the Landcare groups to undertake this vital work.

There has been a shift in the funding for Landcare over the past 2 years with a focus away from facilitators and coordinators to a more project based approach. We are coming to terms with the new arrangements and are strongly focused on delivering the highest quality projects with significant on ground outcomes. We trust this will stand the Network in a strong position for the future.

A boost to that funding future was received when the South Gippsland Landcare Network was entered on the Register of Environmental Organisations and the Landcare Fund granted deductible gift recipient status.

There have been three major events for the Network over the past 12 months to help raise the profile and attract funding for project delivery.

1. ***Launch of One Million Trees for South Gippsland***  
The project was launched in Landcare Week in 2009 with a small planting at Mossvale park as we approach the anniversary of the launch, our combined total for tree planted this year is close to 75,000. Not a bad start. We are hoping for at least double that in 2010/2011.
2. The launch of a major biodiversity project ***"Friends of Strzelecki Koalas"***. This occurred in May 2010. It has started small but with the level of interest it has raised we believe this will have a major effect on the survival of our local Strzelecki koala population and all the other fauna species in the region.
3. ***Landcare Open Day***: On the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2010, three of our award winning farms opened their farm gates to show everyone just how you can be a Landcare member and be productive and profitable. With over 80 across the farms during the Open day, we had 8 new landcare members join on the day and may more that have joined as a result of what they saw on the day.

A \$70,000 grant was received from the Volunteer Recruitment Initiative for a project titled "Revitalise, Renew and Regenerate Landcare in South Gippsland. The revitalising of the

Network was not confined to existing groups and members, it is also about bringing new people into Landcare across the Network and working with them to raise the profile of Landcare and get a greater number of people involved which will in turn help to reinvigorate Landcare within the existing groups. The project has resulted in 105 new Landcare members, 44 joining as Network members and 61 joining their local group.

The Landcare Network began a business partner program with 6 local businesses in 2009/10. Rather than ask them for a donation, we asked them to provide our members (over 700 at the end of 2010) with a discount for shopping with them. This would support our local businesses as well as helping our members. The program has been successful with all six business partners signing on for another year.

Planting trees while an important part of the Network was certainly not the only focus. A strong community voice on weed control from the Community Weeds Taskforce and a community seeking help to eradicate feral animals has seen our Community Pest Plant and Animal (PPA) Program continue. With funding for control of foxes, rabbits, gorse and weeds of national significance, weeds were never far from everyone's mind.

The PPA program was highlighted at a State level when Martin Chatfield and Belinda Brennan presented a poster and paper at the 4<sup>th</sup> Weed Society Conference in Geelong in October 2009. The paper "Integrated Community Action on Weeds in South Gippsland" demonstrated just how effective community and agencies working together can be and the Poster: "Technology Tackling Weeds in South Gippsland" is a fantastic resource for field days to explain how our weed website works and how easy it is to access. (see appendix 1: copy of poster)

This year we have been slowly developing a relationship with the South Gippsland Shire. The development of the Shire's Sustainability Strategy has seen Landcare be recognised as a key player in the sustainable future for South Gippsland. The Network has been asked to be involved in the Sustainability Strategy Development Reference Group. Thus ensuring the natural environment and sustainable farming stay high on the priority list. The partnership will continue to grow over the coming years as Landcare proves it is a credible and viable option for the delivery of long term sustainable services.

Certainly a highlight for the year was Arie Bos, president of the Agnes River District Landcare Group being named the Victorian Individual Landcarer in 2009. A small group of Landcare members attended the National Awards in June to support Arie as he was nominated for the Australian Individual Landcarer. Whilst not successful at the National level, his work with the Agnes River group and the local Welshpool community in so many ways shows he is a winner in so many ways.

The death of Board member Robert Vickers was a sad day for the Network and Landcare in South Gippsland. He was a passionate and committed man to Landcare and to the protection of our natural environment. He is greatly missed at the Board meetings and no doubt his local Landcare Group.

The Landcare Network would not continue to function without the generous support of the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority, Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority, South Gippsland Water and Melbourne Water and for that we extend our thanks.

***Yours in Landcare  
South Gippsland Landcare Community***

## 1.0 Chairperson Overview – Mark Uren

The 2009/10 has been a highly productive one for the SGLN. Following the funding challenges presented by the CFOC funding regime last year our Network has managed to navigate the tricky waters of CFOC funding and come out the other side looking in better shape than ever.

One of our early successes was gaining \$70,000 via the State Government's "Volunteer Recruitment Initiative" to help invigorate membership and groups within the Network. Whilst we couldn't save two groups who were well advanced in winding-up their activities, we did manage to attract 105 new Landcare members. The strength of our Network is our membership. To that end, I urge all Landcare members to encourage membership and support of what is the original environmental "direct action" organisation. Whilst the politicians argue about what is best for the planet we have been doing what is best for the planet for more than twenty years now and only ask that we are supported by our local communities and our Municipal, State and Federal governments.

Two outstanding candidates were nominated for our Dick Howarth Memorial Award which recognises individual achievement within our Landcare Network. In a field of two with a close photo finish, Arie just pipped the other highly impressive candidate (me) for the award and then went on to win the State Individual Landcare Award which gained him automatic nomination for the National Landcare Awards. Arie didn't manage to bring home the cigar for the National Award. Arie promotes Landcare tirelessly as a volunteer and continues to serve the Network as a current board member – all for no monetary reward. Organisers of the National Awards take note.... It is Landcarers like Arie that are the backbone of our organisation. Not much talk or fanfare – just lots of action.

When it became obvious last year that the Network would struggle to find funding for projects and staff via the CFOC process, Belinda and the Board explored other funding opportunities.

Four main initiatives were launched. The first of these, **The One Million Trees Project**, was successful in attracting funding to the tune of \$18,000 which enabled purchase and distribution of 100 propagation kits amongst SGLN members, each kit capable of producing 500 indigenous trees for planting in projects around South Gippsland. We have had mixed success with the tree propagation idea and if nothing else, our members have learnt that the path to Network self-sufficiency is not an easy one to walk. As well as \$20,000 sponsorship from South Gippsland Water for on ground works. The second initiative was to **gain tax deductibility for donations to the Network** and with a significant investment of time and effort by our Network Coordinator we were successful in gaining that tax deductibility status. This opens the door to both corporate and private support of our Network – a massive step forward.

The third initiative was the launch of our **Friends of Strzelecki Koalas** project. Looking to exploit unashamedly one of the most memorable images from the recent bushfires in Gippsland (David Tree feeding water to a desperately dehydrated koala later named "Sam") the Network launched this project with the view to improving our profile amongst the wider community and demonstrate we are not just about pests, weeds and trees. While still in the formative stages the Koala project was successfully launched with much fanfare at the Mirboo North Arty Gras. David Tree has kindly consented to be the face of our koala campaign. The Strzelecki population is unique, healthy and genetically diverse (unlike other Victorian populations). We need do no more than restore habitat for these iconic native animals and they will do the rest. The final initiative was to **establish Urban Landcare**. This enables *anybody* from *anywhere* to support our Network without having to be part of any particular Landcare group. Whilst still in its infancy, the Board holds great hope that this initiative will grow our membership profile and involve urban dwellers in our movement.

After seven years of dedicated service Martin Chatfield left our Network for more permanent digs with South Gippsland Water. The Board thanks Martin for his passion and service over that time and wish him all the best in his new role as Environmental Officer with SGW. With every departure comes a new arrival (funding permitting of course) and Kate Williams joined our team from Vic Roads as our new PPA Officer cum facilitator. Kate brings with her a wealth of knowledge and experience and has already established herself as a valuable team member. Courtney continues providing project support one day a week whilst she completes her Honours in NRM, Tony continues as our Westernport Project officer four days a week delivering the Targeted Land Stewardship Project while he builds his house and Jill continues as our new landholder and Tarwin Project officer two and a half days a week. Geoff Trease has recently joined us for 1 day a week to deliver the Tarwin project.

Whilst on the subject of staffing it's important to recognise the contribution and support provided by the WGCMA. I would like to take the opportunity to thank Geoff Hocking, Martin Fuller and Phil McGarry for their continued support. One person that certainly sneaks under the radar, mainly because she doesn't officially work for the Network but does plenty of favours for us is Janine Clark – always positive and always helpful. Thanks Janine, the Board and Landcare Staff greatly appreciate all that you do for us.

The passing of Board member Robert Vickers was a very sad day for SGLN. Robert was Vice Chair of the Board and stood in for me as acting Chair on at least two occasions. He is sorely missed. Passionate and pedantic, Belinda and I could always count on Robert to check the spelling and sense of anything we produced. I'm sure Robert checked the fine print before entering the big forest in the sky.

Success in business and many other ventures is often born out of partnerships. SGLN is very fortunate to enjoy the support of the Port Phillip & Westernport CMA, South Gippsland Water and Melbourne Water and we thank them for their continued support. We are currently working with South Gippsland Shire via the Community Weeds Taskforce to develop effective weed strategies and hope to grow this partnership further by assisting development of their Sustainability Strategy following the recent appointment of Christine Hamilton as their Sustainability Officer.

The biggest challenge facing our Network into the future is membership. If we are to be a strong advocate for the environment and how we live in it, it is critically important that all members of SGLN look to how we can spread the word, educate the ignorant and find new members. As we stand now, we have over 700 members within SGLN. I urge all passionate Landcarers to find ways to engage your neighbours and local communities in one of the really great volunteer organisations.

Finally, I would like to thank everybody - our grassroots members, our staff and the Board - for their time, effort and passion. Every year in Landcare brings new challenges, this year will be no different, but with the continued support of all our stakeholders, we are more than capable of meeting whatever challenges we confront.



Chair – South Gippsland Landcare Network  
Mark Uren



## 2. Network Overview

The South Gippsland Landcare Network (SGLN) was formed in 1995 by a key group of volunteers. The South Gippsland Landcare Network today covers 4000 square kilometres across the South Gippsland Shire and areas of Cardinia, Bass Coast and Baw Baw Shires. The Network encompasses 19 Landcare Groups from Nyora in the West across to Welshpool in the East and from Mirboo Nth, down to our southern most group at Yanakie near Wilson's Promontory.

SGLN works with our local community to improve the long-term sustainability of farming and the environment in South Gippsland. Working together, the local community is finding practical solutions to local land management issues. Local groups use action plans to address local issues such as sustainable productivity, water quality, soil erosion, weed management, remnant vegetation protection and revegetation.

The South Gippsland Landcare Network (SGLN) is managed by a volunteer Board of Management. Executive and administration support is provided by the Network Coordinator – Belinda Brennan.

In 2009, SGLN was entered on the Register of Environmental Organisations and in turn the South Gippsland Landcare Fund received deductible gift recipient status. This will allow a greater range of funding opportunities to be explored and accessed by the Network to achieve our on ground outcomes.

### 2.1 South Gippsland Landcare Network Board

The SGLN Board is made up of 12 volunteer Landcare members. Each member is appointed for a two year term with executive positions being appointed annually.

Chair	<b>Mark Uren</b>	Mardan Mirboo North Landcare Group
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Vice Chair	<b>Robert Vickers</b>	Loch Nyora Landcare Group
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*(note: Robert passed away in April 2010, vice chair role remained vacant until 2010 AGM)*

Secretary/ Treasurer & Gippslandcare Rep	<b>Jean Carnell</b>	Hallston Landcare Group
General member	<b>Arie Bos</b>	Agnes River Landcare Group
General member	<b>Jan Fell</b>	Foster North Landcare Group
General member	<b>Peter Fell</b>	Foster North Landcare Group
General member	<b>Peter Hinksman</b>	Fish Creek Landcare Group
General member	<b>Stephen Hoole</b>	Allambee Community Landcare Group
General member	<b>Dawn Marroti</b>	Arawata Landcare Group
General member	<b>Val O'Loughlin</b>	Tarwin Landcare Group
General member	<b>Rosemary Trease</b>	Mardan Mirboo North Landcare Group
General member	<b>Syd Whyte</b>	Arawata Landcare Group

SGLN Board meetings were held on the second Monday of each second month.

Meetings held in the 2009/2010 financial year were:

- Board Meeting 7: Monday 10<sup>th</sup> August AGM and General meeting
- Board Meeting 8: Monday 5<sup>th</sup> October
- Board Meeting 9: Monday 30<sup>th</sup> November
- Board Meeting 10: Mon 8<sup>th</sup> February
- Board Meeting 11: Mon 12<sup>th</sup> April
- Board Meeting 12. June meeting postponed and held 12<sup>th</sup> July 2010

A Strategic Planning Session was held on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2010. The updated Strategic Plan will be available in late 2010.

## 2.2 South Gippsland Landcare Network Staff

SGLN employed six staff members in the 2009/10 financial year. Staff roles, time allocation and funding source are listed below.

### Staff funding arrangements

- **Belinda Brennan, Network Coordinator**
  - 0.7 FTE total - 0.5FTE funded via WGCMA and 0.2 FTE Project management
- **Martin Chatfield, Pest Plant and Animal Officer to Dec 2009.**
  - 1.0FTE – funded via Second Generation Landcare grant.
- **Tony Gardner, Westernport Landcare Project officer**
  - 0.8 FTE - 1.0FTE – various project funding and facilitation funding via PPWCMA and Australian Government funding.
- **Jill Vella, New Landholder Project Officer**
  - 0.5FTE. funding various projects
- **Kate Williams – Landcare Project Officer (15/03/10 onwards)**
  - 1.0FTE – project based funding
- **Courtney Lever – Project Support Officer (Nov 2009 onwards)**
  - Employed for 6 weeks over Nov 2009 – Jan 2010 period as a graduate placement from Monash University.
  - Employment continued 1 day/ week in project support role – SGLN funds.

### Staff roles and responsibilities 2009/2010

#### Belinda Brennan – Network Coordinator

- Executive support to Board
- Budget development and management
- Coordination of Friends of Strzelecki Koala project
- Funding applications
- Staff Management
- Gippsland Sustainable Agriculture Network liaison
- Shire Liaison – South Gippsland Shire Sustainability
- Articles for Newsletter
- Publicity for Network and projects – local media
- Corporate sponsorship and business partner support
- Maintaining database
- Joint coordination of Landcare Open Day
- Community events as required to promote Network events and programs

#### Tony Gardner – Landcare Project Officer – Westernport

- Targeted Land Stewardship – Westernport region
  - Site visits for tender process

- Facilitation of landholder involvement in soils courses, FarmPlan 21 & ifarm
- Ecotender (till mid May 2010)
  - Enquiries and Site visits
- Melbourne Water partnership (funded to December 2010)
  - Referral of landholders to MW stream frontage programs
- Articles for Newsletter and publicity for projects
- Coordination of GIS mapping project
- Liaison with SAGE for Database upgrades
- Maintaining database
- Assist at Landcare Open Day
- Community events as required to promote Network events and programs

### **Jill Vella – Landcare Project Officer – New Landholder program**

- New Landholder program
  - Welcome packs – upgrading and distribution to businesses/ community organisations
  - Technical support – 1:1 visits for new landholders
  - Referral of landholders to local Landcare groups
- One Million Trees program
  - Administration of round 2 grants inc. Management agreements
  - Monitoring and reporting
  - Propagation kits – second round inc. Distribution and workshops
- Revitalisation Project
  - Joint Coordination of Open Day – 1<sup>st</sup> May 2010
  - Website development and maintenance
  - Development of promotional material to promote Landcare in South Gippsland
- South Gippy Newsletter – coordination of article and collation, arrange distribution
- Articles for Newsletter and publicity for projects
- Maintaining database
- Development of WoNS notes
- Community events as required to promote Network events and programs

### **Courtney Lever – Project Support Officer – 1 day a week till June 30, 2010**

- Conversion of paper based maps/ farm plans for Mt Lyall Landcare Group
- One Million Trees Data Recording
- Conversion of paper based maps/ farm plans for other Landcare groups
- Biodiversity maps
- Assist with Publicity/ Promotion/ Communication and Landcare Open Day

### **Kate Williams – Landcare Project Officer**

- Executive Support for Community Weeds Taskforce
- Penguins to the Prom – Rabbit control program – project coordination
- Gorse Project – project coordination
- Cape Liptrap fox control program – project coordination
- Sandy Point Foreshore – follow up weed control – contractor management
- SGLN weeds website – maintenance and further development
- Weeds of National Significance Project
- Articles for Newsletter and publicity for projects
- Maintaining database
- Coordination of spray trailer hire
- Assist – Landcare Open Day
- Community events as required to promote Network events and programs

### 2.3 Network Achievements for 2009/2010

- Arie Bos awarded State Individual Landcarer for at Victorian Landcare Awards and nominated for Australian Individual Landcarer.
- Warren and Vicky Kenney, Highly Commended in the Sustainable Farming Award at the Victorian Landcare Awards
- Launch of One Million Trees for South Gippsland project - 12<sup>th</sup> September 2009 over 100 people attended, showcase garden planted and propagation kits distributed.
- Over 85 propagation kits were distributed for landholders to each grow 500 native plants. Fantastic response, a few teething problems but will run again in 2010.
- South Gippsland Water provided \$20,000 sponsorship as a founding partner for the One Million Trees Project
- Attendance at National Landcare Awards in June 2010, unfortunately Arie was not successful at national level.
- The South Gippsland Landcare Fund has been entered on the Register of Environmental Organisations. And as such now has Deductible Gift Recipient Status. Donations to the Fund over \$2.00 are tax deductible.
- Revitalise, Renew and Regenerate Landcare in South Gippsland project funded by Volunteer recruitment Initiative – resulted in 105 new Landcare members.
- Six local businesses joined our business partner program offering discounts to Landcare members and sponsorship of the Landcare Network.
- Landcare Open Farms Day – Sat 1<sup>st</sup> May Three Award winning farms were open showcasing Landcare work and how to get involved. Over 80 people attending and 8 people joined their local Landcare group.
- Launch of Friends of Strzelecki Koalas program at Arty Gras in Mirboo North on 8<sup>th</sup> May. Seven new Landcare members and over \$160 in donations received.
- Martin Chatfield and Belinda Brennan presented a poster and paper at the 4<sup>th</sup> Weed Society Conference in Geelong in October. Poster: Technology tackling weeds in South Gippsland. Paper: Integrated Community Action on Weeds in South Gippsland
- Working with the South Gippsland Tourist Rail on weed mapping, the development of a weed management plan for the tourist rail area, and a successful weed identification day.
- Continued implementation of new landholder program. Highly successful in getting new members for Landcare groups
- Support for Community Weeds Taskforce
- Production of Monthly Network Notes, our email newsletter. Currently distributed to over 500 members and supporters. Excellent feedback on relevance of Network Notes.
- Further development and distribution of “Welcome to Landcare Information pack” – all real estate agents in South Gippsland are distributing, sent to all new landholders, copy for all groups and handed out at field days etc
- Continuing to develop relationships with partners – e.g.: South Gippsland Shire Council, South Gippsland Water, Melbourne Water, Vic Roads, WGCMA, PPWCMA, Westernport Catchment Committee, Friends of Venus Bay, South Gippsland Seedbank,
- Conducted series of Landcare information sessions in February, including processes for network, funding arrangements
- Production of three editions of South Gippsland Landcare newsletter

## Network Overview

### 2.4 Project funding received and purpose:

Project details	Funding received from	Funding received	Project completion date
One Million Trees Launch	State Government Funding – Victorian Action Plan for Second Generation Landcare	\$18,000	30/09/09
Community Pest Plant and Animal Program	Victorian Government Second Generation Landcare. Administered by WGCMA for employment of PPA Officer (not included in SGLN accounts)	\$73,000	31/12/09
WGCMA – Funding for Network Support	Administered by WGCMA for Network Coordinator position(not included in SGLN accounts)	\$70,000	30/06/10
Ecotender contract – 13 week contract to deliver Ecotender services in South Gippsland area.	Department of Sustainability and Environment	\$19,500	15/05/10
Founding partner – One Million Trees project – on ground works	Sponsorship from South Gippsland Water	\$20,000	30/6/10
Administration grant	Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and Arts	\$1,500	30/06/10
Sandy Point Foreshore weed project	contract for Sandy Point Foreshore Committee Community Coastcare funding	\$34363	30/06/10
Targeted Land Stewardship – joint project with Bass Coast Landcare Network and Cardinia Environment Coalition (project continuing in 2010/ 2011)	Victorian Government – Victorian Investment Framework	\$67,200	30/06/10
Revitalise, renew and regenerate landcare in South Gippsland	Volunteer Recruitment Initiative – Department of Sustainability and Environment	\$70,000	31/07/10
Solutions at the Source - Joint project with Bass Coast Landcare Network. 40% received in 2009/10	Caring For our Country (Community CoastCare ) Australian Government	\$17,039	30/09/10
Rabbit Control – Penguins to the Prom – joint project with Bass Coast Landcare Network	Caring For our Country (Community CoastCare ) Australian Government	\$9,200	30/09/10
Gippsland Plains Gorse Control Program – Landcare leading the way. Joint project with Yarram Yarram Landcare Network	Victorian Gorse Taskforce	\$9,220	30/09/10
Facilitation support for groups in Western area of Network PPWCMA & Melbourne Water	Melbourne Water	\$44,000	31/12/10

See Appendix 2 for audited financial statement

## 2.5 South Gippsland Landcare Fund

SGLN received an early Christmas present on the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2009, when the Network and its public fund, **South Gippsland Landcare Fund** was entered into the **Register of Environmental Organisations** and as such is entitled to receive tax deductible donations.

The South Gippsland Landcare Fund was established to receive public donations for Landcare projects in South Gippsland. This will also allow SGLN to access a greater range of funding opportunities as many philanthropic trusts require deductible gift recipient (DGR) status when granting funds.

The objective of the fund is to support the environmental objects of the South Gippsland Landcare Network as defined in the Role and Statement of Purpose

In 2009/10 \$663.75 was received in donations, this was primarily through small personal donations, including \$150 raised at the launch of the Friends of Strzelecki Koalas on 8<sup>th</sup> May.

See Appendix 3: Financial Audit for South Gippsland Landcare Fund



At the Mirboo North Arty Gras, with Mirboo North secondary colleges students, and members of the Mardan Mirboo North Landcare group and friends for the launch of Friends of Strzelecki Koalas.

Thank you to the Mirboo North Secondary College Landcare Cadets for building the trees for our display.  
Thank you to Renae Carmody for painting the back panel and designing our Koala logo and thank you to Phil Piper for bringing it all together for the Arty Gras parade.



## 2.5 Business Partner Program

In late 2008/2009 SGLN initiated a Business Partner Program for the 2009/10 financial year. The idea behind the program was to support local businesses and to offer benefits to our local members. Six businesses came on board offering a range of discounts depending upon the products and services they offer. The benefits for Landcare members upon presentation of their membership card are

### **Leading Edge Computers, Leongatha offers**

- 10% discount on all software, ink and toner and computer accessories on presentation of
- \$20 donation to SGLN for any computer or laptop purchased
- Additional \$50 donation to SGLN for any equipment purchased using our OptiRent leasing options.

### **SG Hire, Leongatha offers**

- 10% off all hire agreements Monday – Friday

### **Terraflora Landscape Centre, Leongatha offers**

- 10% off all plant stock – all pot sizes

### **CountryWide Clothing and Safety Supplies, Korumburra offers**

- 10% off all stock not already reduced.

### **Elders Insurance, Leongatha and Korumburra offers**

- \$25 payment to SGLN when SGLN members take out (or renew) farm or business insurance
- \$15 payment to SGLN when SGLN members take out (or renew) personal insurance

### **Agmart, Leongatha offers**

- 5% off all Gallagher/Thunderbird fencing equipment
- 2% off Wire
- 2% off Gates
- 2% off Posts
- 5% off Chemicals
- 10% off Boots and clothing
- This excludes already discounted items and sale items.

Promotion of the partnerships has included;

- Banners at the launch of One Million Trees on 12<sup>th</sup> Sept. which included press coverage and also coverage from WIN TV and a mention from Russell Broadbent on the importance of supporting the businesses that support Landcare.
- Double centre page spread of all business partners in the Spring edition of South Gippy Landcare News and a single page spread in the December edition.
- Single page flyer is included in all our Welcome to Landcare packs and is sent to all new Landcare members
- Signage for your office/ business promoting your involvement

Initially Leading Edge offered a \$20 donation to the Network for every installed Activ8me Satellite connection. Only three connections were made in July – Dec 2009 period and as a result, Leading Edge changed the offer to that listed above.

Twelve policies were noted through Elders resulting in a donation of \$300 to SGLN.

All businesses happily support the program and have all resigned for 2010/2011 financial year. SGLN will work with the businesses to better support the program and to increase the uptake of the membership benefits.

## 3. Landcare Groups in South Gippsland

### 3.1 Landcare Groups

There were 19 Landcare Groups in the South Gippsland Network area in 2009/2010.

**There are currently 702 Landcare members in the South Gippsland Landcare Network area.**

Landcare Group	President	Secretary
Allambee Community	Evelyn Lillie	Judy Lackman
Allambee South	Lyn Butcher	Lyn Butcher
Agnes River District	Arie Bos	Garry Ardley
Arawata	Syd Whyte	Dawn Marotti
Franklin River	Rae Knee	Hugh Sarjeant
Foster North	Corrie Greven	Tom Schoeffler
Fish Creek	Gary Wallis	Robyn Stevens
Hallston	Peter Pavey	Mike Carnell
Jindinook	Eric Cumming	
Loch/Nyora	Ron Barnacle	Robyn Mills
Mirboo North Mardan	Phil Piper	Carole Cash
Mt Eccles/ Wild Dog Valley	Ron Holt	Dianne Brew
Mt Lyall	Joe Green	Karyn Bujega
Nerrena	Sue Miles	Louise Matthews
Poowong	Steven Halliday	Wendy Davis
Prom Plains sub group	Rob Knight	
Stony Creek	In recess	
Triholm	Russell Hupfield	Wilma Mackay
Tarwin Lower	Margaret Windisch	Sue Svenson

### Network memberships

There are currently 70 Network members which include 17 Prom Plains sub group members who are required to be SGLN members for insurance purposes as a Sub group.

We also have the Friends of Strzelecki Koalas which as 10 members – some are just a Friend and others are also members of their local Landcare Group.

Leongatha North Landcare Group ceased to operate in 2009/2010. The Prom Plains Landcare Group reverted to a sub group (cancelled incorporation). All financial and insurance matters are now handled by SGLN on behalf of the group.

See Appendix 4: Map of Landcare group boundaries



## 3.2 Landcare Group reports

### Agnes River & District Landcare Group

- 30-35 members with subs still coming in as report was written.
- 6 committee meetings, 2 general get-togethers, AGM included bike ride and meal.
- No group-generated field days etc although individual members attended Million Trees Launch and various other Network and Landcare group events.
- The group is looking at future directions, especially in relation to changes to funding and the shift to more retirees/weekenders in our group makeup.
- Highlight would have to be Arie's nomination for Landcarer of the Year and the subsequent trip to Canberra by several members.
- Working on the Welshpool/Port Welshpool Community Trail and hope to be able to present an ongoing management plan to their committee
- Input into the construction and launch of the Weetaboona Sanctuary project on the Agnes River
- Pursuing an offer from WGCMA to design and place signage promoting the work of Landcare and the CMA in our catchment.

### Allambee Community Landcare Group

- 16 Financial members for 2009-2010.
- One member has undertaken a small planting of 900 plants with funding from the Million Trees for Gippsland project
- Special mention and thanks to Klaus Jansen and Marty Hart who volunteered their time and equipment to spray the roadside blackberries along several kilometers of the Yarragon Mirboo North Road. Chemical supplies and appropriate signage was gladly supplied by Baw Baw Shire council.
- Our September 2009 meeting was a Solar Field day held at some of our members' properties. The group walked between three adjacent properties and was shown the various Solar electricity units in use at each of the properties. Each owner presented the pros and cons of their system and answered any questions from the group. At the conclusion of the afternoon a BBQ was held and was enjoyed by everyone.
- In January we held our annual get together at Mt Worth State Park with families enjoying the social aspect and using the BBQ facilities on hand to complete the evening.
- Our AGM in March was well attended- despite the difficulties encountered by lack of power on the evening. Colin Lackman spoke to the group about the new Eco Tender Contract Scheme for native vegetation and revegetation works on properties. Landholders need to register their interest and have a management plan for their on-ground works. Successful applicants (those with the best environmental value) are required to sign a five year management agreement with the DSE to undertake the works on their property.
- Our June meeting was also well attended by members and other interested community members. We invited Malcolm McKelvie to be our guest speaker. Malcolm is the president of the Baw Baw Sustainability Network and he spoke to the group about the Transition Towns project that he is promoting. This is an initiative that deals with the concept of peak oil and the fact that world oil supplies are dwindling. As a consequence, communities



*Array of John O'Grady's solar panels*

will need to become more self sufficient and he encouraged everyone to think more about the food miles involved in many of their purchases. Community gardens and "Veggie Swap" afternoons have been introduced locally and they have other ideas to share and teach skills to community members.

### Allambee South Landcare Group

Whilst the group did not meet in the 2009/10 financial year, individual members continue to use the groups spray trailer for weed control. With a number of new people moving into the area the group will look at options for re-enthusing members and getting new people involved in the coming year.

### Arawata Landcare Group

- The Reservoir project is moving along with Martin Chatfield who now works for South Gippsland Water on PPA work around their storages. Martin said contracts are now being finalised for some staged work on the southern boundary of the Western reservoir between Gill and Meredith's property west across to Geoff and Julie-Anne Trease's.
- Throughout this year we manage to get another 500 trees from South Gippsland Water to plant out more on the "Gooseneck" corridor to Kardella from Arawata.
- Weeds was again the biggest issue that we focused on this year
- Submissions were presented and letters written about the State Government's Draft Invasive Plant and Animal Framework
- Syd Whyte, president attended the DPI Forum release of the Draft Invasive Plant and Animal Strategy document at Flemington
- Geoff and Linda Whitaker opened their property as part of the Landcare Open Day.
- In July, Arawata and Korumburra LC Groups united to clean up the Railway Precinct that we both have been spraying for the last 5 years. This was done courtesy of a Shire grant of \$5000 that Korumburra Group secured this financial year. Work was carried out by contactor Dave Harris with operator Angelo Cavalerro at the controls and this took 3 and ½ days to complete with ½ of the material burnt or saved for firewood. Burra Foods and neighbours were complementary to the work we carried out, however as much needs to be done to tidy up bricks; pipe and rubbish left behind. Also the site needs to be sown down to grass to control the area against weeds.



*Linda Whitaker ready to show interested members around the farm.*

### Fish Creek Landcare Group

No report received

### Foster North Landcare Group

There are 44 members of the Foster North Landcare Group which held 4 meetings during the including AGM in Feb 2010. A very successful Fire prevention & Protection Field Day held on 21 Nov 2009 with over 70 people attending.

## Franklin River Landcare Group

- Currently 18 members
- 6 meetings held, with guest speakers at 5
- Some members have attended field days, and workshops e.g. the fence-making one, but generally as individuals rather than as a Group.
- A significant exercise has been the planning and construction of a memorial to two important conservationists – Charlie Foster and Charlie Barnett There was a formal unveiling on 30<sup>th</sup> May with media coverage.
- We have also as a Group dealt with some weed infestations.



*Franklin River member Mrs. Dawn Hopkins speaking on behalf of Charlie Barnett at the unveiling, she is in front of the Landcare Rotunda at the Franklin River reserve*

## Hallston Landcare Group

- Despite the financial gloom and doom over the recent past, Hallston Landcare Group has had a moderately successful year. We recruited three new members (one through the Network) taking our current number to 14.
- We completed the Southern Slopes Sustainable Pastures project at the beginning of the year. The 7<sup>th</sup> Stage of the Tarwin West, Upper Reaches Project was completed with 300 native trees planted. This project has been in progress for 8 years now and we have cleared willows and weeds and planted out an estimated 3/4000 native stock in the riparian area on both sides of the Tarwin River during this time.
- We have been reliant on small grants, mainly from the private sector; however we were fortunate to receive a Community Action Grant (2010) which has enabled us to target 1500 trees for stage 8 this year. We have had our first planting of about 400 on 1<sup>st</sup> May. We expect to plant the remainder in spring 2010 and autumn 2011.
- In addition to the planting sessions we have held four ordinary meetings during the year and several planning meetings.
- We have been well served by West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority with their work of removing willows on our major project. The job would have been very difficult without them. We have been informed that they are not able to continue to provide this service in future due to lack of funding. We are endeavouring to find sponsorship to fund their work in the next few years.



*One year old plantings on the Tarwin*

## Jindinook Landcare Group

The group kicked off the year with a film night to bring all the members together. However, due to health issues in the executive of this group, the group hasn't done much since. However, members had attended other SGLN or Landcare group events on an individual basis.

## Loch/Nyora Landcare Group

In the year just gone, and despite our small size and limited resources, you will be pleased to know the Loch Nyora Landcare Group (LNLG) has been extremely active. We have 70 members and have held 7 meetings.

A small band of our enthusiastic members has **represented** the LNLG - with the view of broadening the Landcare message - at the inaugural Loch Village Garden Festival, the Loch market, and Network One Million Tree launch; **participated** in the Cluster bus trip through the region, Clean – Up Australia, the Soil Improvement Course at Poowong, newspaper recycling, the Lang Lang River Health Seminar, Giant Gippsland Earthworm Survey; **initiated** the distribution of \$50 tree vouchers to LNLG members; **secured** a grant for maintenance and weed control between Hilda Falls and Loch, as well as a \$500 grant from Council for the development of Hilda Falls, with the help of Councillor Jennie Deane; and we **organized** the Bush Christmas Party at Henry's Creek Sanctuary, and of course, the AGM with Guest speaker Dr Beverley Van Praagh on the Gippsland Giant Earthworm.

### Identification of Giant Gippsland Earthworms



On a sadder note, we lost Gordon Henry, a major contributor to Landcare for many years who not only leaves behind wife Joan, but a wonderful legacy in Henry's Creek Sanctuary. We also lost Robert Vickers, our longtime treasurer and another great contributor to Landcare.

Martin Chatfield, Pest, Plant and Animal Facilitator for the Network and a great resource for all the region's Landcare groups, changed jobs, and we faced the challenge of losing funding for our highly regarded coordinator, Tony Gardner, albeit he remains involved and continues to be critical to the effectiveness of Landcare in the region.

## Mardan/Mirboo North Landcare Group

- No of members: 15 paid up but another 5 or 6 who didn't pay last year (This includes 5 new members)
- We held 6 meetings and two tree bees which planted a total of 1350 trees.
- Members were involved in the launch of the Friends of Strzelecki Koalas at the Arty Gras.
- Seed propagation was attempted using network kits.
- The SGLN tree planting trailer is now housed within the group and the group acquired a posthole digger as part of the equipment grant.
- Graeme and Rosemary Trease opened their farm as part of the Landcare Open day.



*What a difference three years (and hard work) can make!  
Willow control, and waterway protection and revegetation at Graeme and Rosemary Trease's property. Left hand picture taken in 2007, right hand in 2010.*

## Mt Eccles/Wild Dog Valley Landcare Group

- Members: 7
- Meetings held: 1
- Issues: We are happy to continue as a micro group in the hills. Existing members are committed to Landcare ideals and happy to catch up on an ad hoc basis to discuss issues as they arise. Five members hosted visits from Mary Mac school students as part of the school's Sustainable Living unit. Activities included tree planting, habitat study, and animal work. Busy working lives of members has led to a reduction in formal meetings.

## Mt Lyall Landcare Group

- MLLG has 61 Members with a mix of 50% commercial dairy, beef and mixed farming operations and 5% lifestyle.
- The 13 Committee members had 4 meetings throughout the year
- Two working bees were held this year, the first in February at the old school site on Mt Lyall Road. Eighteen members attended and under the direction of Jeff Cochrane there was cutting and pasting of pussy willows, spot poisoning of blackberries that had invaded the 10 year old plantation. This was followed by a BBQ at the Patterson's property and a walk around their beautiful lake.
- The second working bee in May only attracted nine people, nevertheless, 500 trees were planted in all at the Ferrier Road cut off and the embankment on Mt Lyall Road opposite Garnham's property.
- Throughout the year, some of our members have completed Sonia Lee's 'Vital Soil' course, taken part in the iFarm program and also taken advantage of the Whole Farm Planning courses offered via the SGLN.
- We had our AGM and dinner at the Royal Hotel, Loch in August, only 22 attended but a great night was had by all. A surprise visitor was Canadian Jean Beliveau who as a hotel guest dined with us. Jean has 'walked the world' over the last 10 years and shared some of his experiences with us. Coincidentally, since leaving Lakes Entrance he has been sponsored by different Landcare Groups on his walking travels.

## Nerrena Landcare Group

- We have approx 30 active member families at present but about to go over this and do membership drive
- In 2010 we've had a General Meeting in Feb, Walk and talk from Matt Bowler on the Rail Trail in March, the Landcare Open Day in May at Stuart and Veronica Greaves, another General Meeting in May and our AGM and another General meeting on July 7.
- Since the Group was revitalised we've had Kevin Hughes running a soils information day, a fire preparedness evening courtesy of the Koonwarra CFA, a family evening at Koonwarra Rec Reserve, an information day on *Antechinus* and an Action Planning evening.
- For National Tree Day we ran a school planting day Fri 30th July thanks to the Westaway Ford who have donated the plants and another on the 1st Aug with Rail Trail Committee.



*Stuart Greaves showing visitors around property during Landcare Open Day*

## Landcare Groups

- Our aim was to hold General meetings every three months with events in between. We are also planning a social night to welcome our new members that have joined us recently.
- Only issues we seem to have are trying to get older members to pay their memberships - we are working on this.
- Other than that our Group is moving forward and the main focus of our group is to have fun, socialise with like minded people, learn i.e. hold information events and protect and enhance the natural assets of our area.

### Poowong Landcare Group

- 29 active members with a meeting held each month.
- Members have been involved in a range of events this year including Farm Day at Foster, Lang Lang River bus trip, Climate Change forum, Network Forum, Seed Collection day at Pioneer Bay, Landcare Open Farm day, Slow the Flow meeting and property visit, Seed collection for Mangroves – Mangrove Planting Day, represented Landcare at Loch Markets, and had a Fun Day photo shoot for Landcare Mag. (see photo)
- Members also attended the Poowong Produce Swap Market and the Reptile Evening with Fish Creek
- Intending to present at Poowong Dairy Expo later this year, in conjunction with SGLN and will participate in Poowong Kinder's cup day Event – thinking of a racing theme with ferret/snail/frog racing and a weed identify comp for the children!
- To show support for promotion of our local pool, will have a social meet at the pool this summer
- R Boyce has visited Starfish/Seasol plant in Altona and trialing this product on his property.
- Guest speakers included Ruth Beilin Assoc. Professor Melb University, discussion on Grow Grow Lightly and Sustainable Gardening and Nicole Reischelt an associate of Ms Ruth Beilin met with Poowong members to assist with Community Perceptions in conjunction with their research.



*Members of Poowong Landcare Group Taking A well earned break after finally capturing those three serial pests; Rhonda Ragwort, Tommy Thistle and the Easter Bunny!*

### Prom Plains Landcare Group

In response to a slow year for the group, in May the Group decided to take up the SGLN offer to form a sub group. This will allow the group to continue without the administration burden.

### Stony Creek Landcare Group

In recess in 2009/2010

### Tarwin Landcare Group

- The year began without a president and thanks to Marg Windish for taking on the role.
- Fox baiting in Cape Liptrap National Park by Department of Primary Industries has continued so hopefully fox numbers in our area are now diminishing.
- There has been a new group formed especially to monitor and improve Bald Hill Wetlands and Kings Flat. As the local Landcare group we hope to keep in touch with them and receive reports at our meetings.
- Friends of Venus Bay have been busy and we support their activities whenever possible. Congratulations on the new web site. Looks great!

- We have had no major projects and received no money for on the ground works this year.
- We have had two meetings and enjoyed hearing James Taylor, a meteorologist, speaking about weather forecasts and we have seen the implementation of specific area forecasts on the internet which he described during his address.
- Lindsay Hyde, at our next meeting, wet our appetite for farm maps using a specially designed computer program. Consensus was reached to hold a fully funded course in our area so we could update farm plans and access this valuable tool. Unfortunately it does not look like this is going to happen in the near future.
- Kate spoke to the group about weed and pest control and we thank her for the offer of Rabbait to help control the growing rabbit problem.
- Tony also attended our meeting and spoke briefly about eco tender.
- There was interest shown in forming an Urban Landcare Group for Venus Bay but as yet there has not been an initial meeting.

### **Triholm Landcare Group**

- Members-32.three meetings were held with attendances range between 10 to 20 members per meeting.
  - Activities-Russell and Wilma have attended CWT meetings in the hope of influencing the final draft of the Invasive Pests and Weeds policy.
  - Russell has also written a number of letters to people voicing our concerns about weeds in the local area.
  - A number of members are still accessing funding through westernport projects and Melbourne Water
  - Have received the PPWCMA \$330.00 Community Grant and have applied for the \$500.00 one this year.
  - Guest speakers-Gerry O'keefe once again came to talk on weeds.
  - Mark Uren came to explain the motion from the Network regarding group administration and to fill us in on any other matters.
  - Nicole Reichelt - Project Researcher at Melbourne School of Land and Environment Uni of Melb came to speak on a Project which is looking at land abandonment in hilly country in 3 sites around the world-Portugal,Sweden and Poowong East. She is looking for farmers to participate by being interviewed for about 1-2 hours.
  - Tony also came along to fill us in on the latest funding and projects being done by our members. We also saw his house which looks great.
- Issues-remain primarily concerned with weeds and the lack of enforcement by the authorities.

### 4. Network Projects 2009/2010



#### 4.1 One Million Trees for South Gippsland

*Aim: Plant one million trees in South Gippsland over the next 5 years.*

*The outcome will be the protection of our valuable remnant vegetation by increasing the extent of vegetation across the area and improving the resilience of high value ecosystems to the ever changing environment we live in.*

On a gorgeous South Gippsland morning over 100 people turned up to celebrate Landcare in South Gippsland and launch a project that is going to make a huge difference to our environment. Russell Broadbent joined members of our local Landcare groups and supporters to launch the One Million Trees for South Gippsland at Mossvale park on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September.

The One Million Trees Project in 2009/10 (OMT) consisted of three parts

1. **100 Propagation Kits** – each containing seed, potting mix & tunes to grow 500 trees. (funded by State Landcare Program)
2. **Mossvale Park showcase native garden planting.**
3. **OMT Grants** round one (\$1000 max). (funded by sponsorship from South Gippsland Water)

Noel Maud, Director South Gippsland Water announced their founding partnership for the project with the handover of a \$20,000 cheque. "South Gippsland Water is a long time supporter of the Network and is proud to be associated with this wonderful project" said Noel.

The West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority is the other founding partner for the Project. Their support in funding the Landcare Network Coordinators across West Gippsland is just one way their support helps project like this come to fruition. "It is great to see Landcare Networks taking the initiative and moving forward with projects like this" said Geoff Hocking.

The launch of the **OMT propagation kits** at Mossvale Park was an outstanding success; with the level of participation and the demand for kits on the day taking us somewhat by surprise. A level of frenzy mostly only seen at the opening day of sales was apparent at the opening. We held 6 well attended propagation workshops in the SGLN Ashenden St shed over the next few months and several individual instructions, including two schools.

Some growers have been extremely successful with their kits; whereas others very not so successful and some we have never heard from again.

Whilst several non Landcare Members took part in the project only one has joined as a network member.

One grower reported that her seed yielded over 900 seedlings, with well over 600 being grown by Linda Whitaker, and a participant bought a second kit because she had so many seedlings. However, we did also have a number of growers who reported poor results.



Twenty kits were bulk issues to the Mirboo North Rotary Club and ten to Mardan/Mirboo North Landcare group.

One difficulty we have encountered is getting people to report back on number of trees they ended up planting. We will continue to pursue these people to ensure we get all the plants counted against our one million trees target.

Many participants are planning to grow more seedlings next year, reusing their kits. We will offer seed packages working with the South Gippsland Seed Bank again to give growers more flexibility this year.

The volunteer kit growers was the least successful part of the project with some groups misunderstanding the purpose of the kits or getting so excited about their propagation successes they planted the trees themselves. Apparently one group took their trees to a conference to show them off and lost the lot as souvenirs. Learning from this, next time we will pair up volunteers and farmers and let them liaise on a one to one basis.

**The Mossvale Park Show Garden planting** was very well attended, with 65 plants chosen for beauty and the ability to thrive in the challenging conditions of the planted area. The Mardan/Mirboo North group will be helping maintain this area. The area has been weeded (thank you to Coral Hughes) and a working bee will be held 10<sup>th</sup> October 2010 to apply more mulch.

The planting showing the excellent growth of the bottlebrushes, of which many had flowered. They have been pruned to promote bushiness. Weed control will be an ongoing issue, but with the support of the MMN Landcare Group, this will be easily maintained, requiring two or three working bees a year.

### Round One OMT Grants

In November 2009, we launched the OMT grants program, in line with the South Gippsland Water sponsorship, the priority was the protection and enhancement of waterways in South Gippsland Landcare Network area. Grants were limited to \$1,000 to maximize the available funds.

Twenty one applications were granted funding in the First round of One Million Trees Grants. Three applications received were not funded as they did not meet the grant criteria.

The projects are completed and the works include;

- Retire and revegetate steep area
- Biolinks on Leongatha South property and Fish Creek property
- Additional planting in existing plantings



*Linda Whitaker proudly displaying the trees she had propagated.*



- Continue fence and revegetate gully
- Fence and revegetate waterways including the Tarwin River and Black Spur Creek, Lamont Creek, Welshpool
- Revegetation work on Bennison and Amber creek
- Revegetation and weed control for Fishers Lake wetlands
- Remove willows and revegetate creek
- Retire steep land revegetate to stop erosion on Wild Dog Creek

### The program resulted in

- **2.4ha of weed control**
- **16,700 plants**
- **3397m fencing**

**Total grants allocated: \$15,300**

At the time of writing this report our tally for the first year of one million trees is

- 21,000 - Propagation kits
- 16,700 – OMT grants
- 9, 167 – Revitalisation project planting
- 28,500 – Solutions at the Source Project (Westernport)

**Total so far: 74,367 native trees and shrubs planted in South Gippsland in 2009/10.**

Please note: this does not include any plantings that were done privately.

We will be working with our Landcare members over coming years to document ALL plantings regardless of who paid for them to give an accurate picture of all work being undertaken by Landcare in South Gippsland.

### 4.2 Friends of Strzelecki Koalas

At Arty Gras in Mirboo North on 8<sup>th</sup> May, SGLN launched its new biodiversity project – Friends of Strzelecki Koalas.

*Friends of Strzelecki Koalas- Habitat for Life* is a community based three year project to increase habitat and the ecological resilience of landscape for *Strzelecki Koalas* and other important native species.



The project will involve identification of key remnant patches and identification of revegetation area to create biolinks. On ground works will be a key component of overall project, starting in year one and becoming a larger part of the project in years two and three.

Active management of our remnants and revegetation areas will be a key to the long term ecological resilience of the landscape and ultimately the protection of our native species.

Community awareness and education will further enhance the project by actively engaging the community in seed collection, propagation, tree planting, koala counts, weed control and assistance to research projects.

The project will also link in with research projects on Strzelecki Koalas to ensure a coordinated approach to the long term survival of the species.

### Project Goals:

- **Protection of remnant vegetation by fencing and active management**
- **Increasing areas of vegetation by strategically connecting area of remnant vegetation in the Strzelecki Bioregion**
- **Reduction of threats to the remnant vegetation such as pest plants and animals**
- **Raising community awareness of importance of protection and enhancement of remnant vegetation in the Strzelecki Ranges**

The development of the project has been funded as part of the *Revitalise, Renew and Regenerate Landcare* in South Gippsland.

The project is in its early stages, there are 10 members of the Friends of Strzelecki Koalas and over \$500 was donated to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2010.

We are working in partnership with HVP on identifying priority linkages for koala habitat and also with the Tourism officer of South Gippsland Shire to further promote the project and raise funds for the on ground works activity.

### 4.3 Revitalisation Projects

#### **The Revitalise South Gippsland Landcare was initially funded by a \$4000 Victorian Volunteer Small Grant.**

This project aimed to invigorate existing Landcare groups with an infusion of new members and give new landholders – especially urban “tree changing” residents a point of contact and referral to their Landcare Group.

The four least active Landcare groups were targeted by this project for remedial attention and of these groups Nerrena is highly successful, with new members and monthly activities. Jindinook attracted 10 new members and Prom Plains were given help to hold activities to engage and inspire the interest of their members and encourage new ones. One group, Leongatha North, regretfully, was found to need disbanding.

The revitalised Landcare Groups developed a number of activities to address the needs and interests of their members, including a Soil Health Workshop, a film night, a community tree planting activity and a successful entry in the Network Landcare Awards. In all, the project attracted 44 new members to the Landcare Network and a number of old members who were able to re-sign to revitalized groups. This project was used a “pilot project” to attract funding from the Volunteer Recruitment Initiative to continue this very effective program.

#### **Revitalise, Renew and Regenerate Landcare in South Gippsland.**

The Network was successful in receiving \$70,000 to revitalise, renew and regenerate Landcare in South Gippsland. The project funded by the Volunteer Recruitment Initiative (VRI) for 2009/10.

The project focused on a number of key areas

1. Raising the profile of Landcare and benefits of membership
2. Support for our new landholder program
3. Small grants for new Landcare members
4. Landcare Open day
5. Development of Friends of Strzelecki Koalas
6. Urban landcare
7. Working with local businesses
8. Involvement with the indigenous community

The revitalising of the Network is not confined to existing groups and members, it is also about bringing new people into Landcare across the Network and working with them to raise the profile of Landcare and get a greater number of people involved which will in turn help to reinvigorate Landcare within the existing groups.

Using the knowledge gained during the Revitalise South Gippsland Landcare Pilot Project, the VRI funds were used to finance a small grants program to encourage landholders to join Landcare. Once landholders were part of a group, we expected that the knowledge and community support they received from their group would encourage them to remain with and contribute to their Landcare group.

### **Round 1 Revitalisation Grants**

These grants were for a maximum of \$1,000.00 and were allocated to landholders who had joined the Network or their local group in the previous 12 months.

Ten expressions of interest were received and 9 grants were allocated projects including;

- Revegetate steep block and weed control
- Remove willows from Stony Creek and revegetate
- Weed control on South Gippsland Tourist Rail tracksides
- Fencing and revegetation of Deep Creek
- fencing for propagation kit plants and revegetation
- Revegetate grey gum plantation with understory

### **The grants resulted in**

- **69.5ha of weed control**
- **3620 trees to revegetate 11.5ha**
- **1145m fencing**

**Funds allocated: \$8276.15**

### **Round 2 Revitalisation Grants**

A second round was announced and reduced to maximize the number of new landholders who could access the funding. These grants were for a maximum of \$500.00

Twenty four expressions of interest were received and 19 grants were allocated including;

- Supplement planting after willow removal along creek
- Blackberry control on Rail Trail which abuts property
- Weed control and Revegetation in drainage gully
- Revegetate gully after weed removal
- Filling in gaps in existing plantation - wildlife corridor
- Wetland revegetate & planting to stop soil erosion, some weed control
- Biolink to join up with existing vegetation patches
- Revegetate river bank to improve water quality & prevent livestock damage
- Revegetation corridor and create windbreak
- Revegetation of waterway to improve stream quality
- Weed control
- Fence and revegetate steep gully to form Biolink
- Steep property; retire from farming and revegetate

### **The grants resulted in**

- **56ha of weed control**
- **5547 plants to revegetate 42.5ha**
- **870 m fencing**

**Funds allocated: \$9,980.90**

None of the above accounting includes contributions by the landholder for labour. As the second two rounds of grants listed were specifically for new landholders, the projects listed were often the first landscape restoration project the landholder had attempted. With a little encouragement our new Landcare members developed the skills necessary to undertake such works, obtaining an understanding of the EVC's appropriate to their property, how to source tubestock, and planting and fencing skills. We have also increased the capacity of small, new landholders to tackle weed infestations, as several of our new Landholders have purchased small holdings that have substantial weed problems. Many did not realise just how hard controlling 10 acres of blackberry or ragwort (or both) can be both physically and financially; or that it would take years of work. We are able to offer a little financial support, a great deal of encouragement, and hope. We also reassure them that the community really appreciates their efforts. Three of our new landholder grants were totally for weed control, recognising that replanting would be impossible until the blackberries and ragwort were under control.

### **Open Farms Day**

Three of the winners in our 2009 SGLN Awards were on display during our Open Farm Day on May 1<sup>st</sup> 2010.

Rob, Linda and Geoff Whitaker (Rivercare Award winners), Stuart and Veronica Greaves (Bushcare Award winners), and the Group Winners Mardan/Mirboo North at Rosemary and Graeme Trease's property (previous award winners) properties were on display.

About 40 people attended each farm with about a third of all attendees taking the opportunity to visit two or more farms. Eight people joined Landcare on the day, and with plenty of information available to visitors about joining Landcare it is probable more will join at a later date. This was an excellent way of displaying our top Landcarers to the general public and to the Landcare community. We attracted at least one person who saw the signs as they were driving by, and stopped and joined Landcare as a result. See group reports for photos.

### **Urban Landcare**

The Network worked with Venus Bay Community Centre who had expressed an interest in establishing an urban Landcare program and possibly an urban Landcare group for the area. A \$500 grant was allocated to the centre to establish the program when it became apparent that the idea of a urban group would require a great deal more consideration from all involved. SGLN is continuing to work with the Venus Bay Community Centre on linkages to Landcare and other sustainability programs.

An urban landcare information session held in Leongatha was held in June 2010. Whilst the meeting was poorly attended, the focus on urban Landcare has given the Network a vehicle to work with the South Gippsland Shire on sustainability issues.

### **South Gippsland Shire Sustainability Strategy**

The South Gippsland Shire is currently developing their Sustainability Strategy and Landcare is playing an integral role in the identification of issues affecting our members and the South Gippsland environment as a whole.

The Strategy will be tackling 12 main areas, namely water, natural environment, resource minimisation, sustainable Council, transport/ mobility, built environment/land use, active/resilient community, green economic revolution, sustainable farming, sustainable energy,/ greenhouse and air.

The Network has been asked to be involved in the Sustainability Strategy Development Reference Group. Thus ensuring the natural environment and sustainable farming stay high on the priority list.

In March, the Shire held their first Sustainability Festival at Coal Creek, SGLN had a display alongside the South Gippsland Seedbank and South Gippsland Water. (see photo)

The day was a great success for Landcare with a great interest shown. The Network gained 8 new members mainly lifestyle and small holdings.

The Network is working with the Shire on the possibility of establishing an urban Landcare group to help address some of the issues raised in the Sustainability Strategy and get more people involved. Landcare will also be submitting some joint applications for funding on a range of sustainability issues which will see the Shire and Landcare working closely together over the coming years.

The Network is excited about the partnership that is developing with the Shire and is looking forward to working together on projects that will benefit all.



### **Working with the Indigenous community**

SGLN had planned to work with the WGCMA Indigenous Facilitator to raise the awareness and understanding of indigenous and cultural issues. Unfortunately a delay in the appointment of the facilitator meant that this component of the project was not undertaken in the 2009/10 financial year, however, this is an area that the SGLN Board feels is important and it will be pursued in 2010/ 2011.

### **4.4 New Landholder Project**

The New Landholder Program was developed by the SGLN in 2008/09 to oversee the new Landholder program within the Network, coordinate the promotional and community education components and cluster events for SGLN, maintain and strengthen existing partnerships with SGLN staff and other partners, provide coordination, leadership, strategic planning and support to the South Gippsland Landcare Community for its continued success in a changing environment. The project continued in 2009/10 primarily in conjunction with and support of the revitalisation project. The project also encompasses

- Refinement and distribution of SGLN Landcare information pack
- Undertake initial site inspections for new landholder Landcare members and refer them to appropriate services
- Maintenance of SGLN website
- Coordination of SGLN newsletter
- New Landholder Skills Workshop held in conjunction with Dave Stewart from the DPI. This was attended by 8 people which was the maximum we could accommodate for a hands on workshop.

## 4.5 Community Pest Plant and Animal Program

Extension work delivered in response to a high community demand for information and advice relating to pest plant and animal control. Given the natural and agricultural values of South Gippsland, the management of pest plant and animal threats will always be a priority. The weeds website administered by SGLN is fantastic in terms of providing a platform for accessible and current information relating to news and events in the region as well as general information.

### Presentations:

- Franklin River Landcare Group
- Poowong FarmPlan21 group X 2
- Mirboo North Secondary College Landcare cadets

### Media:

- Monthly Weed Talk articles provided to the Foster Mirror

### South Gippsland Weeds Website:

- 340 visits per month (on average over a 12 month period)
- Website traffic directed through search engines i.e. Google accounts for 80%, direct traffic 10% and referring sites accounts for 10 % (on average over a 12 month period)
- Website updated monthly (as a minimum)

### Community Weeds Taskforce

Formed in 2006 the taskforce and made up of representative from the community and departmental agencies. The taskforces objectives are to identify priorities with regard to pest plant management, create and co-ordinate partnerships, monitor weed control progress, advocate for additional funds and policy change, educate and inform the community and foster broader action across all land tenure i.e. public/private land. SGLN provides executive support for the CWT.

- Quarterly taskforce meetings held with relatively good representation and high attendance levels
- Joint CWT submission made to the DPI re the Invasive Plants and Animals Policy Framework
- Delivery of two successful Blackberry Control Field Days
- Sub-group formed to deliver a combined weed awareness display as part of the Leongatha Daffodil and Flower Festival 2010.
- Mike Carnell tendered his resignation as chair of the CWT
- Replacement Chair is Paul McAsey a member of Korumburra Landcare
- Continued interest in the operation of the CWT



## 4.6 Weeds of National Significance (WoNS)

### *Targeting Invasive Species in West Gippsland with Community Action*

This project addressing weeds considered a national priority throughout the West Gippsland Catchment in areas of ecological significance. Invasive species were targeted using integrated techniques to enable on ground-works and community action. The project complemented a suite of initiatives coordinated by the WGCMA and has built on past investment into pest plant management over the last 10 years. The South Gippsland Landcare Network was focused on

raising awareness of WoNs with a particular emphasis on invasive Willows, delivering extension and the facilitation of on-ground works.

### **Milestones:**

- Delivery of the Networks component of the catchment wide program
- Five WoNS fact sheets produced and distributed throughout the catchment
- Majority of extension and on-ground works focused on willows
- Eight hectares of stream frontage treated for willow removal and sere reestablishment
- Areas treated through on-ground works mapped in partnership with Maffra Landcare

### **4.7 Cape Liptrap Fox Control Program**

#### ***Supporting Coastal Pest Animal Management along the Cape Liptrap Coast***

The project focused on training, empowering and supporting private landholders to increase and improve their fox management practices. Areas targeted for management are geographically isolated from the surrounding landscape by the Tarwin River, the Yanakie Isthmus and the coast enabling strategic management. The project aligned with landscape-scale fox control programs initiated by the Friends of Venus Bay Peninsula and Parks Victoria. Cape Liptrap Coastal Park and its hinterland provides vital, contiguous habitat for nationally threatened species including migratory shore birds. The projects ultimate aim was to reduce predation of these species by the European fox.

### **Milestones:**

- Twenty five foxes removed in total over the 18month program
- Seven hectares of fox harbor (boxthorn) removed in priority areas on private land
- Extensive aerial spraying of boxthorn in conjunction with Parks Victoria
- Landholders trained for the use of 1080 baits
- Responses from a feedback survey given indicate a high level of interest in on-going self sustained fox management through coordination of baiting and trapping programs

### **4.8 Rabbit control program**

#### ***CFoC Penguins to the Prom***

An integrated 12 month rabbit control project designed to complement and enhance smaller existing control projects. The project area covered over 120km of coastline from Philip Island to Wilsons Promontory. The project was delivered in partnership between Bass Coast Landcare and South Gippsland Landcare Networks in coordination with the Philip Island Nature Park, VicRoads and Bass Coast Shire Council. The project involved community extension and on-ground works to reduce the impacts caused by rabbits.

### **Milestones:**

- Delivery of the Networks sub-program components (with the main program belonging to Bass Coast Landcare Network)
- Fifteen semi permanent bait stations established within SGLN area
- Seven coastal townships within SGLN area targeted for the program



### 4.9 Gorse management Project

#### *Gippsland Coastal Gorse Control Program – Landcare Leading the Way*

A targeted 12 month gorse project encompassing a large geographic area from the southern extent of the Gippsland Lakes near Seaspray to the RAMSAR listed Corner Inlet & Nooramunga systems, with Wilsons Promontory National Park providing a southern boundary. Priority areas of Gorse infestation were targeted as per DPI's 'Distribution of Gorse in West Gippsland CMA' mapping. Local level priority areas that required further on-ground work to extend and build on considerable investment over the past 3 years were also treated. The project was delivered in partnership between Yarram Yarram and South Gippsland Landcare Networks in coordination with public land management agencies including South Gippsland Shire Council and Parks Victoria.

#### **Milestones:**

- Delivery of the Networks sub-program components (with the other sub-program belonging to Yarram Yarram Landcare Network)
- Five hectares of public land within the 'containment zone' treated
- Positive response from letters sent to landholders near infested areas of Welshpool
- Public land managers receptive to on-going control requirements

### 4.10 South Gippsland Tourist Rail

The SGTR committee recognised the need for a quick reference tool that will enable volunteers to firstly, recognise weed species present along the easement and secondly, describe suitable control techniques for their management. As part of the *Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal* (FRRR) grant received by the South Gippsland Tourist Railway (SGTR) committee a Weed Management Plan was developed in coordination between the SGLN and the SGTR committee. Another component of the grant involved the mapping of weeds along the railway easement. Mapping was completed in 2010 and forms the bases of the plan in terms of weed species present and their distribution.

#### **Milestone:**

- Mapping of weeds along the Tourist rail easement
- Design and printing of posters (large and in colour) of the project (the poster is displayed at each station Nyora, Korumburra and Leongatha)
- Holding a public (i.e., Landcare groups that adjoin the railway easement and SGTR members) weed awareness day which included guest speakers, light lunch and then followed by site visits along the line between Korumburra and Ruby using a rail car
- Development of Weed Management Plan for the South Gippsland Tourist Railway in coordination with the railway committee (Peter Hinksman)

## 4.11 Targeted Land Stewardship Program

A Joint project with Bass Coast Landcare Network (BCLN) and Westernport Landcare Network (WPLN) and funded through the Victorian Investment Framework (VIF). Three major components of the project include delivery of training in farm planning, computer based mapping and soil health, an on ground works program targeting the reduction of nutrient and sediment loads to Western Port and increased biodiversity outcomes through revegetation/remnant protection on private land, and a cutting edge soil health program.

Land stewardship is the first attempt by SGLN to deliver a market based tender using the DSE "Ensym" modeling program, and the soil health component is a new concept in paying landholders to undertake actions that will protect environmental assets.

Targeted Land Stewardship moves into its second year in 2010/11 and will combine with Monash University Soil Health Research Institute, to test the validity of actions and refine the methodology.

### Deliverables

- Farm Planning Training delivered to 27 participants
  - 2 x Farm Plan 21 courses 6 sessions each.
  - 1 x I-Farm course 3 sessions
  
- Soil Health Training delivered to 11 participants
  - 1 x Soil health course 5 sessions
  - Soil health projects on 6 farms
  - \$19,900 of soil health improvement incentives to SGLN landholders
  - 53 ha of paddocks improved under contract
  
- Remnant/ Revegetation projects 12 landholders bid
  - 10 successful projects funding \$77,836 on ground works to SGLN landholders
  - 5.5 kms of fencing
  - 27,222 indigenous plants
  - 18ha of waterway and remnant protected and revegetated



### 4.12 Melbourne Water – Catchment Care Coordinator

SGLN, BCLN and WPLN have been in discussion with Melbourne Water to develop a long term arrangement for Landcare Networks to support Melbourne Water activities and assist in meeting targets set in the Regional River Health Strategy.

\$44,000 over 12 months will facilitate promotion at events, in newsletters, Network Notes, and through site visits. Final targets will be reported on in December 2010. MW have co-invested with Targeted Land Stewardship so some targets will fall out of that project. Currently working on specific river reach targets in Lang Lang and Bass catchments. Support ends in December 2010 and will be reviewed for 2011.

### 4.13 Solutions at the Source: Slowing the Flow to Western Port

A joint project with Bass Coast Landcare Network, targeting the reduction of nutrient and sediment loads to Western Port and increased biodiversity outcomes on private land. Funded by the Federal Government "Caring for our Country" program, the South Gippsland Landcare Network component of funding was \$93,717.

- **\$65,200** on ground works purchased **30 projects** on 28 farms
- **6.7 kms of fencing**
- **28,500 indigenous plants**
- **3 culverts**
- **1 improvement to stock crossing.**
- **25 ha** of waterway protected and revegetated including 5 ha of remnant vegetation.

Project is due for completion in September 2010. All projects on track with small amount of funding still to be spent due to a late withdrawal.

### 4.14 West Gippsland EcoTender (12 week DSE contract)

The third trial program in Victoria, will deliver 2 million dollars in on ground works through a market based tender, using a new Environmental simulator (Ensym) to determine the environmental benefit of different management actions on private land. My involvement in the previous tender in Western Port led to a contract to deliver site visits and prepare management plans for 12 weeks. An extension was offered but other work commitments took priority.

- Organised 1 info session to engage community and build understanding of tenders and DSE approach.
- Training – EcoTender, Ensym, Trimble, Habitat Hectares
- Delivered contract agreement including site visits and management plans.
- Successful tenders are yet to be announced but anecdotally there has been a lot of interest in SGLN area so funding should follow.