

SOUTH GIPPSLAND  
LANDCARE NETWORK



A newsletter for landcarers  
in the South Gippsland  
Landcare Network (SGLN)

# South Gippy **Landcare News**

Issue 2 Volume 23  
Winter 15



*In this issue: Environmental Action + Food Production,  
Westernport groups focus on Sword-grass Brown  
Butterflies, and Deer up for discussion*

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## Circulation

*South Gippy Landcare News* is distributed to all members of the South Gippsland Landcare Network and at field days and festivals. 1000 copies are circulated in the South Gippsland and Westernport catchments.

## Front Page

Ellie Watts lending a hand at the Russell's tree planting day.

# from the SGLN Chair



By Mark Walters,  
SGLN Chair

Again I am impressed with the achievements of the network.

Aside from administering

grants for tree planting and fencing works, a significant part of the network focus and energy is spent on delivering field days, forums, workshops and training days.

Over the last 12 months, staff have delivered a large mix of such events in collaboration with Landcare groups and agency partners. There have been 13 field days held on a wide range of topics from growing blueberries and garlic through to measuring agroforestry performance, managing wet soils and economical planting methods.

A series of community forums were delivered, each covering a topic of interest to the Landcare community; bees, koalas and wild deer.

Training days and short courses have been completed by Landcare members across the district on the subjects of safe and effective farm chemical use, soil management, computerised farm mapping and environmental management systems.

Add to this 2 Landcare bike ride events, 4 community tree planting days and a 3 day Landcare Tour in the Westernport catchment. Based on this, it's fair to say that it has been a busy and rewarding year for the team!

Of course, none of these events would be possible without the support and involvement of Landcare groups and members, as well as our agency partners.

On this note, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to our Landcare members and business partners in making 2014/2015 a successful year.

One of the field days was held at my farm at Loch. It was on the most economical ways to get trees into the ground.

There are broadly two ways to plant trees:

1. Direct seeding
2. Tube stock and hikos

On the field day we saw the planting of hikos demonstrated as well as examples of two different direct seeding methods.

The first method is using a Mulboard plough to turn over the top layer of soil. Seed is subsequently spread usually by hand over the area.

The second method uses a small plough which digs a small furrow and turns over strips of soil. Seeds are then scattered by hand in the furrow.

You would use these methods on tractorable land and is by far the cheapest. One hectare would use no more than \$200 of seed bought from the Leongatha Seed Bank. Both methods can be done without the need to use Roundup.

The speed and efficiency of hikos was clearly demonstrated at the field day. Professional planters can plant 2000 plants in a day and, if conditions are good, many more.

The cost of hikos is approximately \$1.50 to supply and have them planted. The relative cost of tubestock might be \$1.20 for the plant plus \$1.50 to plant. Almost twice as much as hikos. We saw on the field day that the results of direct seeding and using hikos was excellent. There was no need for follow up infilling.

To summarize, in my opinion, if land is tractorable look at direct seeding. If too steep for a tractor hikos are the best option, assuming you are doing at least 1000 plants and you are paying professionals to plant for you.

We have uploaded a video of me giving a demonstration on the use of hiko plugs to the SGLN website and our Facebook page.

That's a neat segueway into the power of social media to enable Landcarers to keep up-to-date with local activities and share information and experiences of a host of related organisations. If you haven't already "liked" our Facebook page I urge you to do so and get "in the loop".

Don't have a Facebook account? You would be one of the dwindling minority that don't (less than 30%) but you might reconsider with appropriate privacy restrictions if that is an issue for you. Otherwise, as far as the 21st Century is concerned, it's all about social media.

A reminder that the AGM is on Saturday evening, October 10th, at the Djinta Djinta Winery, Kardella South. Our guest speaker is none other than Geoff Gourley. He is a true entrepreneur, encompassing sustainability and exceptional economic environmental and social outcomes.

He is on the Board of the United Nations Association of Australia. Listening to him will be a privilege, so I look forward to seeing you there.

Mark Walters

CHAIRMAN



# from the Network Coordinator



By Jenny  
O'Sullivan  
SGLN Network  
Coordinator

I am very proud of what SGLN has achieved this year. We have protected more bush, planted more trees, controlled more

weeds and educated more people this year than last year and for less money! We are getting more and more efficient.

Congratulations to all our members for their ongoing commitment to improving the environment of South Gippsland and continuing to embrace sustainable food and fibre production in the region.

Achievements for South Gippsland Landcare Network for 2014-2015 include:

- 56,545 plants in the ground
- 8 kgs of seed sown
- 18.8 km of fencing
- 33.7 ha of revegetation
- 147 ha of remnant protected
- 149 ha weeds controlled
- 30 field days or information sessions run 7 training courses run with support from DEDJTR and private consultants
- One pasture trial established at property in Buffalo
- One fox action group in Corner Inlet



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( OPPOSITE GOLF COURSE )

This is only accounts for the works funded through the 15 projects run by SGLN this year. This doesn't include all the individual work done on farm that is self-funded by land owners as well as the group activities that are self-funded and driven.

Working with others is critical for our success. We have had ongoing support from West Gippsland CMA and Port Phillip CMA, South Gippsland Water, South Gippsland Shire Council and The Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) formerly DEPI.

We have built many new relationships this year that have assisted us to be more effective. Key new partnerships developed or consolidated this year include:

- Agribusiness Gippsland and South Gippsland Beekeepers with our bee project funded by Michaels Super IGA
- Corner Inlet Fishers Habitat Association (CIFHA) and Melbourne University with our Farmer Fisher day
- GippsDairy with Fert\$mart delivery and work in Corner Inlet and Farmer Fisher day
- Melbourne University joined the South Gippsland Koala Working Group
- Rotary Leongatha, Chadstone East-Malvern and Malvern Clubs volunteering for tree plantings
- Origin Energy with community funding for projects in the Loch area
- Australian Deer Association (ADA) and Game Management Authority with our deer forum and on-going control
- Local schools with support for tree plantings; Korumburra, Leongatha and Mirboo Secondary Colleges
- Friends of Turtons Creek working group with South Gippsland Shire Council and Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning

This coming year we hope for even greater outcomes. We were also thrilled to receive \$20K for the Arawata group for erosion works funded through Australian Governments 25 Year Anniversary Landcare Grants programme. Strzelecki Ranges South Gippsland - building biodiversity and saving our soils.

Funding available this coming season includes:

- Habitat for Life - Friends of Strzelecki Koalas - this is the last year of funding for projects that enhance habitat for koalas;
- One Million trees funding by South Gippsland Water (SGW) for revegetation in SGW catchment areas;
- Waging war on invasive plants funding for weed control in landscape priority areas, and
- National Landcare Program Regional Community Grant: Strzelecki Ranges; Corner inlet to Bunurong Coast - enhancing the biolink project through the West Gippsland CMA. This is funding for remnant protection and revegetation in landscape priority areas

If you have a Landcare project in mind, complete the enclosed expression of interest form.

Jenny O'Sullivan

## Rotary Planting Days – Trees unite city & country folk

*By Ross Garner, Arawata Landcare group member*

Relationships are important to Landcare member Ross Garner who organised a tree planting day in mid-June at the Meeniyen Wastewater Treatment Lagoons and Wetlands (managed by South Gippsland Water). Having moved to a hobby farm at Korumburra South, Ross and his wife Diane have learned an enormous amount about life in a small rural community.

Ross explained. "What is great about Gippsland is the naturalness of the farming we have here. I wanted to find a way to help city people appreciate what we have here". This idea then led to interaction between the Chadstone, East Malvern and Leongatha Rotary clubs. Linking with Landcare seemed like a perfect match to bring city people in touch with South Gippsland.

"Landcare has experience and expertise in achieving environmental outcomes on farm and have processes in place for selecting suitable on-ground projects. They also work with other organisations such as South Gippsland Water to identify properties that will benefit from tree planting and other environmental works such as fencing and weed control" said Ross.

The two Rotary clubs, (Leongatha and Chadstone) have come together to work with Landcare and to learn from each other through a social activity in the outdoors. Species indigenous to the area and suitable for a

wet site were selected, including Bog gum, Strzelecki gum, swamp and scented paperbark, prickly moses as well as native grasses and sedges.

Another day with Rotary was also held at Zak and Tanya Chalmers property "Valley Plains Pottery" in Leongatha South which involved over 20 members of Rotary members from the Malvern East Branch two weeks earlier.



Photo above: Malvern East Rotary club members assisting with tree planting at Zak and Tanya Chalmers Leongatha South property.

## Sword-grass Brown Butterfly Project

Our four Western Port groups (Loch Nyora, Mt Lyall, Poowong & Triholm) are collaborating on a project to restore habitat for the rare Sword-grass Brown Butterfly (SGBB) through-out their area. The project was instigated by Malcolm Brown who is a member of the Loch/Nyora Landcare Group and also works for Melbourne Water.

The SGBB caterpillar is totally dependent on the Red Fruit Saw Sedge (*Gahnia sieberiana*). As a result of clearing for agriculture, this sedge species has been dramatically reduced from most of its former range in the southern and western Gippsland region and as a result there has been a marked decline in populations of the SGBB. The adult butterfly lays its eggs on the underside of the sword sedge leaf and the young caterpillars feed on the plant as they develop.

Each of the participating Landcare groups have funded \$350 towards this project. From this each group will receive 150 plants that will include 3 sets of Red Fruit Saw Sedge and its companion plants Snowy Daisy Bush (*Olearia lirata*) and Musk daisy bush (*Olearia argophylla*) which are food plants for the adult butterfly.

These plants have been propagated from local seed and are being grown by Operation Revegetation at Pakenham. The plants will be ready for distribution among members of the four Landcare groups in Spring 2015. The planting sites will be monitored over 3-5 years to see to ascertain if the SGBB has colonised the property.

For those sites not successful, the Museum of Victoria could be

requested to transplant SGBB caterpillars. Should the project be successful, it could be expanded to other former areas of the SGBB range.

It is intended to hold a field day at either Henry's Reserve at Loch or Henry Little Dyke Reserve, between Poowong and Nyora, in November with an entomologist from the Melbourne Museum to look at the host species in the wild and hopefully spot some of these elusive and beautiful butterflies.

A brochure will also be produced to increase awareness of the relationship between this rare native butterfly and an indigenous plant species.



Photo above: a Sword-grass Brown Butterfly (*Tisiphone abeona*). Photo, Museum Victoria

# Environmental Action and Food Production

By Jenny O'Sullivan, SGLN Network Coordinator

Eleven paddock to plate businesses commenced the certified Land Management Program in April delivered by the Australian Land Management Group (ALMG).

These producers considered environmental and animal welfare constraints, exploring catchment and legal requirements, with a commitment to embrace best practices and continually improve performance in these areas.

Great progress has already been made with tree breaks, improved fencing, weed control, mulching and rotational grazing put in place.

The group visited Paul and Sam Crock's Fish Creek property in June to see improvements they have made to the property over the years.

All gullies have been fenced with seed collected from the few existing remnants on the property.

Pastures have been improved and an organic fertiliser program used for many years. The pastures looked fantastic.

Most impressive were the new yards recently built to improve livestock handling and safety for both animals and people.



Photo above: Paul Crock explaining how his cattle yards work to the group.

Photo right: some of the producers involved with the certified Land Management Program at Paul Crock's Fish Creek property.

The brands involved in the project are:

Selling beef: Gippsland Natural, Gippsland wide ( 6 businesses)- underpinned by Meat Standards Australia; Scorrybreck Farm- Highland cattle at Foster ( establishing brand).

Selling lamb: O'Neil's Lamb at Fish Creek; Koony Natural Lamb at Koonwarra; Glen Alvie Lamb and forestry at Glen Alvie.

Selling pork: Amber Creek Pork and sawmill at Foster.

Selling deer and products: Terramirra Park Deer Farm at Koonwarra.

You can find most of these brands on Facebook or by searching for their website if you are interested to find out more.

All businesses will be audited in September. This will be followed by a celebration dinner where the stories and products will be profiled at Moos Restaurant at Meeniyan on Thursday September 17th. See below for more information. Visit [www.almg.org.au/index.htm](http://www.almg.org.au/index.htm) for information on ALMG.

These initiatives are part of the Smarter Farm Planning, Environmental Action and Food Production program funded by the Australian Governments National Landcare Programme 2014-2015.



## Taste and celebrate the regions produce!

The producers mentioned above have just completed a certified Land Management Program. They have committed to continually improving their environmental performance and animal welfare outcomes.

**What:** Come to hear their stories, taste and celebrate our regional produce with finger food prepared by Marty's outstanding chef. Alcohol available to be purchased on the night.

**When:** Thursday September 17th, 7pm-9pm

**Where:** At Moos at Meeniyan, 89 Whitelaw Street Meeniyan

**Cost:** \$20 for Landcare members, \$25 for non- members

**RSVP:** to 5662 5759 or [sgln@landcare.net](mailto:sgln@landcare.net) by Friday the 11th of September



# Farmers and Fishers of Corner Inlet

*A collaborative meeting between farmers of the sea and farmers of the land was held at Corner Inlet on Friday, 8 May.*

Over forty people, including commercial fishermen, farmers and researchers, came together to discuss the problem of declining seagrass meadows within Corner Inlet.

Dr John Ford of Melbourne University explained that just as farmers rely on good quality pasture to feed their stock, Corner Inlet's fishermen rely on good quality seagrass to produce their catch.

Representatives of Corner Inlet's commercial fishing industry took participants on a tour of the Inlet and spoke of the impact that declining seagrass cover is having on their livelihoods. They explained the vital role that seagrass plays in providing nutrients, habitat and protection for marine life, and their own efforts to create a sustainable fishing industry.



Photo above: (from right) Rob and Joan Liley with Merren Wilde on board a commercial fishing boat as part of the farmer fisher day. Photo courtesy of Garry Wallis.

After a seafood lunch, the group visited a local dairy farm managed by Dan and Cindy Knee. The Knees have implemented best management practices to keep nutrients and sediment on-farm and out of the Inlet. Nutrient and sediment run-off are regarded as the two greatest threats to seagrass meadows around the world, and there is genuine concern about seagrass levels in the Inlet.

Land uses contributing to sediment and nutrient loads entering the Inlet include farming, forestry and urban development. Because the waterways at the western end of Corner Inlet are smaller, steeper, have erodible soils and are in a high rainfall area, they are more susceptible to the impacts of these land uses.

Discussions acknowledged the efforts that many farmers are taking to keep nutrients and sediment on-farm in partnership with agencies such as Landcare and the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme).

These include revegetating and fencing off creeks and drainage lines, siting laneways to

avoid run-off, maximizing ground cover to reduce soil loss and following best management practices when applying fertiliser.

The day also raised awareness of the measures that the Corner Inlet fishermen and Dairy Australia are taking to ensure their industries are sustainable.

Fishermen have a self-imposed Code of Practice that, alongside government regulation, restricts fishing to weekdays only, caps the number of fishing licences, sets net and mesh sizes, and allows only two net shots a day to prevent over-fishing.

Similarly, Dairy Australia encourages dairy farmers to adopt best management practices to protect their natural resources such as recycling effluent, soil nutrient budgeting and fertiliser planning and preventing erosion with pasture management.

The day was funded by the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation and was delivered by representatives of Melbourne University, GippsDairy and the South Gippsland Landcare Network.

Image below: An informative short video was produced as part of the day. Visit the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority website and click on the camera icon at the bottom of the home page to find the video [www.wgcma.vic.gov.au](http://www.wgcma.vic.gov.au)



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## Look up before you plant

A very important factor in planning a revegetation project is to ensure that powerline clearances are adhered to. This is in order to keep the power network safe and reliable, and avoid the need for costly vegetation clearance in the future.

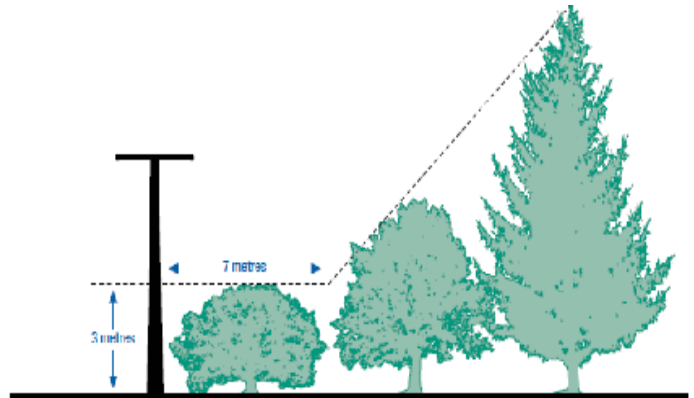
### \*Planting near distribution powerlines -the general rules

When planting under or near distribution powerlines, you should consider these requirements:

- Low-growing species, with a mature height of **no more than 3 metres**, can be planted within 7 metres of the line.
- For trees outside the 7 metre zone, plant them as such distance so that if they do blow over, they will not fall on the lines. For example, a 10 metre tall tree should be planted at least 13 metres from the lines.
- As you approach mid-span (the mid-point of the line between two poles), gradually increase the distance between the powerlines and any tree or shrub by an extra 3 metres.
- Do not plant vegetation within 3 metres of power poles.

Taking these general rules into consideration, the use of direct seeding using eucalyptus and acacia species > 3 m when mature, should be avoided in power line easements (as there is limited control as to where the plants will grow).

\*Source: AusNet Services *Your Guide to Planting near Electricity lines*. A full copy of the Guide can be downloaded via [www.ausnetservices.com.au](http://www.ausnetservices.com.au)



## Koala project update

By Nicole Walsh, SGLN Project Officer

Two community planting days were held on properties that received funding through the koala and One Million Trees projects. These days were held at Geoff and Donna Russell's Hallston property and the other at Zak and Tanya Chalmer's property at Leongatha South.

Twenty five + members of Rotary helped with supplementary planting of an adjacent 1.1 hectare degraded remnant to improve its overall condition. This day was the first of two planting event with Rotarian members from Chadstone, East Malvern and Leongatha.

A Landcare & koala session was delivered to Grade 4/5 class at Tarwin Valley Primary School.

Another tree planting day was organised with Year 11 students at Korumburra Secondary College at Grant and Tracey McColl's Mardan property. The students helped plant out a gully with 550 trees and shrubs and 160 grasses and sedges. The McColl's received a grant through the koala project.

Our third year koala projects are progressing with completion of most projects anticipated for the end of September. Three projects will be planted in the spring including a direct seeding project. An expression of interest period for the final year of the koala project will commence in early August and run until the end of September. These projects will need to be completed by the end of May 2016.

Photo right: another community planting day was held as part of the koala project at Geoff and Donna Russell's Hallston property in May 2015.



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# Latrobe Valley Koala Project

All 8 projects have commenced and most of the planting has occurred with some further weed control to be undertaken this summer. Two projects have already been completed.

An extra \$2,000 was received from Hancock Victorian Plantations to assist with the cost of preparing Living with Koalas in South Gippsland brochure.

A second koala monitoring training session to be held in late October at Morwell National Park, this will

be combined with a eucalypt identification field day.

An article about the koala monitoring or SAT (Spot Assessment Technique) training day held in March 2015 went into the Latrobe Catchment Landcare Network and the FOSK Newsletter (see text box below).

Department of  
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## Victorian Rabbit Management Conference

Friday Aug 14 2015 in Melbourne

What? Connecting knowledge and know-how towards more effective community action on rabbits.

They cost Victorians approximately \$31m annually in lost production.

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For more information and to register, visit [www.rabbitaction.com](http://www.rabbitaction.com) or contact Michael Reid (National Rabbit Facilitator) T: 02 6043 7975, M: 0400 853 251, E: [michael.reid@depi.vic.gov.au](mailto:michael.reid@depi.vic.gov.au)

## Give me a home amongst the gum trees; koala's habitat preference assessed

*Article taken from the April 2015 "Friends of the Strzelecki Koala" Newsletter*

Seventeen community members attended a one day training course in March to learn how to undertake Regularised Grid based Spot Assessment Technique (RGSAT) to assess koala habitat preference and monitor their local koala populations.

The SAT is a probabilistic sampling tool that involves an assessment of koala "activity" generally focused on a minimum of 30 trees\* of any species around a given sampling point (\*= live, woody stemmed plants, minimum diameter at breast height (dbh) of 100 – 150 mm).

Tree use by koalas is indicated by the presence/absence of a single koala faecal pellet (scat) and limited to a one minute search within 1m around the base of each tree in the site.



Photo above: Wildlife Biologist, Steve Phillips on the look out for scats at Keith and Alisons Boolara South property, (where the SAT training took place).

Koala 'activity' is simply measured as the number of trees beneath which scats were recorded within the prescribed search area, divided by the total number of trees that were sampled.

The data allows us to answer a certain number of questions related to koala conservation. Where are they living, where are they not? How many are there? What are their preferred food trees?

Members from the Boolarra South Landcare Group, Friends of Morwell National Park and Latrobe Field Nats attended.

The training was delivered by Steve Phillips, a wildlife biologist who developed the SAT, and has been using it to assess and monitor koala populations in New South Wales for nearly twenty years.

One of the highlights of the day was finding the koala scat moth larvae. This species of moth only lays its eggs only in koala scats where the young develops and consumes the scat from within before emerging to complete their life cycle (see photo on the right).

The aim of this training is to equip community members to undertake koala monitoring on their own properties and areas of public land. A guide to eucalypt identification in the field will also be produced to assist with this monitoring program.

This training course was funded through the Victorian Government's Community for Nature grant: Latrobe Koala Corridor Project. For further information please contact Nicole Walsh, South Gippsland Landcare Network on 5662 5759 or [nicolew@wgcm.vic.gov.au](mailto:nicolew@wgcm.vic.gov.au). Thanks to our wonderful hosts Alison & Keith Craven at Boolarra South.



Photo above: larva of the koala scat moth found within, (you guess it!) a koala scat, during the SAT training.



# Deer up for discussion

By Kate Williams, SGLN Project Officer

*A wintery Friday night at the Stony Creek Rec Reserve was an ideal setting for an information session on wild deer.*

On June 12, a large group of landholders and farmers enjoyed a cosy sit down meal and heard presentations on wild deer from the perspectives of: a government regulator; a landholder; and a hunter.

The session was hosted by the South Gippsland Landcare Network in response to concern from landholders and deer hunters alike over the social, ecological and economic impacts of deer, and to promote responsible, best practice deer management.

The evening also provided a networking opportunity between hunters and landholders. Landcare members from the Foster North and Hallston groups in particular were keen to explore options for responsible and informed wild deer management.

The topic of regulations for the control of deer on private property was covered by Matt Salmon a Game Manager with Game Management Victoria. Matt explained that the illegal spotlighting of deer is a major enforcement issue for government agencies, such as the Game Management Authority and Victoria Police.

"It is illegal, dangerous, unethical and reduces recreational hunting opportunities for law-abiding hunters. There are multiple offences for people caught illegally spotlighting deer or for being in possession of a spotlight and firearm in recognised deer habitat. Each offence can attract a fine of up to \$2,800 and Firearms and Game Licences may be cancelled. In addition, equipment used in the commission of an offence, such as firearms, spotlights and vehicles, can be seized by enforcement officers and forfeited by the courts." said Matt.

Matt made a point of clearly distinguishing 'control' programs from 'recreational hunting'. If a landholder engages a hunter or hunters with intention of significantly reducing deer numbers on the property, there is the expectation by the landholder that the hunter will do so, (rather than hunting deer in a 'recreational' capacity).

After Matt's presentation, Don Jelbart a Tarwin Lower farmer spoke of the arrangement he has with hunters. Over the years Don has come to know and trust the hunters he allows onto his property, they ensure that farm gates are left the way they were.

Don also gave a tip for hunters looking to form an arrangement to hunt on private land with the landholder. 'If you have received written permission, (signed and dated by the landowner of a property) don't then turn up to hunt with a group of mates. Rather, go with one or two hunting mates, but ask the landholders permission first out of courtesy".

Following dinner, Paul Hockridge from the Australian Deer Association, (ADA) discussed the ADA's Property Based Management Plans. Paul explained that property based management plans are tailored specifically

through one-on-one discussions with ADA Coordinators before a relationship between a hunter and the landholder is formed.

For further information regarding game management, visit [www.gma.vic.gov.au](http://www.gma.vic.gov.au). For information regarding the ADA, please visit <http://www.austdeer.com.au>. The ADA are looking to open a South Gippsland Branch, for more information please contact Shane Mostert on 0429 964 684 or email [shanemost@bigpond.com](mailto:shanemost@bigpond.com) or alternatively, please contact the ADA Victoria Deer Management Committee Chair Steve Garlick on 0438 840 915 or email [vicdmc.chair@austdeer.asn.au](mailto:vicdmc.chair@austdeer.asn.au).



Photo above: (from left) Sally Jelbart, Board Member with the South Gippsland Landcare Network, Paul Hockridge from the Australian Deer Association and Kate Williams, Project Officer with SGLN.

An advertisement for RSA Rotor Solutions Australia. It features a blue and white helicopter flying over a field of green grass. The text on the advertisement includes the RSA logo, the tagline 'FOR ALL YOUR AERIAL NEEDS', a list of services: 'Spraying - Fertiliser - Aerial Seeding Crop Protection - Granular Application', and a call to action: 'CALL FOR A QUOTE 1300 500 901'. At the bottom, the website [www.rotorsolutions.com.au](http://www.rotorsolutions.com.au) and email [info@rotorsolutions.com.au](mailto:info@rotorsolutions.com.au) are provided.

## New walk, signs, firepit and table for Turtons Creek

The Friends of Turtons Creek have been busy. They have upgraded an overgrown track that connects the Turtons Creek Falls to a smaller falls area up the road. It travels along next to the creek through beautiful wet forest with magnificent tree ferns. The evidence of weed control can be seen with new ferns pushing their way through dead blackberry canes and lots of new lyrebird activity.

At the little falls a new table built by the Mirboo North Men's shed has been placed alongside a fire pit funded and constructed by the Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning.

Signage is now also in place for visitors entering the area highlighting the need for them to take their rubbish with them and giving directions to the walks.

The group has also facilitated extensive blackberry control to coincide with works by both the Department and the Shire along the roadside. This work has occurred on both private and public land.

These works have been funded by two grants the "Friends of" group received - one from the Victorian Government through Communities for Nature and the other from South Gippsland Shire Council.

The group has seen great collaboration between agencies and landholders. To get involved in future activities contact president of the Friends of Turton's Creek, Peter Gannon, on 0410 564139.



Photo above: (from left) Nigel Hutchinson-Brooks, (Friends of Turtons Creek) Jenny O'Sullivan, Network Coordinator with SGLN and Sasha Fox next to the little Turtons Creek falls.

## Landcare champions walk the green carpet

Over 150 people walked down the 'Green Carpet' to celebrate 25 Landcare champions from across West Gippsland on Friday 24 April.

The event celebrated Landcare individuals, groups and partnerships, as well as sustainable agricultural innovators and young people who are championing the connection between environment and productivity.

The 25 recipients were honoured as a result of nominations provided by the five Landcare Networks across West Gippsland.

Of the 25 recipients, South Gippsland Landcare Network recognised the efforts of:

- The South Gippsland Equine Landcare Group, Landcare Group category;
- Daniel Knee, Young Landcare category;
- GippsDairy, (Sustainable Agricultural Innovator category);
- Mick Stuart, (Individual Landcare category, and
- The Community Weeds Taskforce Partnerships category

Each of the individuals, groups and organisations recognised will be featured in upcoming editions of the South Gippy News.

For now, enjoy some photos from the 'Green Carpet' event.

The event was supported by the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority and the Victorian Landcare Program.

Photos right: Recipients were acknowledged for their efforts by Anthony Carbines, Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment and Chair of the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority, Angus Hume.

Photo 1. South Gippsland Equine Landcare groups Larissa Judd and Fleur Stefani Photo 2. Daniel Knee Photo 3. GippsDairy Chair Matt Gleeson.





## Dairy farmers getting Fert\$mart In South Gippsland

SGLN dairy farmers have participated in two Fert\$mart courses run through the network this year. One at Meeniyan run by Ag-Challenge Consulting's, Glenn Marriott and one at Poowong with Benita Kelsall from the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources.

Dairy Australia's Fert\$mart program wants farmers to take another look at their most important asset and ask if they are managing it in the most efficient way possible.

In both courses, twelve dairy businesses took the opportunity to undertake a soil testing program across their farms, participate in group discussions about the local soil test results and receive a nutrient management plan for their own business.

The basic doctrine of Fert\$mart is that, by getting soil and fertiliser management "right", farmers should be able to produce more feed at no extra cost. The four "Rs" of the program are: Right source of fertiliser, Right rate, Right place and Right time.

Soil testing and the proper interpretation of test results are the keys to efficient use of fertiliser. The bottom line of improving data interpretation is that farmers can expect significant savings on their next fertiliser bill.

"Financial savings that can be quite significant," Glenn Marriott said. "The cost benefits can vary from \$5,000 to \$25,000 per farm with no anticipated reduction in productivity."

"The results are always open to interpretation, but from our experience to date, there's a lot of potential for improvement on most farms."

Glenn cited examples of where farmers with adequate levels of nutrients in their soil continue to apply "boosters" to their pasture. "For someone who has adequate levels of potassium, sulphur and phosphorus and are continuing to use a pasture booster - they may not need it," he said. "The Fert\$mart guidelines have qualified the range of pasture response to lower levels of phosphorous in particular."

For Dairy Australia's Gippsland Natural Resource Management Technical Specialist, Gillian Hayman, Fert\$mart is a win/win for both farmers and the environment. "Fert\$mart came about

when the dairy industry wanted to be proactive about soil and fertiliser decision making on farms and bringing scientific evidence to that space, allowing farmers to make informed decisions," she said.

"The environmental impact of Fert\$mart is seen particularly when you farm in a high rainfall area, where there is a potential for nutrient run-off into waterways". Gillian said. Keeping up-to-date with the latest research in soil testing is important for any farmer who wants to improve productivity and profits. "For a lot of farmers it's a bit like a check-in - the same as they would take the car to the mechanic - on how you are going with your soils and fertilisers," she said.

"For other farmers it might be the first time they have been exposed to soil testing and understanding what the results mean and relating it back to their farm businesses."



The South Gippsland Landcare Network is supporting another Fert\$mart course in Poowong in the coming year.

The West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority is also partnering with Dairy Australia to run Fert\$mart programs in the future.

For further information or to register your interest in the Fert\$mart process please phone Gillian Hayman, NRM Technical Specialist for Gippsland on 0428 345 493.



Your Levy at Work



### SAVE THE DATE!

**Saturday October 10 2015**

South Gippsland Landcare Network  
annual dinner and AGM

**Where:** Djinta Djinta Winery, 10 Stevens  
Road Kardella

**When:** 6pm-9.30pm

**Cost:** \$35 drinks at bar prices

**RSVP:** by Oct 1st to [sgln@landcare.net](mailto:sgln@landcare.net) or  
5662 5759

**Keynote speaker:** Geoff Gourley

## Open Grants & Funding

### 20 MILLION TREES PROGRAMME GRANT ROUND TWO

Round Two of the 20 Million Trees Programme invites applications for funding of between \$20,000 and \$100,000 to plant trees in a range of environments across Australia. For more information visit <http://www.nrm.gov.au/national/20-million-trees/competitive-grants-round-two>.

### GREEN ARMY AND 20 MILLION TREES COMMUNITY INFORMATION SESSIONS

Those considering applying for funding through Round Two of the 20 Million Trees Programme are encouraged to attend. Melbourne session: 28 August 10am – 12pm, Metropole Hotel, RSVP by Friday 21 August 2015

### PORT PHILLIP WESTERNPORT CMA COMMUNITY GRANTS ARE COMMING

Grants for up to \$30,000 will be available for volunteer, community or not-for-profit groups. More information will be available shortly at [www.pppwcma.vic.gov.au](http://www.pppwcma.vic.gov.au)

## WANTED: Work experience & positive role models

A letter from Tom Cannon, Teacher at the South Gippsland Specialist School

Dear South Gippy Landcarers,

I coordinate and supervise a small group of students in a Work Experience Program every Wednesday.

The boys are enthusiastic, capable young men that thrive when performing hands on work. For example, they have recently assisted a local farmer with all aspects of farming including farm fencing, hanging gates, moving cattle between paddocks and feeding calves.

I am now seeking out other landholders in the South Gippsland Shire or nearby that would be willing to share their knowledge and skills one day a week for a few hours with these boys.

If you think you may be interested and would like some more details about the program please give me a call or email.

Tom Cannon, Teacher – South Gippsland Specialist School  
Mob 0433 427 996 or cannon.tom.h@edumail.vic.gov.au



Photo above: the students assisting a beef farmer at Kilcunda with some fencing.

Attention: Allambee South, Franklin River, Mt Eccles-Wild Dog Valley, Tarwin Valley, and the South Gippsland Landcare Network members!

Yet to renew your Landcare membership for 2015/2016? If you would like to remain a financial member, please remit \$35 per member family to the South Gippsland Landcare Network. Please make cheques payable to the South Gippsland Landcare Network and post to PO Box 419 LEONGATHA VIC 3953 or Direct debit to Account Name: South Gippsland Landcare Network Bank: Westpac Leongatha BSB: 033-237 Account Number: 181 867

