



Almost every Landcare Group was represented at the Presidents' Pizza Night held on 28 November.

As well as enabling everyone to put names to faces and meet the new Board members, the Pizza Night was a great opportunity to gather input for the development of SGLN's 2020-30 Strategy.

The Strategy will shape the programs and projects delivered over the next decade so the Network is seeking as much feedback as possible from Groups and individuals.

Everyone at the Pizza Night contributed to the discussion. The key themes that emerged were:

- protecting and improving waterways;
- tree planting and agro-forestry;
- building communities;
- sharing knowledge;
- encouraging greater community awareness about Landcare;
- encouraging greater involvement in Landcare.



*What Landcare programs and projects do YOU want to see delivered in South Gippsland over the next ten years?*

*Email your comments and suggestions to [glenn@sgln.net.au](mailto:glenn@sgln.net.au)*



## Meet the Board

Five new members were appointed at the Annual General Meeting held in September. Andrea Clifford's resignation in November to fill the role of Bunurong Project Officer (see page 12) means that there are currently nine members on the Board.

### **Mark Walters (Chair)**

Mark, who belongs to the Poowong Landcare Group, has been on the Board since 2010 and became Chair in 2019. Mark operates an accounting and financial planning business in Melbourne and owns 240 acres at Loch where he runs beef cattle. With assistance from both Landcare and Melbourne Water, Mark has been revegetating the property's gullies and providing shelter belts for stock. He has also established a 25ha commercial timber plantation for sawcut logs.



### **Rosemary Knox (Vice Chair)**

Rosemary has been on the executive committee of the Loch-Nyora Landcare Group since its inaugural meeting in 1996, and joined the Board in 2018. As well as working casually as a primary school teacher, Rosemary runs beef cattle on a 300 acre property at Loch with her husband, Garry. She is heavily involved in the Loch community and is passionate about family, the environment, recycling and trees.





**Libby Anthony (Treasurer)**

Before moving to a 13 acre farm near Mirboo, Libby was an environmental scientist working in private enterprise, government and not-for-profit organisations.

She has significant experience in the renewable energy sector, as well as skills in management, strategy development, corporate governance and fund raising.

Libby belongs to the Mardan-Mirboo Landcare Group and is committed to all aspects of sustainable living and farming. She and her husband are experimenting with growing bushfoods, and have rehabilitated two creeks, a wetland and fern gully on their property.



**Jillian Staton (Secretary)**

A member of the Tarwin Landcare Group, Jillian is a freelance writer specialising in agriculture and environmental sustainability. She has written several books on these topics, including one that showcases food and wine producers in South Gippsland.

Jillian and her husband, Bruce, run beef cattle over 300 acres at Walkerville. They have built an off-grid home and are working towards creating a low-waste, self-sufficient lifestyle.

As well as improving biodiversity, Jillian has a keen interest in building strong, healthy communities.





## **Amy Cameron and Alex Daraio**

Amy and Alex both work remotely from their 104 acre property at Toora where they use natural farming methods and permaculture methods to manage the land as sustainably as possible.

The couple are members of the Lower Franklin River Landcare Group. Working with Greening Australia, they have revegetated more than half their property to combat severe erosion and compaction and create a wildlife corridor along their Franklin River frontage.

Amy has a degree in Creative Writing, and works part-time as a copywriter for a branding agency. She creates and edits many different types of written content (including social media content,

media releases, newsletters and website content) for brands like Monash University and Australia Post.

Alex holds a Bachelor of Commerce and a Masters in Mechatronic Engineering, and works in areas involving cloud platforms, automation, electronics and drone technology. He also has experience in large-scale project management, including working with government and enterprise stakeholders.

Both Amy and Alex are exploring ideas for a more sustainable future including self-sufficiency and environmental footprint reduction. Alex is also interested in coding projects, aquaponics, regenerative farming and automation.



### **Bryan Watterson**

Bryan has lived in the South Gippsland hill country for thirty years and has been involved in many conservation projects. He is particularly interested in the use of whole-of-catchment approaches to protect riparian environments.

He is a member of the Agnes River Landcare Group which is working with the West Gippsland CMA and Greening Australia to rehabilitate Agnes River. His background in education has enabled him to involve local school students in this long-term project.



### **Herb Wilde**

After a long career in Melbourne, Herb returned to Nerrena where he lives with his daughter on 260 acres of mainly remnant vegetation. He belongs to the Nerrena Tarwin Valley Landcare Group of which his parents were inaugural members.

Herb has vast experience on the executive of conservation organisations including Environment Victoria, Friends of the Earth and Renew. He cares deeply for the bush and its wildlife and laments the loss of many species due to feral cats and foxes.



### **Nick Dudley**

A member of the Arawata Landcare Group, Nick lives just out of Leongatha and runs a small beef property with his wife, Anna.

Nick is currently employed as Gippsland Regional Manager (Meat and Wool) with Agriculture Victoria. Previous roles include West Gippsland Landcare Facilitator, Bass Coast Landcare Network Coordinator and lecturer at the University of Melbourne and Victorian College of Agriculture and Horticulture.





## Cassie's Corner

Cassie Wright is SGLN's Project Officer. Cassie works Mondays and can be contacted at [cassie@sgl.n.net.au](mailto:cassie@sgl.n.net.au) or 0448 739 559

*It's been a very busy spring, with lots of events happening. Here's an update on the projects I'm looking after:*

### Smart farming for Westernport

This sustainable agriculture project (lead by Westernport Catchment Landcare Network over the Western Port Phillip and Yarra catchments) includes five on-farm demonstration sites, with a focus on building soil carbon. It also involves farmer discussion groups and field days.

SGLN is supporting Bob and Robyn Gray's agroforestry demonstration site, a 15 ha forestry plantation targeting sawlog production. The property is located on steeper Strzelecki hills which are subject to slipping, tunnel erosion and pugging damage (especially by cattle). The sites are monitored to measure tree growth, providing objective information to compare economics of sawlog production versus traditional grazing enterprises. I've been out recently helping Bob and Clinton Tepper monitor the trees, and learning about agroforestry at the same time.



Another fabulous learning opportunity was attending the 'From the Ground Up' Regenerative Agriculture conference held in Colac in September. Run over three days, with talks and farm visits, we heard from a number of inspiring speakers including Christine Jones, Charlie Arnott, Colin Seis and Di and Ian Heggerty. There were many recurring themes, including how regenerative agriculture can improve soil biology and health, soil carbon and water holding capacity and improve the quality of crops and pastures and therefore livestock and human health. The power of diversity was another key theme, and how the pasture or crop species grown with many other species are healthier and more robust.

The Smart Farming for Westernport team are working on our next series of events which will occur in the first half of 2020.



### **Corner Inlet citizen science water quality improvement project**

This project is supporting volunteers to test water over the next 12 months to get a snapshot of what's happening in four creeks near Foster that flow into Corner Inlet. Our eight volunteers have undergone training and collected their first samples in mid October and early December.

The samples were sent to a laboratory in Melbourne to test for nitrogen (NO<sub>2</sub> and ammonia), and the volunteers used turbidity tubes to check sediment. One of the monitoring sites is being tested by students from Foster Secondary College. We will hold a second seminar in late 2020 to share the results.

### **Threatened invertebrates**

We are working with neighbouring Latrobe Catchment Landcare Network (LCLN) and DELWP's Natural Environment Program on a project to protect giant Gippsland earthworms (GGEs) and three species of burrowing crayfish (Warragul, Strzelecki, and Narracan).

The project involves monitoring two demonstration sites that were set up in 2014 to trial a new revegetation technique. (Standard revegetation techniques aren't always suitable for GGE as the growing trees reduce soil moisture which is critical for their survival.) These sites were monitored in 2019, looking at groundwater, and at the presence of GGEs. The GGEs were found to be thriving at the sites, indicating the modified revegetation method is working well. *(cont. p8)*



(from p.7) A field day was held on 9 October in Poowong North, with terrestrial invertebrate expert Dr Beverley Van Praagh presenting on the biology and habitat of these cryptic species, and how landholders can identify and protect earthworm habitat on their properties.

Participants visited the two farms where revegetation, designed to conserve earthworm habitat, was trialled five years ago and heard how it has worked.

This project was funded with the support of the Victorian Government.

**SGLN and LCLN have funding available to assist landholders with GGEs or burrowing crayfish on their properties protect their habitat via on-ground works such as fencing or modified revegetation.**

Contact [Cassie](#), or check out [www.giantearthworm.org.au](http://www.giantearthworm.org.au) [www.burrowingcrayfish.com.au/strzelecki-burrowing-crayfish.htm](http://www.burrowingcrayfish.com.au/strzelecki-burrowing-crayfish.htm).

## **Growing Southern Gippsland (climate change adaptation)**

This two year project (lead by Bass Coast Landcare Network and working with RMIT and Federation University) is developing 12 detailed case studies of farmers who are innovating and diversifying in a time of climate change. These will be available on a web portal in May, 2020 which will also include a decision-making tool to help landholders make decisions taking relevant information about climate change into account.

Five field days will be held across the BCLN and SGLN network areas. The first, 'Pathogens, Parasites and Pesky Pests in a Changing Climate', was held on 23 October. Participants heard from a range of speakers, including Will Hume from Agriculture Victoria on developing a biosecurity plan, Paul Horne (with Adam Schruers) on integrated pest management

in vegetable crops, David Piedrafita on liver fluke, Dr Mary Cole on soil biology and Ashley Burgess on the dairy industry's approach to climate change. We also visited Andy and Diana Thomas' dairy farm at Krowera.

The second ('Carbon Farming in a Changing Climate') was held on 28 November at Prom Country Cheese in Moyarra. Approximately 70 people came along to hear about soil carbon sequestration, multi story farming (integrating trees and pasture), emissions auditing using a tool to identify carbon sequestration opportunities, and a demonstration of soil coring methodology for baseline and monitoring.

Visit <https://www.growingsoutherngippsland.org.au/> to register your interest in the project.



## Enhancing soil biology in South Gippsland

The Enhancing Soil Biology project will run for the next 18 months across South Gippsland.

The project is well underway, with 80 people attending the launch on 20 October, where Dr Mary Cole (soil microbiologist, fungal taxonomist and plant pathologist) took us through the amazing world of soil biology including fungi, bacteria, macro and micro fauna and the soil food web.

She covered why healthy soil biology is important, and the role it plays in farming – including improving the health and quality of plants and grazing animals, and storing carbon in the soil, how to enhance the life in your soil and what damages it.

The first group of 15 farmers have attended two training sessions, and have each set up a 1 ha demonstration site, where three treatments have been applied (aeration with a Yeoman's plough, seaweed + aeration, and mycorrhizal fungi + aeration).

Soil biology, soil chemistry and soil carbon tests have been taken, and will be taken again at the end of the project. After the project they will share the results with their Landcare groups and farming networks.

Two open days will be held in April and May 2020, to allow people to visit these demonstration sites.



*Using penetrometers to assess soil health.*

We are still accepting expressions of interest for farmers wishing to participate in the second year of the project, particularly from the Fish Creek/ Foster/Yanakie coastal areas. For more information contact [Cassie](#).

This project is supported by SGLN, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.

## Group news

### **Allambee Community Landcare Group lends a hand after fires**

*“In early October the Allambee Community Landcare Group held a planting day at a property in Garfield North owned by Lyn and Peter Link.*

*Several of our members have worked closely with Lyn through the Warragul Women on Farms Group and were devastated to learn that the Links’ property suffered greatly from the Bunyip/Garfield fires in March.*

*Fortunately, their home was spared but they lost farm fencing, storage sheds, farm infrastructure and equipment, and the established vegetation corridors along their waterways and shelterbelts.*

*The past months have been spent clearing burnt and damaged vegetation, fencing, and sheds and they are now rebuilding some of these structures.*

*Some regrowth and seeding of plants was visible after the winter rains, but our Landcare Group offered to assist with some additional revegetation work.*

*We provided plants and guards, then assisted with the planting along part of a waterway and two other corridors.*

*Lyn and Peter were extremely thankful for our assistance, and we were happy to be able to help out and lift their spirits in what has been a challenging and difficult time recovering after the bushfire.”*



### **Mardan - Mirboo North Landcare Group celebrates logging exemption**

Many hours of hard work paid off for members of the Mardan-Mirboo North Landcare Group with the announcement that the old growth forests in Mirboo North will never be logged.

The Group was instrumental in identifying the forests’ attributes and then getting them formally recognised as High Conservation Values (HCVs).

Those HCVs played a pivotal role in the Victorian Government’s decision to exempt the forests from logging.



### **Tarwin Landcare Group's history walk - from middens to dinosaurs**

Many of the 50 people on Tarwin Landcare's coastal walk at Cape Liptrap on 23 November were puzzled by the shell fragments littering a sheltered area in the sand dunes.

Local historian, Dr. Cheryl Glowrey, revealed that the amphitheatre-like space is one of many Aboriginal middens found along the Bunurong coastline. The shells, stone implements and charcoal indicate that indigenous people gathered there regularly to open, cook and then dine on shellfish collected from the reefs.

The surprises continued when Fish Creek farmer and geologist, Gary Wallis, revealed several sets of megafauna footprints - believed to be 100,000 years old - just a stone's throw from the midden. Gary discovered the prints at very low tide several years ago. All are unidentified but appear to belong to a large wombat, a hopping animal and a bird.

The coastal walk was made possible thanks to Vicky and James Gemmell and Heather and Tim Leroy, and was organised by Tarwin Landcare member, Jenny O'Sullivan.



## Message from the new Bunurong Project Officer

Former Board member, Andrea Clifford, has stepped up to fill the role of Project Officer for the remainder of the Enhancing Biodiversity at the Bunurong Coastal Landscape project (year 2). This project aims to enhance biodiversity along the stretch of land running from Venus Bay through to Walkerville by reducing fox and rabbit numbers.

Andrea has worked extensively in natural resource management in other regions and gained valuable Landcare experience while on the Board.



*“I have lived in South Gippsland for seven years having moved down from Mildura where I was employed as the Executive Officer and Regional Education Officer for the Regional Waste Management Group. Prior to Mildura I worked for Frankston Council as the Senior Park Ranger.*

*I hold a Bachelor of Applied Science-Natural Resources Management, and a Diploma of Business-Frontline Management.*

*Over the years I have gained hands on experience (both compensated and voluntary) in the environmental educational field.*

*My skills cover the best practice waste management, development, planning implementation and management of*

*several projects including successful grant writing, whilst enhancing and maintaining the general operations of a business.*

*I have two very fast growing boys - in fact my eldest is nearly taller than me!! I volunteer as the School Council President for Leongatha Primary School and I work closely with the Children in the garden and on environmental initiatives around school. Other volunteer roles I undertake are the Vice President and Uniform Coordinator for the Leongatha Knights Football Club. I look forward to working with you.”*

Contact Andrea:  
[andrea@sgln.net.au](mailto:andrea@sgln.net.au)  
0487 238 907



## Events, funding and learning opportunities

### Loch-Nyora Landcare BBQ

15 December 2020 (midday)  
Sunnyside Park Rotunda, Loch  
All welcome.

Contact [lochnyoralandcare@gmail.com](mailto:lochnyoralandcare@gmail.com)

### Tarwin Landcare picnic and walk

15 December 2020 (midday)  
Bald Hills Wildlife Reserve, Tarwin Lower  
An end of year picnic. All welcome.  
BYO food, drink, chairs, blanket.

Contact [debbiebirkett@bigpond.com](mailto:debbiebirkett@bigpond.com)

### What do you think about our forests?

Online survey (ten minutes)  
Closes 15 December 2019

The University of Melbourne is running an online survey to discover what people think and feel about Victorian forests.

Visit [www.melbourneuni.au1.qualtrics.com](http://www.melbourneuni.au1.qualtrics.com)

### Evening bird monitoring

17 December 2019 (5pm)  
Koonwarra Recreation Reserve

Visit [www.nerrenatarwinvalleylc.org.au](http://www.nerrenatarwinvalleylc.org.au)

### Smart Farm Small Grants

Applications close 19 December 2020  
Organisations and individuals can apply for up to \$50,000 to fund projects that promote and deliver adoption of best practice sustainable land management.

Visit [www.landcare.org.au](http://www.landcare.org.au)

### Community Conservation Grants

Applications close 31 January 2020  
The Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife is seeking to fund field projects and education programs that have a direct outcome for nature conservation in Australia.

Visit [www.fnpw.org.au](http://www.fnpw.org.au)

## Employment opportunities

### Bookkeeper

SGLN is seeking a part-time bookkeeper who is proficient in Xero.

Contact [glenn@sgln.net.au](mailto:glenn@sgln.net.au)

0428 427 004

### Education and Engagement Officer Gippsland (Agriculture Victoria)

Applications close 9 December 2019

Contact:

[aimee.liston@agriculture.vic.gov.au](mailto:aimee.liston@agriculture.vic.gov.au)