



Ashbourne Landcare Group

WINTER 2016

President: Robin Allen
Vice President: Ian Temby

Secretary: Libby Peck
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Welcome to the ALG's Winter 2016 Newsletter!

With the recent damp conditions there has been a rush of mushroom madness in the Macedon Ranges! They have been popping up everywhere in fields, forests and lovely to find in hollowed trees in the garden.



From Robin Allen

I am sure you are all delighted with the rainfall we have had in May and June after such a prolonged period of near-drought-like conditions. Hopefully there is plenty more to come.

Firstly, a thank you to all of you who were able to make it to the AGM on Sunday 15 May. We had a good turn out with 23 members attending and bringing delicious food to share over a long lunch after the AGM formalities were over.



Photo: SC

To those of you who were unable to attend, it was agreed that the Committee should focus on identifying natural corridors within the Ashbourne

precinct in order to promote and develop wildlife habitats that would naturally complement the broader biolink activity currently being undertaken by the Upper Campaspe Landcare Network (UCLN) (see below). This will also be accompanied by a greater focus on the management of roadside remnant vegetation which was also recognized as necessarily connected to the biolink issue. Having said that, there was also agreement that weed control continues to be a critical part of the Group's activities.

We would like to thank Libby and Michael Peck for hosting the AGM at their place and as usual it was an interesting and enjoyable afternoon that was shared with neighbours.

A presentation was delivered by Ian Higgins from the North Central Catchment Management Authority. Ian has professional experience with revegetation regarding the salinity effect on land, revegetation of degraded landscapes, work with aquatic zones and conservation of roadside vegetation.



Ian Higgins, Project Officer, NCCMA, giving a presentation on the history and status of 'Roadside Remnant Vegetation' in the area.

COBAW TO CAMPASPE CONNECTIONS FIELD DAY



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In May, ALG members were sent an email invitation inviting them to participate in the UCLN-organised Campaspe Biolink Connections field day that was held on Sunday 22 May. Eighty fliers were also distributed to Ashbourne residents. The day was a huge success with Trentham, Newham and Woodend LGs also participating. Expert ecologists (Paul Foreman and Damian Cook) and traditional Taungurung elder, Uncle Larry Walsh, spoke of how the landscape may have looked and functioned prior to European settlement; what is missing from the landscape and why that matters and what is needed to restore it and to protect our native species.

The day included a visit to Marsh Court Reserve, the Woodend grasslands near the Buffalo Stadium and Hawthorn Park Farm, (owned by Braemar College) near Newham.



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Traditional Taungurung elder, Uncle Larry Walsh describing elements of the natural terrain.

Six ALG members attended the field trip. Two non-members also responded to the invitation and have now applied to become ALG members!

Part 2 will take place on Sunday, 24th July. See details further on regarding the 'Coliban Connections Field Day' which promises to be an interesting day exploring rivers, creeks and grasslands in this diverse area.

LANDMATE CREW

On Wednesday 25 May, a Landmate Crew of four carried out some general maintenance works at the Marsh Court Reserve (cutting and pasting gorse and blackberry, clearing old fencing wire etc.). The men are part of a Corrections Victoria initiative to provide community groups with subsidised labour while also offering Loddon Prison inmates meaningful work and the opportunity to gain some useful skills. The men were very appreciative of the welcome extended to them by two Committee members (RA & AD) and the morning tea prepared for them (LP & RA) and appeared to enjoy working on the Reserve despite the low temperatures that day.

FERAL PIGS

I advised members in May of reports we had received of damage to pasture caused by feral pigs and/or sightings of pigs by ALG members in the Ashbourne area.

Several properties in the Ashbourne area with river

frontage have experienced damage to pasture in recent months two of which have incurred extensive damage.

The photos below reveal how extensive and severe the damage to pasture and crops can be.



Photos: RA

Three feral pigs were separately trapped (each weighing approximately 100 kilos) in the past 4 months on a property off Chanter's Lane/Pearson's Road, East Trentham. Four others were caught with the assistance of dogs and shot on the same property.

Recent sightings include a feral pig taking a kangaroo carcass from a property near Falloons/Walshes Road early in May; a boar, sow and 3 piglets travelling south across the western end of Einsporn's Road early in May; a boar, sow and 6 piglets travelling south across McGiffords Road near Emmins Road on Saturday, 14 May at about 6.30 pm (this sighting was made twice); a large black boar travelling west across a property south of the river on Einsporn's Road at approximately 10.30 am, Monday 23 May; and finally, on 27-28 May, a coloured pig similar to the feral boar in the photo to the right on a property where domestic pigs are kept at the eastern end of Einsporn's Road.

The image of the feral boar was captured on the night of 22 May on a camera that had been set up by one of the Committee members, Ian Temby, near a kangaroo carcass down by the river on private property in the Ashbourne area. Another image was captured on the night of 1 June.



Photo: Ian Temby

It is difficult to determine how substantial a feral pig population exists in the area but after speaking to a former DPI trapper, the best means of dealing with the situation first involves identifying their trail(s) and laying bait (grain, fermented or plain) to attract the pigs along the identified trail. After they have become accustomed to the bait, special traps are set to trap them. The pigs then need to be humanely dispatched which requires daily inspection of the traps and an experienced shooter.

Two landholders have agreed to baits being laid on their properties (north of the Campaspe river and on both the eastern and western sides of Falloons Road).

We have followed up with local landholders who have used responsible pig shooters and trappers in the past and can provide the following contact details for those who wish to pursue this option:

Gordon Meyer, Lancefield (03 5429 1677). Gordon is an experienced pig trapper (previously employed by the former DPI for this very purpose). Gordon operates according to the preferred baiting and trapping methods and does not use dogs. He currently works as a contractor in this area and has suggested that we contact Ag Vic to see if we can borrow some traps (10' x 10') to keep costs down.

Gary Schrader, Kyneton (0416 273 523). Gary is an experienced fox and pig shooter who has culled feral

pigs and foxes on many landcare members' properties in the Kyneton, Newham and Baynton areas. His preference is to work across as many properties as possible and he returns to the area regularly to follow up. He does not charge a fee for this service.

I would like to thank Grahame Thiele, Barry Crozier, Bill Hickey and Jane Holth for their assistance in bringing this matter to our attention and for providing valuable assistance and advice. Graham, in particular, has been most generous with his time and advice.

The MRSC has also been contacted and we have been advised that if the pig sightings are confined to private land, then it is unlikely that the Shire will intervene. However, the Shire has indicated an interest in publicizing the matter through the MRSC's environmental newsletter.

PUBLICITY

The ALG's contact details are now included in the New Woodend Star and, in future, the Group's news and events will also be posted in one of the Coles Supermarket display windows in Woodend.

EVENTS/ACTIVITIES

June: Unfortunately, our foray with fungus at the Firth Park winter walk scheduled for Saturday 11 June had to be postponed due to the poor weather forecast. This event will be rescheduled while fungi are still evident or if this is not possible, we will focus on other aspects of Firth Park.

Some other activities that we hope will be of interest to members have been planned for the Winter season.

These include:

July: Tree Project: we have recently registered with the *Tree Project* which accepts seed collected from trees and shrubs that are locally indigenous to the area to be planted. These are then sent to a Tree Project volunteer to propagate who, in turn, notifies us when the seedlings are ready for distribution. We hope to start collecting seed at Ian Temby's property in the near future and, if anyone is interested in volunteering their time to assist us to do this on other properties and/or would simply like to learn what is involved, please advise me. We would be delighted to hear from you.

We will be taking interested members' orders for tree/shrub seedlings from July-August noting that the Group must order a minimum of 500 seedlings. Further details will be provided when we seek members' orders.

Sunday, 14 August: Presentation on nesting boxes (phascogales, gliders, owls etc.) by William Terry, Environmental Programs and Education Officer, MRSC followed by a BBQ lunch at the Marsh Court Reserve. This will coincide with a working bee at the Reserve.

Robin Allen

UPCOMING EVENTS

Biolink/Roadside Remnant Vegetation Project – Meeting Friday, 15th July, 6.30, Victoria Hotel, Woodend

The creation of Biolink and roadside vegetation corridors for native habitat preservation has been raised in ALG Committee Meetings over the past year. A sub-committee has been established to discuss the project and a meeting will be held on Friday, 15th July at 6.30pm in the Victoria Hotel. Anyone interested in this project is welcome to attend.

Coliban Connections Field Day Sunday, 24th July

Explore forests, rivers, creeks and grasslands during this free field day in the Coliban region. The bus tour is organised by the Upper Campaspe Landcare Network and will visit a diverse range of landscapes within the region. We will look at how the landscape may have looked and functioned, what is missing from it now, why it matters and what needs to be done to restore it.

The tour starts at 9am and concludes at the Tylden Community Hall at approximately 3.30 pm. There is ample parking available at the Tylden Hall. Lunch and morning + afternoon tea is provided.

Please bring warm clothing, sturdy footwear and a raincoat to protect from cold winds as well as rain.

Please look out for follow up flyer.

ASHBOURNE LANDCARE FACEBOOK PAGE!

Ashbourne Landcare now has a Facebook site depicting our beautiful area! This has been set up by Linda Healy and Janine Lambie and has a number of interesting displays including a video on the threatened Powerful Owl species and many lovely photos of the change of seasons in Ashbourne. This is an interactive site so if you have any photos, videos, stories, news items etc. that you would like to share, just put them up!

To access ALG Facebook, type in Ashbourne Landcare Facebook in your Web browser. Even if you don't have a Facebook account it will still come up and you can view the content. **Well worth a look!**

Welcome to "Our Patch - a picture of Ashbourne".

The Ashbourne area of the Macedon Ranges Shire has remarkable biodiversity – farm land to hidden fern gullies.

You are invited to contribute to the expanding knowledge of our district by posting photos of flora and fauna found on your property and local roadsides.

Each change of season brings new nature surprises and visual delights... take a moment to enjoy and share your finds.



PROJECT UPDATES AND OTHER NEWS!

WAG UPDATE

Ashbourne Landcare Group WAG Report June 2016

The WAG submission for a 2016 Landcare Special Projects Grant to undertake further gorse and blackberry control was unsuccessful. Apparently about 300 submissions were received by the two members of Landcare staff assigned to receive the submissions.

Our submission was carefully drafted to respond to the selection criteria, but we have been advised that no feedback will be provided due to limited staff resources. We therefore do not know why our submission failed or how we can in future improve our chances of success.

A disappointing result, given the effort put into our drive-by survey, mapping and submission preparation. Apparently another round of Victorian Task Force grant submissions are soon to be invited, so we will have to try our luck again in that field.

It may be time to call on the Department of Environment Land Water and Planning to require

landholders to undertake weed control, as our effort to entice them are flagging.

Michael Peck
WAG CONVENOR
26 June 2016

Rabbit Control

With regard to the ongoing Landcare Management concerning rabbit control, making a Rabbit Bait Station out of a 24 gallon drum can be a cheap and practical solution to rabbit control. Information on making a Rabbit Bait Station can be found at the following web site:

<https://rabbitaction.com/2016/06/09/interested-in-making-a-rabbit-bait-station/>

Update on Calici virus! The national release of RHDV1-K5 is now likely to take place in spring 2016 or autumn 2017 pending approvals.

PROPOSED CAMPASPE (WOODEND) RESERVOIR ENLARGEMENT AND DAM UPGRADE

Last April/May ALG members adjacent to the Reservoir received advice that:

“Western Water is considering upgrading the Campaspe (Woodend) Reservoir. The dam wall which was built in 1955 requires restoration works to bring it up to modern day standards and some safety features need refurbishment”.

They are “also contemplating raising the dam’s embankment to improve water supply security for Woodend’s growing population. This will result in changes to the reservoir’s capacity and existing boundaries.”

At this stage they have yet to determine the exact impact raising the reservoir’s level will have on neighbouring properties and the downstream environment. Western Water has begun initial land survey investigations, with the consent of the adjoining property owners.

Much initial work is yet to be carried out to determine the feasibility of this proposal. They have committed to keeping adjacent local residents and ALG informed of progress. If anyone wishes to further contact Western Water’s, details are:

majorprojects@westernwater.com.au

Or phone Senior Community Engagement Stakeholder Relations Advisor Karin Brawn on 0409 951 597 during business hours.

LP

Forming an Events Committee

We would like to establish an ‘ALG Events Committee’ and are seeking expressions of interest from anyone who can help out with organising events that would broadly appeal to ALG members. Contact Robin Allen on 0438271108.

Membership Annual Subscription

REMINDER MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION NOW DUE! Joining fee for new members now \$20.00 **per household.** Annual subscription \$20.00. Members can pay by cheque made to Ashbourne Landcare Group or via online bank transfer:

Account name: Ashbourne Landcare Group Inc.

BSB: 313 140 **Account no.:** 19221339

Please write MF (Member Fee) followed by your surnames for description.

Membership form attached at the end of newsletter for new members and membership renewal.

NEXT ALG MEETING

Committee Meetings continue to take place at the Victoria Hotel over a pub meal (6.30pm).

2016 Meeting Dates scheduled :

12 August, 14 October, 9 December.

Any member is most welcome to attend.

Nesting Basics!

Creative spots birds find to make their home...



Easy Rider

What better way to use old motorcycle jackets hanging in the shed!



The Potager



The Penthouse

