

SOUTH GIPPSLAND
LANDCARE NETWORK



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

South Gippy Landcare News

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Outgoing Network Co-ordinator Jenny O'Sullivan with new Network Co-ordinator Kate Williams with Mark Walters and Geoff Gourley at the 2015 SGLN AGM. Thanks Jenny for all your wonderful work! Welcome Kate, and congratulations!

Inside:

- ★ Grants available
- ★ Landcare Group Reports
- ★ Project updates
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South Gippy Landcare News is a joint publication between all Landcare groups in the South Gippsland Landcare Network.

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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.



June 30 2015 concluded my first year as Chairman of the South Gippsland Landcare Network. I have been impressed with the achievements of the Network and members in improving the environment and agricultural practises across South Gippsland.

Since the beginning of the financial year, 56,545 indigenous plants have been planted across 33.7 ha and 147 ha of remnant vegetation has been protected. None of this work would have been possible without support from a range of stakeholders.

We continued to work with long term valued partners and appreciate our new relationships that have formed this year as outlined in this report. Through a number of community tree planting days, the Networks relationship with Korumburra, Leongatha and Mirboo Secondary Colleges has also gone from strength to strength.

In recognition of the important role partnering agencies and local businesses have, a supporters lunch was held at my Loch property in August 2014. The lunch provided a great opportunity to learn more about the businesses and agencies Landcare deals with, as well as explore options for future collaboration.

This year has seen the continuation of a number of longer term projects including the 'Friends of Strzelecki Koala - Habitat for Life' project which commenced in 2012. The project, which is funded by the Victorian Governments Communities for Nature program, has this year seen the planting of 19,705 indigenous plants across 16.2 ha.

Two other longer term projects are the Healthy Soils and Demonstrating Sustainable Farm Practices projects supported by the West Gippsland CMA and the Westernport Landcare Network, through funding from the Australian Governments National Landcare Programme. These projects have enabled innovative sustainable agricultural practices to be trialled and implemented in both the West Gippsland and Westernport Catchments across the

Landcare Network area.

To plan for the future of SGLN, Network members, Board and staff held a SGLN strategic planning session at the property of Board member Helen Hasty in December 2014. Those who attended shared their Landcare stories and ideas for future opportunities. This was the first step in developing a Strategic Plan for the next 5 years.

Coal Seam Gas remains an issue in South Gippsland. All the Landcarers I talk to unanimously don't want CSG. The main concern is the risk of contamination of our water and loss of the best productive land in Australia.

Ongoing funding has been a real concern for Landcare. Networking is vital if we are to grow in the modern age. Facebook and the like are necessary ways to do this. We need to network so if funding dries up we will survive.

Don't tell me you don't have internet. Get a smart phone. Your children will be able to help you. If you are into Landcare you need to get connected. Get with it or get left behind. Tell us if it's a problem and we can help you use your phone.

A special thank you to all the Board members who put in many days of voluntary work. They are an awesome group.

Thank you for all your support and I look forward to the next year and beyond.

Mark Walters

Chair - South Gippsland Landcare Network



A great evening was had on Saturday the 10th of October for the South Gippsland Landcare Networks (SGLN) Annual Dinner incorporating the AGM with guest speaker, Geoff Gourley. The event was held on a pleasant spring night at Djinta Djinta Winery in Kardella South.

Chair of the SGLN Board, Mark welcomed all in attendance and thanked the affiliated groups and members of SGLN, along with the Board and staff for their hard work and enthusiasm over the past 12 months.

The AGM elections were then held with 3 vacancies out of 12 positions on the Board. Three nominations were received from Rosemary Trease, Margaret McDonald and Russell Swan. Rosemary is a member of the Mardan Mirboo North Group, Margaret is a Network member and Russell is a member of the Tarwin Valley Landcare Group. As the number of nominations matched the number of vacancies, all three nominees were duly elected to the SGLN Board.

Jean Carnell was elected as Treasurer, with Mark Walters continuing as Chair and Frank Dekker continuing as Vice Chair for their second year of a two year term in accordance with the rules for SGLN. Retiring Treasurer, Dawn Marriotti was thanked by Mark for her great contribution to the Network over many years in fulfilling the role. Retiring Board members, Stephen Hoole and Diana Droog were also acknowledged.

The achievements of the Network were presented by then SGLN Network Coordinator, Jenny O'Sullivan also announced on the night that she would be leaving the role of Network Coordinator at the end of October. Jenny will continue to support SGLN with sustainable agriculture projects.

I'm grateful to have been appointed to the position and enjoying the role so far. Being nearly half way through the current financial year, it is business as usual in terms of delivering projects and working collaboratively with other organisations. Securing future funding to ensure Landcare in the region continues to thrive remains a high priority.

On the topic of funding, the Australian Government have announced two grant programs, one with a focus on sustainable agriculture as part of the National Landcare Programme, the other with a focus on the purchase of equipment and to assist with training as part of the 2015 Volunteer Grants. More information on these grants can be found on page 7.

Being the last Newsletter for the year, on behalf of the Board and Nicole, I would like to thank our volunteers, our sponsors, business partners and the membership for your ongoing commitment to improving the environment and ensuring sustainable food production in South Gippsland. Best wishes for a safe and merry festive season.

Kate Williams
Network Coordinator - South Gippsland Landcare Network

Changes to the SGLN Board

A new treasurer and two new board members were appointed, and two outgoing board members were farewelled at the Networks annual general meeting on the 10th of October 2015.

Hallston Landcare Group member, and long serving board member, Jean Carnell was elected as the treasurer and will fulfil a two year term. Dawn Marotti is the outgoing treasurer and will remain as a general member of the board for a two year team. Dawn, has been on the Board since 2008 and has served as Treasurer since shortly after this time which is a significant effort.

The two new board members are Margaret McDonald, (a general member of the Network) and Russell Swan, (Tarwin Valley Landcare group member). A brief bio on both Margaret and Russell is included on page 4.

The two board members who retired from their positions were Stephen Hoole, (Allambee Community Landcare Group) and Diana Droog, (Franklin River Landcare Group).

Diana was a board member for four years and during that time she applied her skills and knowledge in finance and governance to the role. Stephen was a board member for six years and during that time spent a year as Chairman of the board in 2012 and Chair of the Friends of the Strzelecki Koala Habitat for Life project Steering Group committee since 2013.

On behalf of the staff and members, we thank Dawn, Diana and Stephen for the contribution they have made to the success of Landcare in the region.

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Margaret McDonald (Amor)

By Margaret McDonald

Our family has been a member of the SGLN since Sept 2011. I am a dairy farmer's daughter and now a sheep farmer's wife with two young children, Timothy 8 and Vanessa 6 from the Tetoora Road area. My husband, Cameron, has been a farmer of some 30yrs and runs some 1,500 ewes in the Tetoora Road area and 100 cattle on land at Strzelecki.

Having seen the benefits of tree plantings from the late 1980's in South Gippsland on my parents property I have bought this enthusiasm to my husband's property which was cleared some 100 years ago, as we understand.

Likewise I have been involved with other existing local community groups as well as being founder of the "Connecting Kids in the Community" in our immediate local area which has been going for some 2yrs now ... What you do when you have young children and want to be a part of the local community.

In 2011 and 2012 we fenced and planted out parts of two gullies, one on the west side of the property and one on the east side, some 3,500 trees, and we have a main road that goes through the property! I am treasurer of our local Landcare group Mt Worth & District, since July 2011 and have managed some \$80k worth of funds during this time for the group. We have been a family member of the group since October 2009.

Professionally I have been a Chartered Accountant since 1995, known as Margaret Amor and have predominately worked in public practise, refer to attachment, in the Taxation/Business services area with also experience in auditing and more recently having worked in Industry.

During the past 5-6 yrs I have re-immersed myself back into community work as life has permitted it. In viewing the 2014/15 SGLN Annual Report which covers a diversity of groups within it and the various projects that have/are being undertaken. I believe that I can become a valued Board member not only to maintain the group strategies but to assist in the group's future referring to the Strategic Plan 2015-2020 and its six key themes identified. I look forward to being a part of the Board.



Photo above: Margaret McDonald (l) and Russell Swan (r)

Russell Swan

By Russell Swan

I am originally from the Eastern Suburbs of Melbourne with a 25 year background in Banking and International Finance. Currently I am the Finance and Administration Manager of Saxton Speakers Bureau.

Five years ago we made the move to South Gippsland. We run beef cattle on our 170 acre, hill country farm at Stony Creek. The farm initially had very little vegetation on it and so we are in the process of re-vegetating Stony Creek, which flows through the property. To date we have planted approximately 4,000 trees along the creek, providing a corridor to remnant bush on neighbouring properties.

I was a founding member and the inaugural Secretary of the Tarwin Valley Landcare group at its inception in 2011 and continue to be an active member of the group. Having completed the Whole Farm Planning course, I valued the experience that the lecturers shared. This further inspired me to work with Landcare to improve the property, waterways and revegetate to encourage indigenous flora and fauna back to the area.

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By SGLN Project Officer, Nicole Walsh

The majority of our Year 3 Habitat for Life Koala projects have now wound up. The dry spell over spring caught out a few landholders who will now have to put their planting off until next autumn. A 5.34 ha. direct seeding project was carried in September in Mardan with the assistance of the Gippsland Seed Bank and the landholder John Constantine, a member of the Mardan/Mirboo North Landcare group.

75 expressions of interest were received from across the network for grants in 15/16. Of these we have been able to fund 41 projects from a variety of funding sources, including the final year of funding for the koala project. Congratulations to those of you who were successful and better luck next year to those of you who were not. It certainly pays to re-submit projects that may have missed out from the year before.

Please note that those projects funded under Year 4 of the koala project will need to be completed by the end of May 2016 due to our reporting requirements to DELWP.

Nicole attended a Citizen Science Conference in Canberra in July to present a poster on some of the fantastic work done by our volunteers on collecting data on our Strzelecki koalas.



Photo above: Lucy & Jim (far right) and some of their helpers at the planting day at their Boolarra South property in September 2015.

Photo right: the SAT survey team at Morwell National Park in November 2015.

Project Officers, Nicole and Kate ran a koala activity session at Poowong pre-school in October and were kept busy visiting properties during September and October.

The South Gippsland Koala Working Group met in October and actioned a number of initiatives. One was a follow-up from the Koala Community Forum held in December 2014, where a proposal to translocate some koalas from the Strzelecki area to the southern NSW was discussed. This has been put on hold due to the risk of transmitting chlamydia, (sexually transmitted disease) resulting in blindness and infertility to NSW koalas.

We had a Nursery Growers catch up in August to find out how the Network and local plant nurseries can work together more effectively when it comes to placing plants order for revegetation projects.

Communities for Nature – Latrobe Valley (Northern Strzelecki) Koala Project

Nicole attended a planting day at Lucy & Jim Rasmussen's place in Boolarra South. Lucy and Jim received funding through the Latrobe Koala project to fence and revegetate a gully on their property which include some remnant bush and blackberries which they are getting on top of. A minor accident with a chainsaw has put Jim out of action for the present. We wish him a speedy recovery.

A Spot Assessment Technique (SAT) and Eucalypt ID training day was held at Morwell National Park in November which was attended by fifteen people. Many thanks to Richard Appleton of Hancock Victorian Plantations, Jenny Wolswinkel (Seeds of Gippsland) for their presentations as well as Russell Cluning and Ruth MacFarlane of Hazelwood Forestry for their help on the day.

A Guide to Living with Koalas in the Strzelecki Range brochure has been produced which will be distributed to 962 households within the Latrobe Koala corridor area.

Six of the eight projects have been completed with some further weed control to be undertaken over summer. Two projects have already been completed. This has been a great little project that has created some wonderful partnerships between the Project Officer and local landholders, Landcare groups and the Latrobe Council that we hope to build on in the future.



Discover the benefits of whole farm planning

Next year there is the opportunity for landholders to undertake training in Whole Farm Planning and computerised Farm Mapping through the FarmPlan21 program, which is being offered in Leongatha.

The training is delivered by the Department of Economic Development Jobs Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) in partnership with South Gippsland Landcare Network.



Photo above: Trainer Nick Dudley teaching a group how to use iFarm at a course delivered in Leongatha last year.

FarmPlan21 is a version of Whole Farm Planning being offered by DEDJTR in strategic areas across the state. FarmPlan21 incorporates the use of iFarm, an electronic mapping program in the course. As well as being provided with our latest aerial imagery of your property you will also be provided with access

to iFarm software and a wide range of supporting digital information, which is yours to keep.

FarmPlan21 covers topics including; land use capabilities, farm water supply, pasture production and grazing strategies, drought management, legal requirements on farm, soils and their management, invasive plants and animal control, biodiversity and native vegetation.

The course is run in a friendly group environment by Department of Primary Industries Whole Farm Planning Officer, Nick Dudley and an IT trainer, along with key note speakers.

Fish Creek beef farmer, Jason Keys completed the FarmPlan 21 course at Kee Wee Rup last year and found it to be a useful experience in terms of developing and managing his property. "The sessions on soil and grazing management made me reassess my overall approach to farming the property. Anyone that wants to make the most out of their property should do the course".

Whole Farm Planning is especially important to Gippsland farmers farming steep Strezelecki country. After a season fraught with a high number landslips and erosion, farmers in the hills are being encouraged to participate to identify and manage landslip and erosion. One of the best ways of reducing the threat of landslips and erosion is to take pre-emptive action; identifying areas likely to slip or erode and to manage grazing in this land differently.

On completion of the course you will be able to continue using iFarm to generate maps of your property and to assist in future farm planning.

The course is held over 6 workshops at 3.45 hours per workshop. The course will run over 6 consecutive Wednesdays between April 13 and May 18 2016 from 6.30pm to 9.45pm at the DEDJTR Office on Peart Street, Leongatha. Course cost \$150. For more information or to enroll, please contact the South Gippsland Landcare Network on sgln@landcare.net or call 5662 5759.

What underpins good pasture?

Find out from the experts at a one day pasture management course on Sunday the 6th of March 2016.

The course is being held as part of the Demonstrating Sustainable Farm Practices project across the Port Phillip and Westernport catchment.

This course is a follow on from a soil workshop delivered by Chris Alenson at Poowong in November 2015. If you didn't attend this soils course, but you are wanting to attend the pasture day that is fine, as you don't need to have attended the first workshop to qualify for the pasture course.

The pasture course will be facilitated by Small Farming Specialist, David Stewart. David has significant experience with pasture management and helping producers maximise growth and feed value of pastures.

A graduate from Marcus Oldham Farm Management College in Geelong, David has spent time working as a farm manager, delivering chemical courses, working as a Senior Chemical

Standards Officer, working within the Small Landholder Information Services department at the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) and writing articles in the Weekly Times Farm magazine. David has also obtained other qualifications throughout his career including a graduate Diploma in Sustainable Agriculture and a Diploma in Technical Teaching.

Participants at the pasture workshops will take part in activities that will assist them in determining how different pasture species grow and how they can be influenced by grazing animals.

There is no charge this workshop however registrations are essential for course material. Registrations close Monday the 29th of February 2016 to the South Gippsland Landcare Network on 5662 5759 or sgln@landcare.net. Morning and afternoon tea provided please BYO lunch.

This course is supported by the South Gippsland Landcare Network through funding from the Australian Governments National Landcare Programme and the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority.

Do you have a project in mind that would contribute to the competitiveness and productivity of the regions agriculture industry?

If you answered 'yes', then applications are now open for the National Landcare Programme Sustainable Agriculture Small Grants Round 2015-16 (Small Grants Round).

The grants complement the delivery of the Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper by supporting the resilience, competitiveness and productivity of Australian agricultural and fishing industries.

It is expected that the Small Grants Round will have a positive impact on farming systems groups, community groups and individuals, enabling them to increase industry capacity and support the adoption of productive management practices, while maintaining or enhancing the natural resource base.

Grants of between \$5 500 and \$55 000 (GST inclusive) are available for projects that will achieve the objectives of the programme. The programme objectives are:

- increase the capacity and knowledge of famers and fishers to productively and sustainably manage Australia's natural resources
- the adoption of appropriate management practices that will increase the production or improve product quality while maintaining or enhancing the natural resource base.

Examples of activities that may be eligible include:

- field days, workshops, conferences
- demonstration events
- training or skill development sessions

- community information or education sessions
- development of decision-making tools
- development of new information channels within the current knowledge system
- conducting surveys.

Applications are invited from a range of entities, including farming systems groups, community groups and individuals to undertake projects across a variety of agricultural industries, including cropping, livestock, dairy, horticulture, pastoral, aquaculture and fisheries. All project activities should be completed by 31 December 2017.

Applications close 2pm (AEDT) Monday, 7 December 2015. For grant guidelines visit: www.nrm.gov.au/agsmallgrants

Is your Landcare group looking for funding to assist with the purchase equipment or training?

If so, then the Australian Governments 2015 Volunteer Grants might be of interest.

Volunteer Grants between \$1,000 and \$5,000 are available to help not-for-profit community organisations support their volunteers. These grants will enable community organisations to purchase small equipment items to assist their volunteers, assist with the reimbursement of fuel costs incurred by volunteers (and transport costs for volunteers with disability who are unable to drive), and contribute towards the cost of training courses and background screening.

Applications close 2pm (AEDT) Monday, 9 December 2015. For grant guidelines visit: <https://www.dss.gov.au/grants/grants/funding-open-for-application/volunteer-grants-2015>

Banksia Award winner

Mirboo North Secondary College teacher, Allen Riseley was recently awarded with an environmental award as part of the 2015 Banksia Foundation Awards held in Sydney. Under Allen's watch, students at the college grow native trees from seed, supplying them to local farmers and landholders at low cost to help restore habitat on their properties. This vibrant community enterprise cultivated more than 10,000 trees with the assistance of funding from organisations such as South Gippsland Water.



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Sustainable Agriculture bus trip to Warrigal Creek, Darriman.

On Wednesday the 21st of October, a bus of South Gippsland farmers joined farmers from the Yarram Yarram Landcare Network region to learn about the drought tolerant pasture being trialled by Yarram Yarram Landcare Network farmers and researcher Lisa Warne.

This bus trip was part of the Demonstrating Sustainable Farms project supported by the South Gippsland Landcare Network and West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority through funding from the Australian Governments National Landcare Programme.



Photo above: the field day attendees hear about the outcomes of the pasture trial that have seen more than 500 hectares sown to new perennial pasture systems, using species such as lucerne, cocksfoot, phalaris, fescue and kikuyu. These pastures have demonstrated improved pasture growth, persistence of species, and increased ground cover/litter.



Photo above: Agricultural consultant, Lisa Warne with a pasture sample at the Darriman field day.

Soil Management Course at Poowong

A soil workshop was delivered by Chris Alenson at Poowong in November 2015.



Photo above: Agricultural Consultant, Chris Alenson showing participants how the quality of soil can be determined using a hands on rapid assessment method.

Strategies to improve production in a grazing system

Strategies were discussed at a farm walk on Don and Sally Jelbart's Tarwin Lower property on the 23rd of September. See photo below



This project is supported by the South Gippsland Landcare Network through funding from the Australian Governments National Landcare Programme and West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority.



The 2015 Victorian Landcare Awards ceremony was hosted by Her Excellency The Honourable Linda Dessau AM, Governor of Victoria at Government House, Melbourne on Monday 31 August 2015.

Award recipients from the South Gippsland Landcare Network area included Fish Creek Dairy farmers, Graeme & Gillian Nicoll and Network Coordinator, Kate Williams.

The Nicoll's received the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources Regional Innovation in

Sustainable Farm Practices Award for the West Gippsland Catchment for their approach to sustainable food production.

Kate Williams received the Manpower Young Landcare Leader award for her work in improving local understanding of invasive plant and animal control.



Photo above: (from left) Governor Dessau, Chairman of the South Gippsland Landcare Network Board Mark Walters, and winner of the Manpower Young Landcare Leader Award, Kate Williams.

Photo left: (from centre) Graeme & Gillian Nicoll are presented their award for Sustainable Farm Practices Award for the West Gippsland catchment by a representative from DEDJTR and Governor Dessau.

Wedding bells for Kathleen

Regional Landcare Program Officer, (and former SGLN Project Officer) Kathleen Brack (Bartlett) recently tied the knot to her long term partner, Robert at a winery in Rutherglen. We wish them a lifetime of health and happiness.



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Agnes River District Landcare Group

At a group level the Agnes River District Landcare Group had a quiet year. A number of members were involved with the Corner Inlet Blackberry Action Group assisting with planning and undertaking weed control within targeted areas of the Corner Inlet catchment in partnership with the Yarram Yarram Landcare Network.

Several landholders in the Hazel Park area continue to work together in coordinating their fox control efforts. The Gordon's hosted a fox control demonstration day in November 2014.

Protecting and enhancing the Agnes River and its tributaries remains a priority for landholders in the area. A number of members fenced off and revegetated riparian areas as part of the Australian Governments Corner Inlet Connection program administered by the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority. This work not only creates biodiversity linkages but reduces the amount of nutrient and sediment run off to Corner Inlet, benefiting the seagrass meadows that support a range of marine life.

Allambee Community Landcare Group

This year the group held its 20th Annual General meeting. Whilst only four formal meetings have been held throughout the year, all have been well attended by our steady group of financial members. Our informal end of year social gathering at Mt Worth was well patronised as usual, with the relaxed atmosphere providing the opportunity for much discussion on Landcare and other issues.

Our Landcare membership numbers have remained similar to past years with approximately 15 financial families showing good support for each of our scheduled events for the year. Our group made an application for funding from the Communities for Nature Small to Medium grants program in 2014, however as the program was significantly oversubscribed with a large number of highly competitive applications, unfortunately our submission was not successful.

The achievements of member's Landcare projects was the main focus last year, and after viewing the Lackman property mid-year, we held a farm walk at the Evan's property in November. David and Leanne Evans have owned their property for 15 years and when originally purchased it had been used for grazing dairy cattle and was completely devoid of trees, apart from a few trees around the house. With the aid of funding from various Landcare grants and numerous planting weekends with friends and family involved, they have fenced off many steep gullies and marginal land and revegetated these areas. David took us around the property to show us the extensive tree planting (using in excess of 15,000 trees), slip prevention measures and land improvement done on their property. The walk was followed by a BBQ dinner outside on the lawn completing a very enjoyable day.

Our New Year's social get together is normally held at Mount Worth, however, due to the poor weather conditions the venue was changed to Allambee Camp. Despite the weather, this event was well attended, and it was great to have the use and comfort of their facilities on such a cold miserable January evening.

In June this year our group visited the Warragul & District Historical Museum, with a specially guided tour to view their displays, record files and exhibits. After the tour, a member of the historical society presented a most informative talk on the early

history of selection and settlement of the Allambee district with the subsequent extensive logging and timber milling activities which were prevalent in the early 1900's. This afternoon was well supported and members were keen to look at the many maps and other resources held in the museum which related to our district. It is interesting to think that many of our landholders are now revegetating much of this area with indigenous species to return it to its former status prior to clearing by the early settlers.



Photo above: On the Evans Property farm walk, Allambee Community Landcare group members view the revegetation areas. Note: the trees on the top of the hill were the only trees on their property when it was originally purchased.

Allambee South Landcare Group



Photo above: Students from Mirboo North Secondary College lending a hand with tree planting on the Butchers's Allambee South property on August 14 2015.

The group had a recent planting day on Friday the 14th August. South Gippsland Water allocated \$500.00 grants to local catchment farmers for trees grown by Mirboo North Sec College. Allen Riseley bought about 20 students/cadets out to Tom and Lyn Butcher's place in the morning to plant out 650 trees along the Tarwin River, and a similar number were planted at Frank and Jennie Dekker's property at Hallston in the afternoon.

We all then met at the Hallston Hall for a BBQ lunch. It was a very successful day and with all the rain that has followed the planting I'm sure the plants are now well watered in.

Arawata Landcare Group

SGLN through Nicole Walsh has assisted members in lodging applications for projects, koala habitat and landslips project funded by DEPI through Nick Dudley and CMA with Tony Gardner.

- Adam & Tori Martin qualified for a koala project
- John and Linda Fiddelaers and Jenny Wilsher & Jemma McDonough had a SEMP "Soil Erosion Management Plan" developed for their property as part of the Healthy

Sustainable Farms Project

- Also a Federal grant realised \$20K that will be shared between 3-4 recipients

The SGLN was informed of its shortcomings regarding consulting back with the groups on approval of projects as one was not eligible according to our criteria and the farm has degraded since it was purchased. Consultation should be mandatory as some applications would be reviewed regarding their participation and good land management practice.

The Reservoir project has cranked up again throughout this year with considerable pine harvesting including the Hyland reservoir with older stock. The next phase will be more difficult as it is all on the North side of the Western Reservoir as well as some very steep terrain. South Gippsland Water have migrated the project to the Bellview reservoir on the western side of Arawata. Several locals have engaged the contractor to harvest private plantations.

Weeds were again on the agenda through attendance at the Community Weeds Task Force with Rob and Linda as well as Syd who is an inaugural member as is Martin Chatfield. Again we have gone through yet another name change DEPI as the enforcement body, no surprise as they can isolate the community again. Syd also attended the Weed Society AGM and 2 day field days at Phillip Island and French Island. Rob & Craig upgraded the spray trailer motor/pump configuration.

Weeds are prominent on the Arawata Landcare agenda and several landholders are to be approached regarding their situation.

The SGLN through Jenny O'Sullivan has engaged on more realistic day events which encompass the whole farming activity network in a field she is familiar with. This will give the forums a stronger base and have rewards for all landcare and emerging agricultural landholders.

Fish Creek Landcare Group

The Fish Creek Landcare group continues to focus on encouraging the local community in ecological management of remnant bush and farm land, with protection of creeks and drains, and maintenance of a healthy balance between agriculture, remnant vegetation and wildlife.

We are encouraging farmers, interested locals and a significant lifestyle/weekender population to meet this focus with education, native vegetation planting, fencing, weed management and organising interesting local walks.

Our group has 51 members which is less than the past few years, but we have had a significant review of our current financial membership resulting in fewer numbers. We plan to survey our members to put into place activities to meet their needs.

Activities for the past year include:

- Working with the Fish Creek Development group to maintain and encourage use of the Mt Nicoll circuit track.
- Continuing to liaise with the WGCMA with their works of willow removal and weed eradication along the Fish Creek near the township.
- Cheryl Glowry, a local and published historian, spoke at the last AGM on the "History of Fish Creek before the Railways arrived in 1892"
- Jonathon Stevenson, a marine biologist and member of Parks Victoria, presented an evening talk on "The Unique

South"

- We are currently working with the Fish Creek Community Garden to re vegetate a steep slope adjacent to the garden and a small section of the rail trail.

Our group has 70 members (this includes families) with very diverse needs and involvement, and an executive committee of 8. Our meetings are bimonthly and we encourage all members to attend and participate in discussion.

Foster North Landcare sub-group

Earlier this year the group moved from being an independent group to a sub-group of the Landcare Network because executive officer positions were unable to be filled. The group will remain a sub-group until a time when interest is shown to fill the positions once again.

Following this, there have been a couple of events over the year. A day at the Sandiford's blueberry and hazelnut farm on Amy's Track was popular. Those that attended learnt about how Ian and Chris manage their land to produce blueberries and hazelnuts. People were keen to find out if blueberry production was suitable for their properties and what the economics of production were.

In June a wild deer information session was held at the Stony Creek Racecourse. Several members attended to learn about their options for the control of wild deer that are having an impact on the local environment.

The group are next catching up over dinner at the Foster Pub on October 3rd 2015. Former group Secretary and Treasurer Rob and Vivienne Jones are moving out of the area. The dinner will provide an opportunity to say thanks to the Jones's for their involvement with Landcare and wish them well with their future endeavours.



Photo above: Ian Sandiford (on the right) explaining the growth and life cycle of blueberries to the group as part of the farm walk in May 2015.

Franklin River Landcare Group

The group was involved with a bike ride event in partnership with SGLN earlier in the year as part of the Sea Change Festival. The bike riders rode along the rail train from Foster and learnt about the history of the Koala Reserve off Rae Knee. We then visited Alan and Judy Bacon's Toora farm on the Franklin River to look at the tree planting works they have undertaken over many years before heading north to the Franklin River Reserve for a BBQ lunch at the Rotunda catered by the group.

Aside from the bike ride event, we also had a walk and Xmas breakup at Diana Droog and Hugh Sarjeant's property right on Corner Inlet at Toora in December 2014. There was some entertaining discussion about local history over drinks and apple strudel for desert. Hugh and Diana were involved with blackberry spraying over summer as part of the Corner Inlet Blackberry Taskforce project.

Friends of Turtons Creek

Not even a fallen Eucalypt blocking the road could stop more than 50 people attending the event to celebrate the beauty, history and future plans for Turtons Creek in January. The tree had fallen in the morning and blocked traffic in either direction. Undeterred, over 50 attendees sat up their deck chairs up on the road around the tree and hosted their meeting looking over the creek. The creek and surrounding area also has a rich history, and was the site of a gold rush in the 1870's. Many of the attendees, such as Maurice Pyle, grew up in the area and spoke about this history. This day was followed up by looking at the ecological values of the area in March.

The group has opened a new track earlier this year, connecting the main Turtons Creek Falls to the Little Falls upstream. Recently the DELWP (Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning) staff descended on the Little Falls picnic area to install a picnic table, a viewing bench, and a fire pit. They also put up a new interpretive sign with shelter downstream at the main falls area. Signage has been put up around the area through project funding.

The picnic table had been made to order by the Mirboo North Community Mens' Shed, and it came with a very pleasant surprise in the form of an inscribed picnic bench, thrown in as a freebie by the Wednesday Warriors. The surprise bench has been put in a lovely spot, directly overlooking the Little Falls and the creek crossing to the new fern-shaded track. Many thanks to both the Men's Shed and the Wednesday Warriors for contributing to the ongoing improvement of this area.

Many thanks also go out to Jenny O'Sullivan (South Gippsland Landcare Network) and Suzette Fullerton (DELWP) for not only organising the new infrastructure, but also for being so instrumental in the formation of the Friends of Turtons Creek. Their contribution to this little corner of bush is greatly appreciated. These projects have been funded by State Government through a Communities for Nature grant and the South Gippsland Shire Council.



Photo above: The newly installed park bench made by the Wednesday Warriors is already being put to use.

Hallston Landcare Group

Over the past 12 months the group have been involved in a couple of tree planting days and several members of the group are actively undertaking works on their own properties.

Loch Nyora Landcare Group

The Loch Nyora Landcare Group (LNLG) is approaching its 20th anniversary, having been established in May 1996 and the contribution it and its members have made to the local environment is very clearly seen throughout the district. In fact, its work has been so successful, one of our problems today is retaining interest as many who live in the area get the impression

that all the hard work is done.

However, as new people come to live in this beautiful region and development continues, there remains much work to be done in the fields of endangered species, wildlife habitat, protecting remnant bush, extending planted corridors, education and much else. Consequently, the LNLG has, over the past couple of years, refocused its attention towards new membership and new and innovative projects on private and public land.



While ongoing projects like the rehabilitation of Hilda Falls at Loch are managed by the group, in others we work closely with the South Gippsland Landcare Group, and other groups in the network, to support field days on private properties around the value of revegetation for livestock and pasture, the protection of endangered species like the Sword Grass Brown Butterfly, sustainable farming on small acreages, improving soils to name just some.

Today, the LNLG has a strong and diverse committee, a sound financial position and a commitment to continue the good work done by previous committees and members over nearly two decades.

Mardan Mirboo North Landcare Group

For the last year our group has been a bit quiet on the tree planting focus. This has been for a couple of reasons, one being most of our members did not have any major projects on the go and the changes in the funding have impacted.

We have had meetings or social occasions every second month and our guest speakers have been from our realms. Erica Corr spoke on flower essences and their benefits. Alec Campbell spoke on European wasps and their eradication. Helen Hasty on ricotta and butter making. We have had a movie and pizza night watching "The Land of the Lyrebird" a short movie made by the Mt. Worth Landcare group. It is well worth watching.

Many of our members over the year have taken advantage of the activities offered by the South Gippsland Landcare Network. These include a 3 day Paddock to Plate trip, blackberry rust presentation and an owl presentation at the old mill site from the Latrobe region. Quite a few of our members also attended a Landcare- South Gippsland Bee Club Presentation and supper at the Berry's Creek Hall. The numerous network activities have been informative and enjoyable.

Looking forward to next year.

Mt Eccles/Wild Dog Valley Landcare Group

The group held two working bees/meetings at Hamanns bush in 2014, one on the 5th July and the other in September.

There have been two group planting days over the last twelve months at Warren & Vicki Kenny's place; one on the 31st of May and the other on the 27th of June 2015. In total, 3,000 trees were planted over the two days by group members.

There was a vermin control day at the Kenny's in June with Landcare members, and South Gippsland Field and Game.

The group held its AGM on the 28th June 2015, followed by a general meeting.

Mt Lyall Landcare Group

The Group held the 23rd Annual General Meeting and Dinner at the Poowong Hotel and was attended by 25 members.

The guest speaker was Mr. Stan Glowacki who provided us with an outstanding and well informed presentation on both native and European bees and included a wide variety of specimens. Stan owns Jeeralang Apiary Supplies and enjoys a keen interest in bees particularly native bees. In conjunction with the Australian native bee research centre in Canberra collects and identifies native bees in and around Jeeralang Junction.

Some interesting highlights included;

- Require 600 to 800 hives to make a reasonable living.
- Five hives produce about 80kgs honey per year.
- Native bees and European bees can live together in the same area.
- Leaf cutter bees eat rose petals to line their burrows in the ground.
- Bees uniquely have four wings. When a bee's wings are damaged they are expelled from the hive.
- Bees need pollen and nectar to remain healthy and need fresh water all year round.
- Generally bees handled quietly will not attack. If bees get nasty they will sting.
- Any bird attracting plant will also attract bees.
- In hot weather bees use an evaporative cooler technique at the entrance of the hive to keep cool.

Our first committee meeting was held in October at which the following Executive was established.

President, Jeff Ferrier; Vice President, Paul Cook; Secretary, Frank Bugeja; Treasurer, Lyn Mitchard; Newsletter Editor, Leesa Grant; Equipment Officers, Bill Loughridge and Harold Hillberg; Committee: Anne-Mette McNamara, Gilmore Douglas and Rudy Youssef.

The Group Membership has been maintained at around 40 landholders and our financial position continues to be very sound.

Early this year the Group farewelled Marlene Marsden who has moved to Melbourne because of ill health. Marlene has been a member of Landcare for many years and actively participated at both Group and Network levels. In 2011 Marlene was recognised with a Silver Award on the Landcare Honour Roll.

Members participated in CMA/Landcare and Melbourne Water projects and educational initiatives throughout the year and attended many interesting and informative field days and demonstrations. In particular the Group decided to participate in the Red Sword Grass Brown Butterfly project.

Members also attended/participated in the National Landcare Conference and attended the Network AGM.

Following on from an earlier AGM presentation on Eucalypt dieback, a field day was held in May. We were privileged, indeed

fortunate to have this activity led by Mr David Smith from DEDJTR. David is a Forest Pathologist/Entomologist/ Forest Biosecurity Officer within the Office of the Chief Plant Health Officer of Biosecurity. David's experience and knowledge is unique in Victoria, even Australia. Attending members were given a broad but detailed overview of basic methods for the lay person to use to determine the health of a remnant forest. Examples of a number of obvious pests and diseases were identified at various locations visited. Samples from four different eucalypt die back locations were collected under David's guidance and have since been analysed. Two sites were positive for *Phytophthora cinnamomi*, one site positive for *Ophiostoma* and one site positive for another fungus species. A detailed discussion on causes of diseases, the presence of pests and the methods that might be employed to manage situations of dieback continued at all the sites visited. David made a limited number of copies of his book "A Field Guide to Plantation Health Surveillance in Victoria" available to our members.

Members continued to monitor the weed situation at former Mt Lyall Primary school site and a working bee is planned for this Spring. Our Group planted out this site with natives 10 years ago.

The group continues to provide members with an inventory of plant and equipment for weed control for loan and/or hire and is very ably maintained by Harold Hillberg and Bill Loughridge. The Mt Lyall Group Newsletter was produced and delivered by email and/or post to all members during the year. Our 24rd AGM was held on October 7th, 2014 at the Poowong Hotel.

Nerrena Landcare Group

On 6/9/2014 Nerrena Landcare group hosted 15 keen participants at our 'Pedal to Produce' event, who took advantage of wonderful spring weather to celebrate Landcare Week. Meeting at the Koonwarra Farmers Market with their bikes, the Landcarers and friends took the opportunity to buy some of the delicious produce that was for sale.



The bike ride start was delayed as riders kept ducking into the market for just one more thing! After stashing our purchases in the support bus esky it was time to start our tour de Koony, riding south to Sewells Road and our first stop.

At the farm of Veronica and Stuart Greaves we were able to look at their latest Landcare project, a landslip rehabilitation site. Standing on top of the hill we had a great overview of the problem and the solution that was devised to overcome it. We also had a great insight to the how the Greaves have restored and enhanced the remnant bush on their property, fencing off areas next to the creek and other remnants, and developing linkages. We were able to see some of the Wiltipoll ewes and lambs that Veronica and Stuart farm. After some welcome morning tea, it

was back to the bikes to continue our journey.

Riding from the Greaves' property to our next stop at Jill and Michael Vella's venison farm through bush lined country roads was a pleasure in the spring sunshine, with birds and animals aplenty to observe on the way. The bike riders were way too scary for an echidna who quickly dug itself into the trackside for safety. During a venison sausage lunch an informative roundtable discussion about food production on small properties was held. A tour of the Vella's deer farm finished off the day.

We met on 30/1/2014 at the Koonwarra Recreation Reserve to walk the rail trail and check out the work being done on the trestle bridges. This was an informal get together to walk, have a BBQ (thanks Richard and Zoe!) and a chat. We were impressed by the scale of the work and marvelled at the turn of the last century engineering that built bridges capable of supporting a laden train over such challenging ground essentially by hand.

On 21/4/2015 a walk and informal meeting was held and the Koonwarra Recreation Reserve along with Michelle Harris who is a local recreation consultant who has been engaged by the Committee of Management to develop the Koonwarra Recreation Reserve Master Plan. The plan will identify a range of facility improvements and infrastructure projects to improve the reserve over the next 10 years. The Committee is looking to formalise the informal pathways to the Tarwin River west in the bushland area in between the oval and the river and would like some input from the Landcare group. Given the weather is dark and cold in the evening at this time of year, we went to Coral and Kevin's place for BBQ and meeting.

The group applied for and was awarded a 25th Anniversary Landcare grant for Smarter Farm Planning - Environmental Action and Food Production. This project will engage 11 local land holders to improve land management by developing management plans. Activities include a farm ecology workshops for risk identification and mitigation. Action plans will tackle priority issues such as riparian and grazing management, ground cover, soil management and remnant vegetation. The grant was for \$22,000.00. The success of 11 implemented Environmental Management plans was celebrated at Moos in Meeniyon with a dinner using all our produce on Sept 17th.



On 14/6/2015 we joined with Rotarians from Malvern and Chadstone for a tree planting with members of the Leongatha Rotary Club. The event was held at the Meeniyon Wastewater Treatment Lagoons and Wetlands managed by South Gippsland Water. As well as the tree planting, Martin and Bree from SG Water provided a guided tour of the wetlands. We learned about the processes involved in turning wastewater to a level that can be reused by nearby farms, businesses and sporting grounds. After a fabulous effort planting all those plants a BBQ lunch courtesy of the Leongatha Rotary Club was enjoyed by all.

On 17/8/2015 the group together with Leongatha Secondary College year 11 students at Koonwarra had a tree planting at Ben and Jemima's Koala project site. Lots of lovely habitat for our furry friends was created.

The Nerrena LC group is currently applying for funding from the Shire of South Gippsland to appoint Michelle Harris to prepare an action plan for revegetation and development of the Black Spur Creek wetlands. The group identified this area of public land adjacent to the rail trail during our walk (and during many previous discussions) as in need of protection and restoration. We could have walking tracks down to the river, plantings to restore the riparian and wet land areas and informational and educational signage. As VicRoads has finalised (but not funded) the route of the South Gippsland Hwy realignment we are able to plan with certainty. The Shire, Catchment Management Authority, VicRoads, SGLN, The Rail Trail committee, DELWP and the Society for Growing Australian Plants are supporting our application for a planning grant, which we can use to attract proper funding for the project. Kate Walsh is coordinating this for the Nerrena group, with support from Jill Vella. The scale of the project is beyond the scope of the group to do by ourselves, so we need proper funding to achieve our goals.

Our AGM will have Jill Plowright from Foster to talk to us about birds. We will meet at the Waratah Hills winery in Fish Creek for Lunch.

South Gippsland Equine Landcare Group

It has been another busy year for the group with plenty of events and group interaction via social media.

In April 2015, Fleur Stefani (group Treasurer) and of Prom Coast Barefoot Trimming showcased the modifications she has been making on her Fish Creek property as part of a property walk incorporating the groups AGM.

As part of the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authorities 'Green Carpet' showcase, the group was acknowledged for their efforts as an innovative Landcare group. Larissa Judd and Fleur Stefani represented the group at a special presentation lunch held at the Taralgon Winery in April 2015.

On the 19th of June 2015, the group held an evening presentation in Leongatha with guest speaker, Amanda McCartney who is an Equine Specialist with Zoetis. Zoe discussed equine parasites, when to worm, what to worm for, with and how often.



Poowong Landcare Group

It's been a busy year for Landcare at Poowong.

Many members have attended field days and thousands of plants have been put in the ground.

One of the field days was about more economical ways to put plants in the ground at Mark Walter's farm. It's very pleasing to notice that there has been a swing away from tube stock planting to Hiko planting. This has been in both South Gippsland and Bass Coast Landcare groups. Hikos have almost identical outcomes to tube-stock. Hikos are half the cost, so why would you not use them? The proviso is that you are planting out at least 1000 plants. Direct seeding is considered the best option if the land is tractorable. Incidentally, Hikos are the preferred planting method for Landcare groups all over Australia.

Members have participated in a number of other field days, including a 'bees in your bushland' evening; this was attended by over 130 people. Poowong combined with a Bass Coast Group on a farm walk, followed by drinks and pizza at the Kernot Store.

There were numerous other field days on topics of interest such as koalas, wild deer, growing blueberries, managing wet soils, composting and the sword-grass Brown Butterfly project.

A special thanks, to Wendy Davis who after 6 years as secretary is stepping down. Her contribution has been exceptional.

Other major contributors to Poowong Landcare include Jeff and Elvie Clark, John Jefferis, Geoff Douglas, Steve and Bernie Halliday, Peter and Sue Jacques and Ray Boys. Once again, thank you all for your support and I look forward to seeing you all at meetings and out in the field.

Tarwin Landcare Group

This year the Tarwin group has celebrated the history of the area. In December they met at the Tarwin Cemetery to hear local history of the cemetery from Ken and Marg Fisher and learn about the native grasses from Michael Buckley.



In March, an interesting 'History of Cape Liptrap' event was held at Mittag's property. The group learnt about the early history of the area from members of the Wisner family, finishing with a walk at the beach and discussion of indigenous history of the area.



Several group members have been busy over the last 12 months

as part of their involvement with the Cape Liptrap to Bunurong Environmental Partnership Program delivered in partnership by the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority and SGLN through funding from the Victorian Government.

Group members have also been involved with trials as part of the Healthy Soils Sustainable Farms' project delivered in partnership with the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority through funding from the Australian Governments National Landcare programme.

The groups focus has been on the enhancement of the flora reserve next to the Tarwin Lower Recreation Reserve and this will likely continue into the near future.

Tarwin Valley Landcare Group

This year has been a quiet one as a collective group, but a huge year for our individual landholders.

After missing out on the trust for nature grant we applied for last year, we dusted ourselves off and got back in the ring for another shot at the grants on offer for this year. With a lot of help from Kate Williams at Landcare HQ we were lucky enough to secure \$50,000 for the "Preservation and Recruitment of E. Strzeleckii".

This grant has allowed a majority of our group's member to complete fencing, planting and preservation works on their respective properties. This has been a great outcome for the endangered eucalypt.

In May the group came together at Mick and Cara Stuart's property for a bbq meet and greet. The group purchased 2000+ tube stock and these were allocated for all those members that could attend. The day was a great success, with a lot of not so active members coming along for a chat and a snag.

With all of our individual member busy planting and fencing, there hasn't been much time for socializing. With all the hard work done for this year hopefully there will be time in the upcoming year for some more BBQ's and planting days. Bring on 2015-16!!

Triholm Landcare Group

We currently have 23 financial members and the current office bearers were re-elected at our AGM on the 7th of September 2015.

A number of members have accessed their own funding through various funding opportunities and continue to revegetate or carry out other sustainable activities such as eradicating weeds on dams.

As a group we had a very interesting meeting at Paul Stewart and Ann Bullen's place where they have planted out 45 acres of their 75 acre property to bush. They have planted over 55,000 trees and understory and of the 50 species used, 30 are self-propagating. The property is a credit to their tireless hard work and dedication towards eradicating all weeds.

We also had a combined meeting with the Poowong Landcare Group where Bob Wilson, Biosecurity Area Leader Gippsland with DEDJTR, spoke on the operational position for the coming weed season and answered many questions on our local weed problems.

The group is preparing to be proactive this coming weed season by purchasing signs which will be displayed in the area, and a letter drop to all landholders encouraging people to deal with their weeds, which is obviously still our main focus.

Coming Events

Corner Inlet Blackberry Action Group to host a community celebration

The Corner Inlet Blackberry Action Group (CIBAG) are hosting a community celebration on Saturday the 5th of December at Agnes Falls rotunda from 11am.

What: Live music, blackberry information, and a chance to learn more about CIBAG and how you can get involved from the newly appointed CIBAG Project Officer, Matt Stephenson.

RSVP to Raelene Bond at Raelene.ngaire@gmail.com.

Showcasing our soils on World Soil Day!

Get to know the soil types in our region by coming on a South Gippsland Soils Tour on Friday the 4th of December 2015 9.45am to 2pm. The bus tour commences and concludes at the Inverloch Community Centre. Lunch included.

Presenters include:

Doug Crawford, Nick Dudley (DEDJTR) and Chris Alenson, Soils Consultant.

Places are limited. Bookings are essential to the South Gippsland

Landcare Network at sgln@landcare.net or 0428 317 928.

This project is supported by the West Gippsland Catchment Management Project, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme and the Victorian State Government.



Front Page Photo:

Jenny O'Sullivan and Kate Williams with Chair of the Board Mark Walters and guest speaker, Geoff Gourley at Djinta Djinta Winery. Geoff gave an insightful presentation echoing the sentiment of 'be the change you want to see'. Geoff is passionate about leading, developing and influencing businesses and communities to a sustainable future. To find out more about Geoff and his company visit <http://gemstartechnology.com/about/>.

