

South Gippy

Landcare News

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

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Summer 2017

It's the project issue!

2017 in review

SOUTH GIPPSLAND
LANDCARE NETWORK



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South Gippy Landcare News is distributed to all members of the South Gippsland Landcare Network and at field days and festivals. 500 copies are circulated in the South Gippsland and Westernport catchments.

Seasons greeting to all fellow SGLN members and what a busy time of year it always is.

Why everything has to be completed before Christmas is a concept that puts a lot of extra pressure on people when really it is the festive season where we should be unwinding and reflecting on the year's achievements. Which is a great segue into mentioning the many and varied achievements of our Network during 2017, a testament to our hard-working coordinator, Jill Vella and our dedicated board members.

On behalf of the SGLN board, I would like to extend a warm Christmas wish of health, happiness and safety over this special time of year and trust that all members of the SGLN enjoy their break at the end of the year and come back in 2018 relaxed, refreshed and full of anticipation for an exciting year of Landcare ahead.

Merry Christmas to all SGLN members

Frank Dekker

Chair - South Gippsland Landcare Network



Photo below; Frank delivering the Chairs address at the AGM in his favorite Richmond tie. Carn the tiges!



Hi and welcome to the last edition of *South Gipps Landcare News for 2017*

2017 is almost done, and we have achieved a lot as a network this year.

You probably have noticed that we do not have quite as many resources as we used to- the most telling manifestation of this being the lack of project officers in the network. These days the coordinator is the project officer, with help from contractors such as Jenny O'Sullivan. The programs we are delivering are still of great value, however. Many of them are reaching their conclusion with the end of the 2017/18 financial year being projects end for the Healthy Soils, Sustainable Farms, Corner Inlet Connections and the Sustainable Farming in the Westernport catchment projects all being wrapped up.

Kate will be coming back to work from mid February, 2018. We will enjoy a week of working together to hand over the network operations. Kate will be working on Mondays and Tuesdays in the first instance, until the end of the FY. The Board will make a decision on staffing the extra day, early in the New Year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for the great Landcare work you do. It has made the job I have to do easier with your help. The Landcare ethos and the Landcare community are the biggest strengths of this movement. The groups and the members of these groups are the drivers for Landcare. It is your group projects, coordinated weed control and pest control, and thirst for information, your landscape vision that informs your revegetation projects that drives the Network forward on your behalf. We are always looking for funding and projects that support the members to improve your farms and your farming practice.

We have made a great deal of effort to update our membership records this year. This newsletter will be something a bit different. I am sending it as a PDF to all members that are on our Network Notes mailing list.

If you are not currently a financial member of your group or the Network I would strongly encourage you to join up again. The cost of this is not very much - \$35.00 for a family SGLN membership, and we have the online payment system that makes renewing your membership dead easy! Please consider supporting us as it helps us help you!

This year we focussed on-

- Membership lists and getting and keeping them updated
- Having an online portal to receive payments
- Bringing our three websites into one, so as to make keeping it up to date easier
- Using a mailing list to send Network Notes and renewal notices.
- Sharing our goings on with you on social media
- Bringing our mailed Newsletter back in house to contain costs
- Amalgamating two sets of two Landcare groups. This has led to renewed vigour in the commingled groups. It is a brave step to do this, as our groups have up to 30 years of proud achievements, and it can be a sad day to agree to lose a loved Landcare group name. However our groups have adapted before, as many were Farm Tree Groups and River protection Groups before they were Landcare groups. The Landcare landscape is changing as funding becomes harder to access and tied to projects rather than facilitators.

Congratulations to the Arawata and Mt Eccles groups for

forming the Arawata 'super group' and to Tarwin Valley who has amalgamated with Nerrena, to form a group which will change its name to Tarwin Valley! May you live long and prosper.

- Our Projects are reported on in the body of this newsletter. We are delivering quality field days and events, making sure you get the information you need to farm sustainably and profitably according to the Landcare ethos. These project include, Healthy Soils, Sustainable Farms, Demonstrating Sustainable Farming Practices in the Westernport Catchment, Corner Inlet Connections, Nyora Primary School Biodiversity Blitz, delivering grants for the Australian Landcare Program and the Ragwort Control Project. We have also contributed to the Spring Farm Fair at Buckley Park Community Farm in Fish Creek.
- SGLN supported the new Intrepid Landcare group until they incorporated under Landcare Victoria Inc. The SGLN board was pleased to support them until they had enough members, office bearers and a bank account and were able to go it alone.

Have a safe, happy Christmas filled with love and good things and a wonderful New Year.

Yours in Landcare,

Jill Vella

**Network Coordinator- South Gippsland Landcare Network
(Maternity Leave replacement)**



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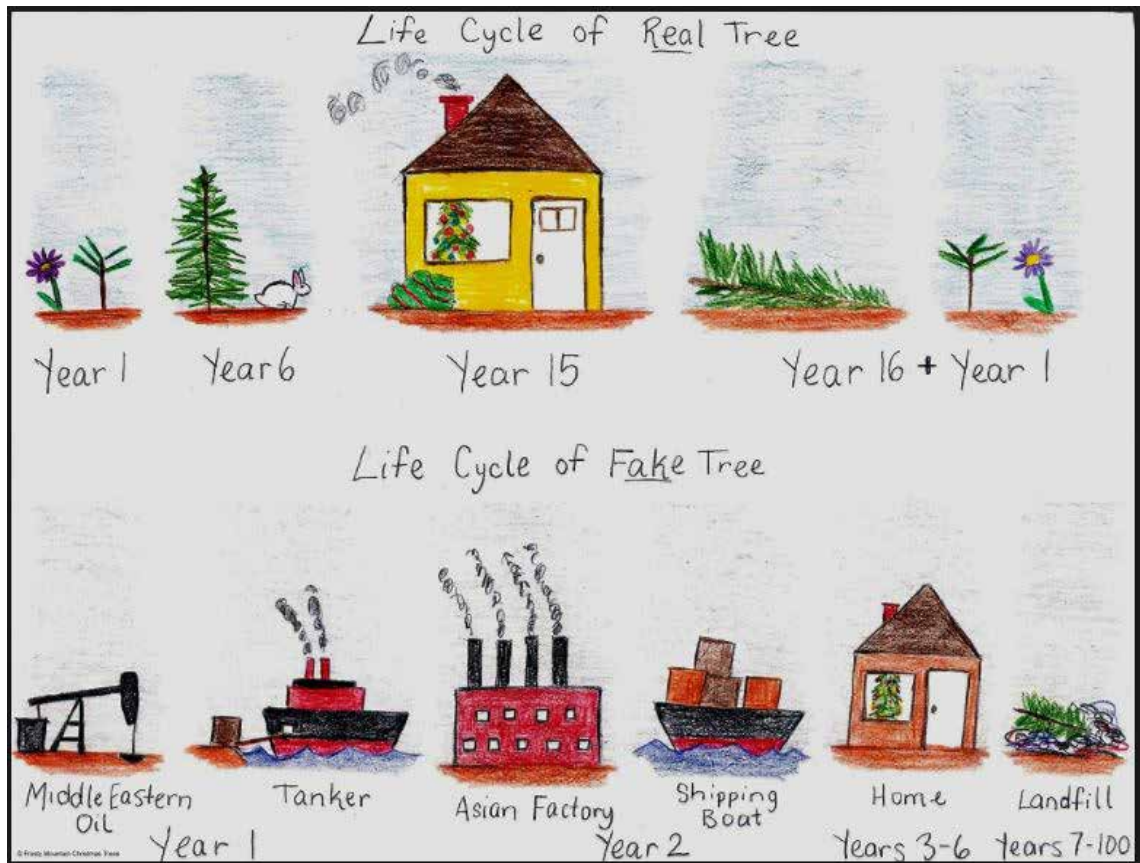
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The 12 tips of Christmas

Have a very merry Landcare Christmas using our 12 tips of Christmas

1. Think Local. This applies to pretty much everything from your tree, your food and drink and your presents. By buying locally you are reducing emissions and also supporting local businesses.
2. Un wrap. One of the biggest sources of waste each Christmas is wrapping paper, with more than 8,000 tonnes being used each year – the equivalent of approximately 50,000 trees. Try using a fabric wrap, a gorgeous hanky, tea towel, scarf or quilting piece that becomes part of the gift. The Japanese call it 'Furoshiki' and you can look for a tutorial on YouTube.
3. Use a real tree. Most Christmas trees sold in Australia are plantation grown under sustainable forestry systems. As they reach maturity they help act as a filter to clean the air before being cut down for the festive season. After use, compost the remains. Just remember that pine trees have a allelopathic effect on other plants, so leave the compost to mature before use.
4. Don't Waste Food. Australian households and businesses are throwing away an estimated 4 million tonnes of food every year. That's enough to fill 450,000 garbage trucks with wasted food. Christmas is one of the worst times, so plan ahead and shop mindfully, which not only saves you money but also the environment.
5. Donate unwanted gifts – don't throw them out! Donate to your local charity shop – the majority of their revenue comes from goods donated so donations are vital.
6. Or – regift. There is nothing wrong with passing on a present – just keep track of where it came from to avoid hurt feelings!
7. This year, think about swapping physical gifts for experiences or donations to a cause or charity that needs support. SGLN springs to mind immediately; use our Give Now site to support our programs and give a gift that really counts! <https://www.givenow.com.au/landcaretrees>
8. Think twice about gifts that need batteries. Batteries are another toxic nightmare that come part and parcel with Christmas. Australians spend around \$400 million each year on batteries – that's about \$50 per household! This also equates to an annual waste of over 8,000 tonnes of used batteries. Rechargeable batteries have up to 32 times less impact on the environment than disposable batteries and after using them a few times you are actually saving money as well as energy. Search for local recycling options on [RecyclingNearYou.com.au/batteries](https://www.RecyclingNearYou.com.au/batteries).
9. Switch off & Switch Down. Make sure your Christmas lights aren't hogging the electricity all night: use a timer and energy-efficient choices like LED bulbs instead of incandescent. LED lights use 95% less energy and cost less to run.
10. Go digital & send e-cards. Why not make your own personalised 'e-card' that can be emailed to your friends and colleagues rather than sending a real one? If you really must spread some festive cheer by post, consider giving charity cards. Always look for cards made on recycled paper.
11. If you travel over Christmas, there are a number of things you can do to reduce the impact of your trip. Consider offsetting your emissions when travelling. When you leave the house make sure you turn off all electricals at the source to reduce usage. Gadgets left on standby can use up to 10% more than when completely switched off which adds up if you are away for a few weeks.
12. Scented candle and those made from paraffin can release nasty chemicals into the air. Unscented candles made from soy, beeswax or natural vegetable-based wax can give the ambience you are after.



Intrepid Landcare - 6 months on by Kathleen Brack

Earlier this year, SGLN was able to sponsor a young person to attend the Intrepid Landcare retreat. After the retreat, the Intrepids formed a group; at first as a sub group of SGLN. Our Board was pleased to be able to support this wonderful initiative



The Gippsland Intrepid Retreat was held at Wilson's Promontory on Saturday, 13 May and Sunday, 14 May 2017. The two day retreat was co-designed by Intrepid Landcare Inc. and the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority and aimed to inspire and connect a small

group of young people aged 18 to 35 years old from the Gippsland region and Victoria.

There were of total of 31 applicants, of which 18 young people attended. The retreat hoped to help participants:

- connect with their local Landcare networks and groups
- develop a greater awareness and understanding of Landcare and environmental issues
- gain leadership skills and connect to other like-minded people to empower them to act and lead with Landcare

The retreat included a range of activities to inspire and empower. Participants were able to learn about the surrounding environment through several outdoor activities including a sunrise hike up Mt Oberon, undertaking vegetation maintenance and participating in a cultural hike with Luke Johnson, a local indigenous ranger from Parks Victoria.

Attendees undertook leadership training, met with local Landcare mentors, participated in a project development workshop and discussed conservation issues. Megan Rowlett and Naomi Edwards, co-founders of Intrepid Landcare and facilitators of the Retreat provided inspiring presentations about their experiences in Landcare and what it takes to lead a Landcare initiative, including the challenges, opportunities and adventures that are possible with Landcare.

The Intrepid Landcare Leadership Retreat in Gippsland was hosted by West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority with support from the Victorian Landcare Program, South Gippsland Landcare Network, Yarram Yarram Landcare Network, Bass Coast

Landcare Network, Latrobe Catchment Landcare Network, Farm Trees and Landcare Association, and the Victorian Landcare Council.

Six months on we wanted to see what impact the retreat had on participants.

As part of the evaluation of the retreat's success, attendees were surveyed on what they have done since the retreat. Out of 18 participants, 17 responses to the survey were received.

The results found retreat participants have

1. Participated in volunteering
2. Become Landcare members

3. Increased their awareness of Landcare
4. Increased their knowledge on how to join Landcare
5. Improved their skills

These results show that the retreat encouraged participants to take action and participate in improving the environment.

Importantly, the retreat was the catalyst for the creation of Gippsland Intrepid Landcare, which is a group that aims to connect 18 to 35 year olds to their region through environmental projects and epic adventures. Currently the group has 32 financial members and 300 followers on Facebook.

Since the Gippsland Intrepid Landcare Retreat, participants have been inspired and volunteered for a range of Landcare and environmental groups. Fourteen out of 17 participants (82.35%) have volunteered for a Landcare or environmental group. These opportunities have included volunteering with:

- Gippsland Intrepid Landcare (tree planting event or on the committee)
- Energy Innovation Coop
- Meeniyen Community Garden
- Heytesbury Landcare Network
- Bengworden Landcare
- Australian Wildlife Conservancy
- Wonthaggi Seed Bank
- Phillip Island Nature Parks
- Korumburra Landcare Group
- Ballarat Landcare Group
- Avon Landcare Group



Photo above :Tree planting at Kilcunda

Since the Gippsland Intrepid Landcare Retreat, participants are more likely to be a member of a Landcare group. Of the retreat's attendees, 12 people (70.59% of participants) are now members of a Landcare group. Half of the retreat's participants (nine people) have joined a Landcare group since the retreat.

Participants belong to:

- Gippsland Intrepid Landcare Group
- Bengworden Landcare Group
- Wonthaggi Seed Bank
- Heytesbury Landcare Network

Nearly all of the retreat's participants, (94.12%) said the retreat made it easier to know where and how to join Landcare.

Intrepid Landcare - 6 months on cont

Since the Gippsland Intrepid Landcare Retreat, participants have better awareness of environmental issues (especially waste) and Landcare through social media. Nearly all of participants (94.12%) said the retreat increased their understanding of what is Landcare.

Half of the retreat's participants have since followed local Landcare groups or pages on social media. This includes

- Mirboo North/Mardan Landcare Group
- Bass Coast Landcare Network
- South Gippsland Landcare Network
- Kongwak Hills Landcare Group

Since the retreat, 75% of participants have followed Intrepid or National Landcare groups or pages on social media. This includes:

- Gippsland Intrepid Landcare
- Brisbane Intrepid Landcare
- Intrepid Landcare
- Landcare Australia

Environmental or waste groups on social media are now newly followed by 80% of participants. These pages include



Photo above :Willow mapping on the Macalister river

- Journey to Zero Waste
- Zero Waste Student Living
- Low Impact Sustainable Living,
- War on Waste,
- Gippsland Unwrapped
- Australian Wildlife Conservancy
- Greening Australia
- Green Matters
- West Gippsland CMA
- Parks Victoria
- Gippsland Girls Network
- Conservation Volunteers

Information about the retreat and Gippsland Intrepid Landcare has been featured in several non-traditional Landcare sources:

- Gippslandia- Advertorial in their Spring 2017 edition
- Wild Melbourne – Facebook post
- We are Explorers – Facebook post
- Gippslandia – Movie on their social media
- Triple R – On-air advertisement
- Intrepid Landcare Website- Adventures Down South-a New Beginning
- Intrepid Landcare Website - 5 things I've learnt about Landcare
- Group member Jem Milkins speaking to Loch Nyora Landcare Group

Nearly all of the retreat's participants (94.12%) believed the retreat gave them new skills. The Gippsland Intrepid Landcare Retreat has prompted increased work opportunities, increased skills and better career pathways. Since the retreat two participants have commenced work in the environmental field and four participants have continued their work in the environmental field. Five participants are still studying environmental-based degrees at university. On top of skills developed at the retreat, committee members of the Gippsland Intrepid Landcare group have

developed skills in committee management, governance, social media and project management.

The Gippsland Intrepid Landcare Group formed from attendees of the retreat.

The incorporated group now has: thirty two financial members, made up of both attendees of the retreat and new people

- a committee of eight who "meet" via teleconference once a month
- organised a tree planting day in Kilcunda with 40 attendees
- organised a willow-mapping kayak weekend with 20 attendees
- more than 300 followers on Facebook
- more than 162 followers on Instagram



Photo above :Jem Milkins (second from left) talks to the Loch Nyora Landcare Group

The Healthy Soils; Sustainable Farms project is in the last year of its five year program. This is the second iteration of the project, the first running for the previous five years.

We are proud to deliver this informative project for the WGCMA and have delivered a large number of informative and interesting field days looking at soil health. Our web page has links to the events we have held for the project, with copies of field day notes and links to the Project Directory which is kept on the WGCMA web site. Find the project under the 'Projects' tab on www.sgnl.org.au.

Soil health is the basis of productivity and sustainability. By using nutrients effectively, managing ground cover, plant health and soil carbon, a healthy soil can reduce erosion, salinity, nutrient runoff and emissions, as well as improving water use efficiency and quality. The West Gippsland Healthy Soils -Sustainable Farms project aims to build farmers awareness around soil health constraints, improve knowledge around managing soils, plants, nutrients and grazing, leading to improved practices based on the information gained. Demonstration sites showcasing best practice and innovation have been established and selected participants are supported in undertaking management plans to suit their particular property and areas of concern. Information and practical experience is shared through discussion groups, field days, web based communication, regional forums and the Gippsland Sustainable Agriculture Network (GSAN).

Farming off the grid – a field day held on Nov 14th

Using renewable energy to power a new grazing enterprise was one of the main topics for discussion at the Healthy Soils Sustainable Farms field day at Cape Liptrap.

Small-scale beef farmers, Jillian Staton and Bruce Whittaker described how they have transformed a 42 Ha agistment block into an easy-to-manage and increasingly productive grazing property.

Initial improvements included subdividing larger paddocks and installing a laneway, and the construction of new, covered yards with a curved race. The real game-changer, however, was the installation of a solar-powered reticulation system that has enabled the couple to rotationally graze the entire property all year round.

The couple have noticed marked improvements in pasture composition and cover, consistent with the goals put forward in the nutrient management plan prepared by Lisa Warne as part of the Healthy Soils Sustainable Farms program.

Bruce described the process he went through in choosing the best system to feed water troughs around the farm, and some of the challenges encountered along the way.

Bruce and Jillian discussed the factors that led them to choose to go completely off-grid when building their home on the property. Electrician Wayne Smith talked about the off-grid system that he helped design and install, which includes 10kw of solar panels, a solar-powered hot water system, LPG for cooking, and provision in the future for a back-up generator and/or wind turbine.



Photos above and below; at the Farming off grid field day



For the field day at the Whittaker/Staton property, owner Jillian Staton provided attendees with background information about the property and the journey they embarked on to improve it.

We bought Tarara, which is 100 acres, in 2013. If it had been a house, it would probably have been described as a "renovator's delight": it had no fertiliser history, the yards were so run-down as to be dangerous, the boundary fencing was terrible, and only two paddocks had a reliable water supply. Little if no weed control had been carried out, and the pasture was dominated by less productive species such as fog-grass and sweet vernal.

All of this represented a great opportunity for us, however. We had seen on a previous property how effective rotational grazing and weed control had been in improving pasture quality, and were keen to replicate that experience on Tarara. And the amazing view was an extra-special bonus!

Although we had lots of ideas that we were keen to implement immediately (new yards, a laneway and a watering system) we decided to run the farm for at least a year before making any significant changes. This gave us a good feel for the farm across each season. We learnt, for example, which areas were prone to bogging (actually, we are still learning that one), and how much we and the stock value good shelter belts (it gets REALLY windy here!)

The first major change we carried out was to subdivide the paddock which now contains the stock yards. It was a fairly large paddock but more importantly, the spring-fed dam located in the upper shelter belt enabled us to run a trough into the new paddock quite easily and cheaply (this is where having a light, sandy soil has some advantages). We also created a ten metre wide shelter belt along the new fence line which we hope will reduce the boggiess in the southern corners, and provide some respite from the wind in the not-too-distant future.

While this subdivision immediately helped our grazing management in the bottom half of the farm, it highlighted the difficulties we were having in the top half due to the lack of reliable water. The top paddock was reliant on "Dodgy Dam": a surface-fed dam that, despite being cleaned out, can dry out in summer. We were also using it to supply the second paddock, because we did not want to risk damaging the small dam in the established shelter belt that runs north-south below the house. Moving stock into either paddock therefore involved fiddling with a portable electric fence that was especially annoying in wet or windy weather.

On a more positive note, however, we had earmarked the spot where we planned to build the shed, stables and house. We engaged a contractor to create a driveway to the site, and constructed a curved laneway alongside it to move stock up to

the top paddock. We also decided to turn the awkward area in the south-west corner into six small horse paddocks. (Note from Bruce: we now have more horse paddocks than cattle paddock. Hmm.)

Around that time, we got involved in the Healthy Soils, Sustainable Farms program. We had soil tests done in each paddock and the agronomist, Lisa Warn, came out to look at our pastures and talk to us about our stock management. We were surprised to discover that the overall soil fertility was actually quite high, with P and S levels at, or close to target levels and only needing maintenance applications (which we have carried out in April each year), and very high K levels. Despite this, the species composition was poor (due to light grazing in the past), and bracken was a problem in some paddocks.

Lisa suggested that some pastures may have needed renovating. Because of our past experience, however, we were confident that once we got our water infrastructure sorted, we would be able to significantly improve the quality, and the quantity of our pasture through a strict rotational grazing regime, regular fertiliser applications and weed control.

Bruce had already started to look into different strategies for moving water around the property. His preference was to pump water from the spring-fed dam to a tank at the top of the property, and gravity feed to a series of troughs spread across the top half of the farm. This was also a risk management strategy, as the bottom half of the farm is fed from the dam in the shelter belt.

This was excellent in theory but did involve pumping water uphill, and we did not have mains power. Although we had been toying with the idea of going off-grid for the house construction, we had had a bad experience with solar at our other farm and at that stage, were not confident that it could meet our needs.

Bruce considered a number of options for pumping water, including wind (too expensive) and an air compressor (too fiddly), and in the end, decided on a Mono solar pump. We bought the pump from Korumburra Pumps for around \$8000, and had it installed, together with a 50,000l header tank, piping from the dam to the tank and then from the tank to a trough in each



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paddock in the top half of the farm. In the horse paddocks, we placed troughs in fencelines to feed two paddocks, and did the same in the dam paddock, effectively creating a holding paddock in the laneway.

The day the pump started sending water around the farm was pretty exciting. But our excitement was short-lived: after just a couple of weeks, a pipe came loose, fell into the dam and the pump burnt itself out. We were assured this was very unusual, and after having it repaired it has worked perfectly well ever since.

As we had hoped, the watering system enabled us to rotationally graze the paddocks far more effectively. Depending on the time of year, we aim to graze each paddock for between one and two weeks. Admittedly, we have had a wonderful start to spring, but we have already seen a marked difference in the quality and quantity of our pasture, with a large amount of clover, and an increasing amount of ryegrass. The bracken has almost

gone, and cape weed was not nearly as much of a problem as in previous years.

The watering system has been complemented by new stockyards which have a roof and are a pleasure to work in on both hot and wet days. Combined with the laneway, one person can move and process the stock quite easily although we prefer to do it as a pair. Having a large shed has been fantastic, as has finishing stage one of our new home which is powered by an 10 kw solar system that has so far proven to be very efficient.

Other improvements we have made include fencing off and revegetating all of our dams, and creating and/or extending several shelter belts. We applied fertiliser as per Lisa's recommendations in 2016 and 2017, and keep a close eye on weeds (predominantly cape weed, bracken and thistles). Now that we have our infrastructure sorted, we are in a position to build our stock numbers through purchase and breeding.

Photo below; Tarara property owners, Jillian Staton and Bruce Whittaker



National
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Program



This project is supported by the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.



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Demonstrating Sustainable Farming Practices

Demonstrating Sustainable Farming Practices in the Westernport Catchment is a large 5 year sustainable agriculture focused project running from July 2013 to June 2018.

The project is working with landholders from multiple enterprise types throughout the Western Port, Mornington Peninsula, South Gippsland, Bass Coast & parts of the Yarra Catchment to promote Sustainable Farming Practices. This project aims to increase the understanding and uptake of innovative farming practices to improve farmers productivity and our natural resources. Innovative tools such as iFarm, demonstration sites, remote sensing & surveys have been introduced to engage and assist landholders to implement sustainable agriculture practices. Discussion groups and farm tours to other regions are also facilitated to challenge and inspire. Demonstration sites to showcase innovative and sustainable farming methods are located throughout the region, with the results communicated through open farms, discussion groups, case studies and field days. Project partners are Western Port Catchment Landcare Network, Bass Coast Landcare Network, South Gippsland Landcare Network, Mornington Peninsular Shire Council, AgVic, Melbourne Water, GippsDairy, Port Phillip and Westernport CMA.

Healthy Soils, Nutritional Food, Healthy People forum held in Inverloch on November 17th.

Healthy Soils, Nutritional Food, Healthy people forum was held on 17/11/17 at the Inverloch Hub and was a joint event held with the Bass Coast Landcare Network. Over fifty people came along to hear Dr Maaren Stapper, a former CSIRO soil scientist and agronomist with forty years' experience and Nutritionist Marieke Rodenstein.



Photo above; Marieke Rodenstein speaks to the nearly 60 attendees.

Marieke focused on the physical and emotional impacts of diet and has experience in sports nutrition and is an expert for "Quit Sugar Program". Her work brings to light the health of the gut in achieving overall health and preventing "modern" diseases.

Maarten talked about the science of biological farming and the function of healthy soils to grow healthy plants.

The workshop hosted an afternoon panel discussion which included local food and soil experts, Chris Alenson an agronomist and soil assessment expert, Gil Freeman from Grow Lightly, Julia Lomas from the South Coast Primary Care Partnership, Adrian James from the Phillip Island Community Garden and Maarten and Marieke. This panel discussion explored local experiences in soil, food and personal health with questions and input from the floor.

The forum notes contain a large bibliography and useful links.

You can find them here <http://www.sgln.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Healthy-forum.pdf>

Controlling Azolla on Dams through Nutrient Reduction field day at Torwood.

Azolla is an aquatic weed which can spread rapidly and choke dams and stock water troughs. It can reproduce asexually and under ideal conditions can double in size (area of water covered) in less than two weeks.



Photos above; Treatment Dam No 1 top in Nov 2015 and below Nov 2016 after treatment were applied.

It thrives where surface water dams collect nutrients, especially nitrogen and phosphorous from run off or stock access. The dispersible, grey clay soils of the Strzelecki ranges seem to suit the growth of azolla as the nutrients are carried into surface water storage dams on the soil particles, especially the clay. This project attempted to control the growth of azolla through two treatment activities.

We held a field day on December 1st 2017, to showcase the results of the treatments.

The azolla control project will be written up as a case study. This will be published on our website when available. In the interim the field day notes are available for download as a PDF file here . <http://www.sgln.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/controlling-azolla-on-farm-dams.pdf>

Financial comparison of agroforestry vs traditional grazing in steep country

This Landcare funded project was undertaken to obtain data on growth rates of 3 different species of eucalypts growing on a range of sites in the Strzelecki hills. The data will be used to guide management interventions in the production cycle – especially their timing, and to provide a better estimate of the length of the production cycle. Estimating the returns from an agroforestry enterprise is difficult due to the long lead time to harvest. The plantations established at Torwood are predicted to be ready for harvest about 2034, ie a production cycle of 23 years.

The costs are however a lot more predictable. The field day outlined the costs to date of the plantation established in 2011, listed future costs and from the projected returns provides a financial comparison of an agroforestry enterprise versus traditional grazing activities.

This agroforestry vs traditional grazing comparison will be written up as a case study. This will be published on our website when available. In the interim the field day notes are available for download as a PDF file here <http://www.sgl.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/comparing-economics-of-agroforestry.pdf>



Photos above and on the front cover - at the field day in Dec looking at the financial comparison between agroforestry and sheep grazing enterprises.



National
Landcare
Program



Demonstrating Sustainable Farm Practices is supported through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme and PPWCMA



Photos above; Matt Khoury leads the azolla field day group through a session identifying macro invertebrates in a farm dam water sample. Macros are a useful indicator of water quality and can suggest whether the nutrient load in a water body is likely to lead to the growth of azolla or algal blooms.

Nyora Primary School Biodiversity Blitz

Origin Energy's Regional Community Development Program offers organizations and groups the opportunity to access financial assistance and in-kind contributions to support projects, initiatives and events that benefit the communities in which they operate and participate. SGLN applied for and recieved a grant to deliver the Biodiversity Blitz program at the Nyora Primary School

In 2016 Nyora Primary School was working with the Loch Nyora Landcare group and South Gippsland Landcare Network to complete the Biodiversity Module of the ResourceSmart Schools program. SGLN applied to Origin Energy for additional resourcing to enable the school to reach it's biodiversity targets as part of the program. This program will also foster greater community engagement in environmentally smart behavior.

The South Gippsland Landcare Network (SGLN) strives to protect and enhance biodiversity of the region and educate the community on threatened species and best practice land management. Up until June 30 2016, SGLN had been delivering a successful educational program to schools with a focus on Koala conservation through the FOSK project. Funding for this program has ceased, however SGLN continues to receive requests from schools for support delivering their environmental programs.

During an action planning session in April 2016, the Loch Nyora Landcare group identified working with students and delivering partnership projects as two out of its four priorities for the next 18 months.

The grant for the the Nyora Primary School Biodiversity Blitz to SGLN in early 2017, enabled an exciting program to be delivered to the Nyora Primary School students.

This project has protected and improved the land (school grounds), the local ecosystem, and plant and animal habitats through revegetation using indigenous species and weed control.

This project will provide student learning outcomes on threatened species local to the area such as the Southern Brown Bandicoot and Giant Gippsland Earthworm. Curriculum activities will engage students in learning and taking action to conserve and increase biodiversity. In August there was a whole school excursion to Healesville Sanctuary. The School led up to this with some work on Australian animals and their habitats so the children were very receptive to what they saw at the sanctuary and what they learnt. The older children looked at the threatened and endangered species found at the sanctuary and what they can do to help conservation or these species. The children see the direct connection between the plantings at school and providing habitats for local biodiversity. There is a real shift in their perceptions of the environment.

The Schools' next year's Preps built some nesting boxes to be put up into the trees. Bass Gas employees attached them to the trees.

Students first mini harvest from the Kitchen Garden was in September, and they will be raising some seeds to plant out as it warms up.

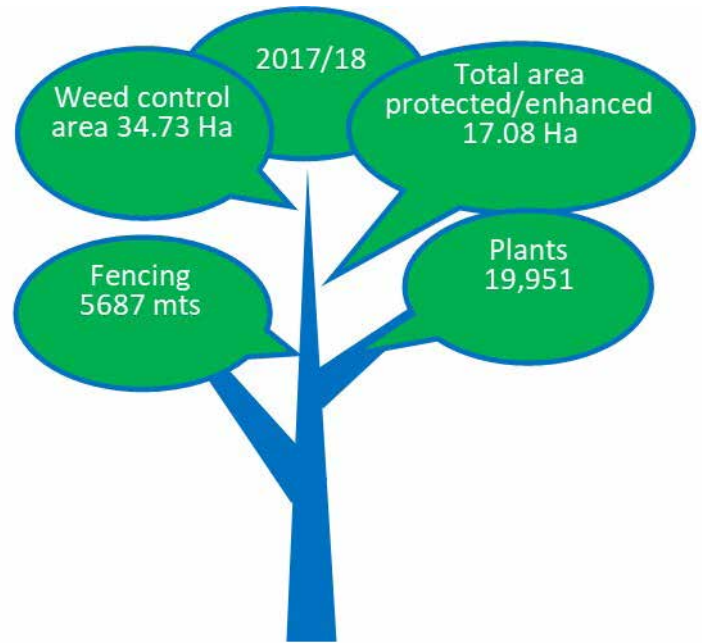
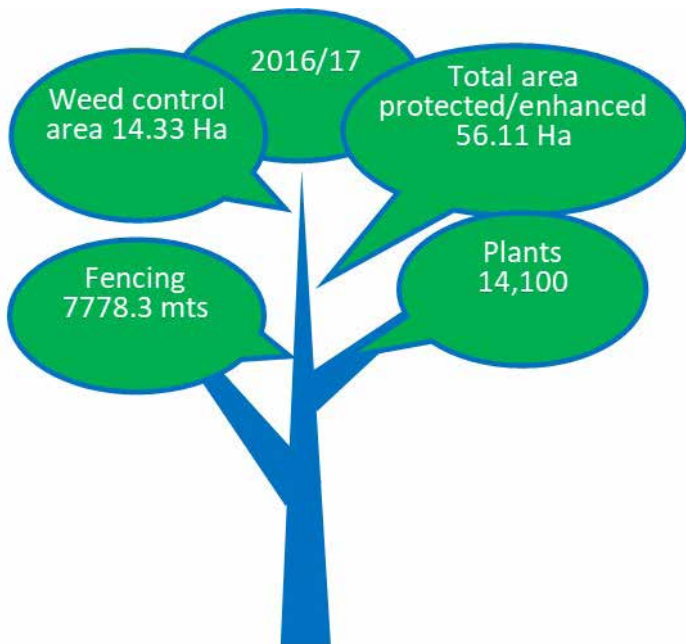
There were three community tree bees held at the school to plant, guard and mulch 500 indeginous plants. These were held on September 23rd, 25th and October 3rd.



Photo top far left; the school grounds before the planting and bottom far left; after the plants had gone in.

Photo above; Loch Nyora Landcare members.

Photo left, produce from the kitchen garden.



Photos above; a lovely piece of remnant bush was protected by a fencing grant as part of the 2016-17 grant round. This project was funded by the SGLN fund. It was wonderful to see the power of donations to have such a wonderful outcome in protecting some high value remnant bush.



Photos above left; some remnant bush we are protecting with a fencing grant as part of the 2017-18 grant round. Photo above right; this disused gravel pit has been slowly rehabilitated by the owners over the last 10 or so years. A grant helped with South Gippsland Seed bank seed to finish off the last bit.

The Tarwin Landcare Group

continues the work of protecting and preserving our natural places, and repairing degraded areas through regeneration and revegetation.

Currently 21 of our members are farmers, 5 small landholders, and 8 on town blocks. Our range of interests and projects include nine major areas of focus and concern. These were farmland care, small landholders, township spaces, indigenous nursery, diversity and education, wildlife habitat and care, parks and reserves, indigenous and history, and river/waterways. Under farmland care, we held a working bee with 10 members at Cope's farm to remove mirror bush, with good result. Under the leadership of vice president Michael, we planted in several town community spaces; IGA/café, Venus Bay store, Labyrinth with plans for a school garden and Venus Bay park. Michael initiated the establishment of the Silver Banksia Nursery. Members learned seed collection, propagating, and planting skills.

Wildlife habitat and care underpins much of our interest areas. The bike track planting has a goal of providing a corridor for koala movement, as well as other benefits. Township habitat, small landholders and farmers are all important in providing habitat. Potential exists for partnership with local wildlife carers. Members enjoyed a guided orchid walk in the Tarwin Flora and fauna park, led by expert Lorraine. Landcare members participated in Clean Up Australia Day, by collecting litter along the roadsides and river banks from the roundabout to the last fishing platform. General meetings were held in Nov, Feb, Apr and June. There is always more to do, but I think our year has been productive. Thank you to each member for your involvement.

Ray Saunders, President

Nerrena Landcare Group

A change of president occurred at our Christmas meeting as Jill became SGLN coordinator. Sue Miles gallantly stepped into the vacancy.

Since then we have held a walk along the Railtrail from Meeniyian towards Stony Creek and met up with a few members of the Tarwin Valley Landcare Group.

Kathy and Bradley Westaway invited us to see their plantations at property in Ruby. They have been planting up the valleys and steep sections of their property for a number of years. It was refreshing to see size of the trees in

such a short time. Several members of our group attended the 30th Anniversary of Landcare Green Carpet Awards in Heyfield. Our group received an award for the Black Spur Wetlands Project. It was an honour for our group.

July saw us meet up with the South Gippsland Bird Observers who were surveying birds along the Rail Trail and the Miles property; 35 birds species were recorded.

Our largest project this year has been the Black Spur Wetlands project. Kate Walsh is the project sub-committee chair. We wish to thank Kate for her expertise and leadership of this project.

Thank you to Coral our Secretary/ Treasurer and to the members for your support. We would also like to thank Richard and

Zoe Baillie for their long time support of Landcare. They have chosen to 'retire' after being members of several groups and Zoe the project officer for the South Gippsland Landcare Dung Beetle project. Their various farms are still a testament to their dedication to improving the land and environment.

A merger with Tarwin Valley Group and a name change will enable us to be relevant within the community and catchment area we all live in.

Sue Miles, President

Mt Lyall Landcare Group

celebrated its 25th Anniversary at the home of Frank & Karyn Bugeja's. A relaxing day spent reminiscing with numerous tales over a scrumptious roast lunch, finishing with speeches along with cutting a cake to recognise this wonderful milestone. Our group has been very active over the years and has developed some significant wildlife corridors and revegetation programs to help maintain healthy water ways.

Our Landcare group also acknowledged the wonderful contribution of Frank & Karyn as they both have held the position of secretary. Karyn held this position from 2008-2010 whilst Frank took over for 2010 -2016. Frank and Karyn have sold their beautiful property in Poowong and have moved to Inverloch for a sea change. We wish them both all the very best.

Our current committee consists of:

President- Geoff Ferrier

Vice President- Gilmore Douglas

Secretary- Leesa Williams

Treasurer- Lyn Mitchard

Newsletter- Rudy Youssef

Equipment Officer- Bill Loughridge

General Committee- Anne Mette McNamara, Frank Bugeja

Mt Lyall is excited to continue working with their members and the network for another 25 years and look forward to what they can achieve.

Leesa Williams, Secretary

Loch/Nyora Landcare Group

The AGM was held at the Gippsland Wine Company in Loch. Our new committee consists of

President - Tricia Fleming,

Vice-President - Rosemary Knox,

Immediate Past President - Ron Barnacle, Secretary - Jo Rayner,

Treasurer - John Fleming; additional committee members - Geoff Bailey, Malcolm Brown, Josephine Kwan and Rod Mitchell. A big thank you to the previous committee and especially Ron Barnacle who held the office of President for many years.

Port Phillip and Westernport CMA have again provided a grant for plants for the Brown Sword Grass Butterfly Rehabilitation

Project.

We are working with the Loch Recreation Reserve Committee with planting alongside part of the eastern boundary.

We are working with Vic Roads to clean up, provide signs and additional plants at the truck stop at the top of Loch Hill.

We are also working with the South Gippsland Shire, landholders and Melbourne Water regarding a bad infestation of weeds on the Loch Poowong Road, Loch.

Melbourne Water will be coming on board for a project for Hilda Falls. It is a precious part of the Allsop Creek.

We have supported several field days and events initiated by the SGLN and PPWPCMA.

Now, at the ripe old age of 21, we continue to play our part in the local community. With some new blood on the committee and some new group members we can expect the LNLG to continue to make a positive contribution to the broader community for a long time to come.

John Fleming, Treasurer

Triholm Landcare Group

Although we are president-less at the moment we still have roughly the same number of financial members as last year and as our main focus is still weeds. We have been involved with other groups -Poowong and Mount Worth- in the fight against weeds.

We sent out a weed pamphlet to all landholders in our area last spring to remind them of their responsibilities as regards ragwort, thistles and blackberry and deployed signs on road sides in the area reinforcing this and we have a representative on the community weeds taskforce.

Wilma Mackay, Secretary

Franklin River Landcare Group

During the past year our small group of members has been busy.

Our activities have included

organising the planting and staking of 2,000 plants along the rail trail in Toora

working with South Gippsland Council to manage the improvements to Franklin River Reserve

roadside blackberry spraying

members plantings on their own properties and

setting up of a covenant with Trust for Nature on a local property to protect the work done.

This coming year with funds from the WGCMA we hope to weed and do planting along the north side of Franklin Reserve.

Diana Droog, Secretary

Allambee Community Landcare Group

It was a quiet year in 2016 for group meetings. The Network 2016 AGM in October was well received by our members who attended the night and they particularly enjoyed the entertainment.

Our annual get together BBQ at Mount Worth, had a very good attendance with members and locals talking Landcare and local issues around the campfire into the evening.

Donations were given this year to our local Allambee CFA and the "Friends of Mt.Worth" group who were extremely appreciative of our support; we hope to assist them with one of their working bees in the coming months.

Members have been very busy attending to weed control on their individual properties with a lot of hard work made more difficult by some neighbours not doing the same. New landholders have realised that Ragwort in the area is a problem. Like most other landholders in the area they have spent time trying to eradicate it and they too, have noticed some other landholders are not responding to the problem. Council and DEDJTR representatives have been informed with follow up this spring.

Our group was proud to nominate and congratulate Ian and Gay Cornthwaite as worthy recipients for the Green Carpet Showcase Awards to acknowledge their contribution to Landcare and the Environment.

Our 2017 AGM saw our President of many years, Evelyn Lillie, stand down from the role due to many family commitments, however, she will still remain active in the group. Thanks Evelyn for all your dedication and enthusiasm in bringing our community together and keeping our group informed.

Judy Lackman, Secretary

Mardan/Mirboo Nth Landcare Group

Over the past 12 months we have had 4 Tree Bees. O'Connors 800; O'Loughlans 300; Hasty's 1,000 and Trease's 700, a total of 2,800 trees in the ground.

We have had numerous working bees at the Bath's Road reserve under Viki Sinclair's passionate guidance. Congratulations Viki in getting the Bendigo Bank grant of \$4,048 for signage and brochures.

We have had several working bees at Mossvale Park. In September we ran the film 'Polyface Farm' at the Baromi centre. We manned the Landcare trailer at the 'Meet the bees' field day at the recreation reserve in October. Colin ran an interesting and informative session on the Landcare group history in October.

Due to the plague of Indian Myna birds in Mirboo North we commissioned member Alec Campbell to construct four bird traps, which our group members can use and others can hire.

We had member Ilan Goldman discussing the benefits, infrastructure and challenges of undertaking integrated paddock grazing with cattle and meat chickens on his 16 acre property. Our biggest project of the year was our three sustainable farm days which consisted of 'Hill Farm' at Ian

and Helen Hasty's farm; 'Small Commercial Farm' at Kirsten and David Jones's Garlic farm and 'Lifestyle Farm' at Libby Anthony and Colin Goodwin's farm. This was funded by a grant of \$35,000.

Special thanks go to Libby for securing the grant and project managing the events, helped by the logistics crew; Jenny Morrison, Carole Cash, Colin Goodwin with some marketing advice from David Jones, thanks guys!

All in all a busy and satisfactory year.

Phil Piper, President

Poowong Landcare Group

It has been business as usual at Poowong this year. Members have again planted thousands of trees, and attended numerous field days.

One field day was on the Soilkee soil renovator. This is potentially a revolutionary way that pasture can be improved. Little herbicide, pesticides or fertilizers are needed as the Soilkee rejuvenates the soil naturally. I urge you to attend any field day on the Soilkee as it is a game changer. I was so impressed I got 40 acres done, with more this spring.

A great Christmas function was held at Peter and Sue's and as a nice touch we were able to celebrate Elvie's birthday.

Jeff and Elvie Clarke received a well deserved award at the Landcare 30 Year Celebrations. They have put in years of service so it was good to see some recognition for them.

There is now a Giant Earthworm information sign erected at Poowong. Well done to Peter who had a lot to do with the project.

We recently held a 'weeds' meeting with politician Danny O'Brien. There were several other groups invited. Much was discussed and our desire for weed enforcement was made very clear.

A film crew attended and some of us may appear in a documentary. Thanks to Steve who played a key role with organising the event with the PCCC. Special mention to Jeff Clarke also.

Thank you all for your participation and I look forward to seeing you all in the field or at a Poowong Landcare meeting.

Mark Walters,

President

Friends of Turtons Creek

During the survey of the Turton's Creek area we found both Strzelecki Burrowing Crayfish and South Gippsland Spiny Crayfish! Ours was the first record for Strzelecki Burrowing Crayfish in the catchment which is exciting, and as there were no reference samples for these guys so our photos and video footage is now on record with the Australian Museum. as the reference sample for the species. In fact it took quite a bit of detective work with experts at the DELWP Arthur Tyler Institute (research facility) to figure out which species we were looking at.

Both species are listed as threatened under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act (making them of State significance) so the next step is to look at what we can do to improve their habitat, and to improve population viability. We've done a heap of weed control up in the headwaters (where we found the best habitat).

A community tree planting was held to put in about 1000 plants to replace the weeds on Saturday the 20th of May.

Peter Gannon, Group leader

South Gippsland Equine Landcare Group

The group has not been very active.

The group held an Nutrition Clinic with Carol Layton in October 2016.

We held a successful grass identification workshop with Graeme Lorimer in November 2016.

We plan to get something happening soon however we've all had a lot going on in our personal lives.

Larissa Judd, President



Agnes River Landcare Group (photo above)

We have had a couple of great events during the year as well as partnering in running the canoe tour

Broadening Horizons Program:

Orchestrated by Ranger Kelly from Wilson's Prom NP, in conjunction with Tanya from WGCMA, the one-day event saw 60 Year 8 science students tour the Corner Inlet area to learn more about this precious marine environment and concluded with a trip to a property lying mid-way from the Agnes River headwaters, where many were privileged to observe a mother and baby platypus in the river.

Understorey Planting:

Louisa Vale's property at Toora North was the first planting for the season with the aim of adding an understorey component to an older existing eucalyptus planting. It was good to meet new potential members and share a relaxed lunch and social chat.

Bryan Watterson, Treasurer

Fish Creek Landcare Group

Our active membership totals 54, embracing a wide range of interests and property sizes. The swing towards small lifestyle members has continued this year, although we still represent the larger beef and dairy farming sector. We have a committee of 10 members who have met quarterly this year, to plan activities and represent our local interests. All members are welcome to all our meetings, and a summary of the meeting is sent to all members.

It has been a quieter year activity wise, but we are still promoting community education, assistance when required and advice to our members, looking towards a greener, more sustainable environment.

- Activities and ideas over the past year included:
- Member attendance to the National Conference
- Member survey to establish needs and interests of current members

The committee has developed a flow chart for members detailing organisations that might be useful to them undertaking any environmental improvements on their properties. Agencies covered ranged from the Ministry through to local shire council.

There is a strong interest within the committee to work with local agencies to improve the environment of local areas. (eg Shallow Inlet, Fish Creek precinct) This will be an ongoing work in progress

Commenced the process of mapping the local areas to monitor the changes to the landscape over the past 30 years (we are hoping to include Fish Creek, Prom Plains, Foster and Tarwin Lower areas)

Working bee to supplement a previous Landcare project on the local section of the Great Southern Rail Trail.

Robin Stevens, President

Arawata Landcare Group

SGLN position has changed where we have lost Nicole Walsh and Kate Mc Kenzie on maternity leave since December and Jill Vella is filling that role; however the work involved is demanding trying to hold the Network together with all the roles and reporting necessary to accommodate pier bodies. Hence grants where groups need professional input as the process is technical and lethargic and this where we need facilitators. Jill has migrated the weeds website into the SGLN website so as reduce the work load but still has some finishing touches to tidy it up.

The reservoir project was engaged by "Green Fleet" coordinated by Eoghan O'Connor and planted trees out 15 Ha / 20k trees last spring in the environs of the Western reservoir where the harvesting had been done the years prior.

Membership paid up last year has risen above 20 which are still poor, and I believe some work needs to be devoted to this as we normally have 35+. Some people never received an invoice. Relying on the SGLN database leaves a lot to be desired, needs some housekeeping!

Recent Grants:-

Soil Erosion Project funding 3 5k

Damien Minogue Victorian Landcare Grant 1516

Jenny Wilsher Victorian Landcare Grant 1516

We probably need to make a concerted effort to supply all the relevant details and get Nick, Tony or Geoff to assist in applying for grants as Jill has little capacity to write the entire application. I did get some 4K trees from HVP David Smith last year which were spread out amongst those interested members

There is a groundswell of angst regarding the bland replies with the large infestations of Ragwort and Blackberry, from the government in charge of Agriculture and Environment. The natives are restless with the standard response from DTWER and or Danny O'Brien (handball the minister's lack of initiative, Jaala Pulford), however Poowong through Jeff Clark has scheduled a meeting with Danny O'Brien to facilitate the concerns of landcare. Danny had a heart attack and has to lay off for a month where we should be able to get a hearing. Jeff will call delegates from Triholm, Mt Worth, Arawata, Loch-Nyora and Poowong where the meeting will be held.

Wild Dog Valley/Mt Eccles LCG were about to go into recess and on advice from Jill Vella have elected to join ALCG which took place at the AGM 0101617

Syd Whyte, President

Photo below; Mardan Mirboo North LC group tree bee





Photo above; the SGLN Board on the stage at the AGM. From L; Ray Saunders, Libby Anthony, Helen Hasty, Jean Carnell (Secretary), Frank Dekker (Chair), Mark Walters (Vice Chair), Mark Uren (obscured), David Layton and Russell Swan (Treasurer)

