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Project Platypus Upper Wimmera Landcare

MISSION

Find us:

Support and empower community. Improve environmental health of Upper Wimmera Catchment. Maintain and improve

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Down to Earth

OCTOBER UPDATE

Welcome to our newsletter *Down to Earth*,

This month Bronwyn & I have rounded up a collection of events & workshops locally and further afield. Feel free to pass around email to your networks.

We hope you enjoy & welcome feedback

Andrea & Bronwyn

Events on at a glance

LOCAL

Tonight Introduction to birds - Horsham

Wed 18 Oct Climate Change Innovation Marketplace - Horsham

Wed 18- 20 Oct Finding the right balance, Vic No Till - Horsham

Sun 22 Oct Gardening for wildlife seminar - St Arnaud

Thurs 26 Oct Stawell Ironbarks Discovery Day - Deep Lead Nature Reserve

Fri 27 Oct Citizen science - Stawell

FURTHER AFIELD

Applications close Oct 29 Victorian Rural Women's Award

Until 26 Nov Women of the Land Exhibition - Melbourne

23-29 Oct Aussie backyard bird count - Australia <https://aussiebirdcount.org.au/>

Landcare roundup

In September, year 3 children from St Patrick's, Stawell West & Stawell Primary schools enjoyed exploring the Ironbarks with volunteers from **Stawell Urban Landcare**. The tradition of educating about the local environment has been happening for many years.

Stawell Urban Landcare cleaned up the Western Hwy on Sunday morning with plenty of take away food wrappers, cans, drink containers & a few tyres collected - no cash found unlike previous years!

Project Platypus's Dene & Pebbles have been out spraying Cape tulip, Broome grass, Gorse, Sweet Briar, Blackberry & Chilean needle grass in areas such as Halls Gap, Pomonal, Moyston, Dadswells Bridge, Campbells Bridge. Bridal creeper was sprayed on the river at Glenorchy and rabbit warrens fumigated in Wal Wal.

Elmhurst Landcare's AGM was on October 1st at the golf club with a sumptuous shared casserole meal and the best pavlova!

Concongella Landcare had their AGM on October 4th at the gorgeous Joel Joel hall.

Northern Grampians Landcare hosted an evening all about platypus at Dadswells Bridge hall. Who knew baby platypus were called puggles or platypup! The enemy of the platypus is plastic, found in even the most pristine rivers. So far 13 deaths recorded to Opera house nets (but estimated to be 200-300)

To find out more: <http://platypusspot.org/>

River Detectives

Project Platypus has been fortunate to secure State Government Funding from the Wimmera CMA to participate in a state wide pilot program called River Detectives. Project Platypus staff member Bronwyn has facilitated the program locally, separate to her role as Regional Landcare Facilitator.

River Detectives is an initiative of the North Central Catchment Management Authority. Similar to Waterwatch, the River Detectives Program provides professional development and support to local teachers on river health, water quality and catchment management. This is complemented with the provision of a range of equipment and access to the interactive River Detectives website.

If you'd like to know more, contact Bronwyn bronwyn@platypus.org.au, or visit the River Detectives website <http://www.riverdetectives.net.au/>

20th Wimmera Biodiversity Seminar – Back to the Future – September 1st 2017

Vibrant television personality Costa Georgiadas, from ABC's Gardening Australia, was MC for an absolute stellar event hosted by **Wimmera CMA**. Fabulously articulate and diverse guest speakers, wonderful local gourmet lunch and a few powerful messages along the way made this a day not to be missed. I especially loved the tour to *West Wail Flora and Fauna Reserve*, feasting on the fruit of the native Leafless currant bush (*leptomeria aphylla*) - tasted much like a Granny smith apple!

The biodiversity seminar saw Matt Ruchel (Executive Director of Vic. National Parks Assoc.) talk passionately about planned logging by VicForests throughout Victoria which was of real concern to him. <https://vnpa.org.au/plans-to-log-native-forests-in-western-victoria-slammed/>.

Corey Watts as new Victorian Coordinator of **Farmers for Climate Action** spoke of this grassroots advocacy organization dedicated to supporting farmers and rural communities in dealing with climate change. <http://www.farmersforclimateaction.org.au/>

DELWP's David Parkes was part of the team that developed Vic. gov's Biodiversity Plan 2037. He elaborated on mapping for species distribution modelling. <https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/biodiversity-plan>

Dr Mardie Townsend spoke at the heart of people engaging with nature and how separated many have become. Her quote on mental health and nature: "Feel blue, touch

green”.

Native foods as a commercial enterprise could see no more passionate advocate than Amanda Garner from **Australian Native Foods and Botanicals**. She travels all over Australia sourcing, promoting and supporting innovative bush food enterprises.

<https://anfab.org.au/>

Some many varied topics kept the seminar interesting with; the history and construction of the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline discussed with Bernie Dun of **GWM Water; Lidar technology** to detect Mallee fowl mounds with Belinda Cant and Rob Youl talking of **Australian Landcare International** <http://alci.com.au/>.

Project Platypus joined forces with the North Central Catchment Management Authority to jointly host

Chicks in this Sticks with the **Banyena Avon Plains Landcare Group** on Sunday the 10th of September. Chicks were treated to a tour of Walkers Lake, where we heard about the environmental issues impacting the Lake and were also lucky to see a scar tree and indigenous flint stones.

Two guest speakers talked about their innovative agricultural enterprises. 2017 top ten finalist of the Regional Australia Institute’s Lightbulb Moments campaign, Melissa Connors spoke about her journey, which led to her to develop the ‘*This Farm Needs A Farmer*’ mentoring project. The 2017 *Weekly Times Coles FARM magazine Innovative Farmer of the Year* award winner and local success story Alicia Cain shared the concept behind ‘Dads Oats’, along with how the business has grown and their plans for the future. Chicks in the Sticks is all about celebrating sustainability and innovation, and we wish Melissa and Alicia all the best with their innovations into the future.

P.S: the images from chicks are all online now at the CMA’s Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/northccma/photos/a.331382513634685.61814.170583499714588/1283679581738302/?type=3&theater>

We need your input!

Phase one of the National Landcare Program (NLP) will cease at the end of this financial year. Phase one of this federally funded program has mainly concentrated on supporting and encouraging sustainable agricultural practices. Locally, NLP funds the Regional Landcare Facilitator position, and also supports a range of projects and activities carried out by organisations such as Wimmera Catchment Management

Authority, Perennial Pasture Systems & Vic No-Till Farmers Association.

After reviewing phase one of the NLP, the federal government has now released some details on how phase two of the National Landcare Program will look. Of particular importance to Project Platypus and our farm-based landcare groups will be the Smart Farms program. The Government is allocating \$134 million dollars to support the development and uptake of best practice management practices, tools and technologies that help farmers & regional communities improve the protection, resilience and productive capacity of our soils, water and vegetation, in turn supporting successful primary industries and regional communities.

Access to the Smart Farms funding will be via a competitive process, so we need your ideas to help us build a relevant and meaningful bid that will help support you and your farm. Please email your ideas through to bronwyn@platypus.org.au

Gardening for Wildlife Seminar - Sunday, 22nd October 2017, from 12 noon
McDonald Hall, Town Hall Complex, Napier Street, St Arnaud

Hear expert speakers discuss how to create habitat for native wildlife in your home garden. Learn about:

- The structural elements that make up 'habitat', why it's important and how habitat needs differ between native wildlife species;
- Simple ways you can create wildlife habitat, whether you're starting from scratch or incorporating it into an existing garden;
- Gardening with Australian native plants, including species that will help attract wildlife to your garden year round;

Entry is FREE and includes a light lunch.

The Kara Kara Conservation Management Network RSVP 0419 550 226 or email karakaracmn@gmail.com bookings essential

Citizen Science - Friday 27 October , 9.30 -12 pm
Grannes, 207 Pomonal Rd, Stawell
Forum with Ken Walker

Start recording the organisms in your own area & on your travels, & join 1000s of people in building Australia's biodiversity knowledge. Get yourself on the Citizen Science Leader Board by recording as many different species as you can. <https://www.ala.org.au/citizen-science-central/>

RSVP Glenda 0409 423 827 bookings essential

Applications for the 2018 AgriFutures Victorian Rural Women's Award are now open!

The Award provides a platform to inspire and support Australian women to use and develop their skills to benefit their industries and communities.

- Applications for the AgriFutures™ Rural Women's Award close on Sunday, 29 October 2017 at 9pm.
- \$10,000 bursaries are available in each state and territory to support emerging women leaders to implement their Award vision.
- Visit www.agrifutures.com.au/people-leadership/rural-womens-award/ to apply!

For more information on the Victorian Rural Women's Award go to <http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/food-and-fibre-industries/rural-womens-award> or contact Johanna Christensen: johanna.christensen@ecodev.vic.gov.au or 03 83927117

Women of the Land exhibition 13 October–26 November 2017

[Melbourne Gallery, Melbourne Museum](#)

11 Nicholson St, Carlton, 3053

A collaboration between Her Place Women's Museum Australia and Museums Victoria's Invisible Farmer Project to celebrate rural women who work, protect and heal our land.

<https://herplacemuseum.com/about/exhibition-2/>



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