



Project Platypus Upper Wimmera Landcare

MISSION

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

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Down to Earth

CHRISTMAS 2018

Welcome to *Down to Earth*,

I hope you enjoy this month's newsletter and take time to think about your year in 2018 (see [Years Reflections 2018](#)). Much has happened locally in Landcare - let me know of your highlights, big or small. Send a photo or story to share on the newsletter, all contributions welcome.

From all of us at Project platypus we wish you all a merry Christmas and safe and happy New Year.

Cheers Andrea

Local Landcare Facilitator

2019

February

13 Feb - 20 March [FarmPlan21](#), Ararat

15 - 17 Grampians Music [Festival](#)

March

29 -31 Landcare Biannual Forum Halls Gap LVI [Landcare Victoria](#)

Moisture Probes Crowlands Warrak Landcare Group

[Seed & Feed tour summary](#)

[Landmate](#)

[Christmas & the New Year - a time to reflect](#)

[Climate](#) - Victoria's Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report

[Cheryl Hall's Christmas trifle](#)

Keeping tabs on the water - Crowlands Warrak Landcare

Written by Michelle Start

The Crowlands Warrak Landcare Group have recently installed two new fully automatic weather stations with soil moisture probes in their local area.

These stations provide real time data of current weather conditions. They are located centrally to Crowlands and Warrak. The data is captured every 15 minutes and uploaded to the cloud every 30 minutes. It can be accessed for free on the web or from an app for everyone's use. The data captured helps local farmers make management decisions and assists them with timing for spraying (wind speed, direction & Delta T), baling (humidity readings), pasture and crop growth (soil/air temperature, rainfall readings) for example. The data for the soil moisture probes will become more accurate after 12

months, for the probes to settle with high & low values calibrated.



Photos above show weather station & moisture probes. They are solar & battery powered.

To view data there are several ways to do this:

- 1.** Download for free **Wildeye Farm Monitoring app** from the App Store (only works for iPhone's, not androids at this stage)
- 2.** Or via the web site on a PC, Phone or Tablet

www.agrotek.com.au

Once in the app or website you will need to enter the Username & Password to view the data.

Username: crowlandswarrak

Password: landcare



Above is an example of the data and how it is displayed

Installing probes

Signage will be soon installed promoting & acknowledging their sponsors & supporters for this project. The project has been supported by Wimmera CMA through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program. The Crowlands Warrak Landcare Group has contributed 50% of the project's cost from their own funds. They would like to thank Project Platypus and Perennial Pasture Systems (PPS) for their support of this project. The Crowlands Warrak Landcare Group is data sharing with PPS's existing network of soil moisture probes. The group was inspired by the Lockington Landcare Group with their network of weather stations & soil moisture probes. They could see real benefits for their members and the local community to have access to this type of information.

Any questions regarding this project can be directed to:-

Paul Harrington (Crowlands Warrak Landcare President) mob: 0438 243 682

Seed & Feed Tour

A small band of women traveled to Horsham and were treated to a full tour of the Grains Innovation Park with Justine Severin showing us around. We listened to a PhD students discuss their projects on pulses and grains, especially in relation to nutritional and baking qualities. We also looked at the Australian Grains Genebank which is the national program for preserving grain crop genetic resources in Australia.

Links to AGFACE (Australian Grains Free Air CO2 Enrichment) written by Justine Severin:

- [The Australian Grains Free Air Carbon Dioxide Enrichment Program](#)
- [AGFACE achievements celebrated](#)
- [AGFACE Project concludes](#)



After lunch we were shown the tools of the trade for

Matthew Rohrsheim's market garden enterprise, Haven Grown. Above he is using a hand held harvester, powered by a drill, used to cut and collect his lettuce and salad greens! A lovely day was had by all - it is amazing the agricultural enterprises we have on our doorstep.

LANDMATE

Get labour for your environmental project

- **All Landcare groups are entitled to 3 days per group per year at no charge to do landcare related work**
- The crew can do work related to DELWP and CMA grants free of charge with no limit on number of days
- 2nd Ararat (Hopkins) crew starting February 2019
- Has to be within 100 km of Hopkins corrections centre (Ararat)



Types of work Landmate can do include:

1. Fencing
2. Tree planting, watering and guarding
3. Noxious weed control with hand removal and herbicide application of woody weeds
4. Vermin control such as fumigation of rabbit warrens
5. Erosion reduction
6. General land reclamation and improvement activities.

New website launched in August 2018:

www.landmate.vic.gov.au – good source of information

- Will be available for disaster recovery work (flood and fire) if need arises.

FarmPlan 21 Course

13 Feb - 20 March

Every Wednesday for six weeks

9 am -3 pm

Ararat Shire hall, 223 - 239 Barkly St Ararat

Topics:

- Computer mapping
- Soils and land classing
- Farm design and layout
- Farm water supply
- Pasture and grazing management
- Biodiversity and shelterbelts
- Climate, vision and goals
- Biosecurity



Contact Clem Sturfels 5355 0535 or 0429 018 879

clem.sturfels@ecodev.vic.gov.au

CHRISTMAS & THE NEW YEAR - a time to reflect

12 Wonderful Ways to Spread Christmas Cheer - hugs, your time and gifts that help save lives are among those on the list.

Below are some challenging ideas to societies norms

The Gift of Death - [George Monbiot](#)

In the words of George Monbiot "Bake them a cake, write them a poem, give them a kiss, tell them a joke, but for god's sake stop trashing the planet to tell someone you care. All it shows is that you don't."

The Story of Stuff - [Annie Leonard](#)

The Story of Stuff exposes the connections between a huge number of environmental and social issues, and calls us together to create a more sustainable and just world. It'll teach you something, it'll make you laugh, and it just may change the way you look at all the Stuff in your life forever.



TEDx TALK - [How much is enough?](#)

How much is enough? Kevin Cavanaugh asks this profound question of the audience. He focuses on three topic areas of wealth, rent & equality – he challenges us on how we will choose to change our lives as he bridges the concepts of capitalism and socialism. What will you do with the power of enough?

YEAR'S REFLECTIONS 2018

10 HIGHLIGHTS

Accomplishments, best memories

5 DISAPPOINTMENTS

Missed opportunities or failures

3 THINGS YOU FOCUSED ON

What you put the most of your time into

3 GAME-CHANGERS

Unexpected events that shifted your priorities

3 THINGS YOU FORGOT

What didn't you get around to

REFLECTION

How will this help inform plans in 2019 for you

CLIMATE

Victoria's *Climate Change Act 2017* establishes the state's target of net zero emissions by 2050. To report on progress in achieving this target, it also requires the preparation of annual greenhouse gas emissions reports for Victoria.

Snapshot of Victoria Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report by Corey Watts

Overall, the state is on track to meet its emissions targets (15–20% of 2005 levels by 2020), with an 18% fall by 2020, in large part because of the closure of Hazelwood, as well as public policy drivers.

Agriculture, at 12% of the total load, is the fourth largest emitter by sector; 68% of which is methane from enteric fermentation (i.e. livestock), unsurprisingly.

Next to livestock, the sector's biggest source of emissions (20%) is from N fertilizers (i.e. soil) applied on cropland.

Emissions for agriculture show a lot of variation since 1990, mainly as stock numbers fluctuated with the Millennium Drought and seasonal factors, and as the wool industry declined. No surprises there, either. The key thing to note here is that productivity improvements have not amounted to a significant drop in emissions. That is, emissions remain coupled to sheer numbers of livestock.

To 2020, emissions from agriculture are projected to rise by over 10% from 2016, mainly because of rising export market demand for beef and, to a lesser extent, pork and lamb. (And no countervailing policy or technical interventions foreseen.)

While the report is largely silent on mitigation in agriculture, **it should be noted that it is technically possible to substantially cut emissions from both cropping and grazing lands without cutting productivity—and even lifting it.** See [Carbon Farming Futures](#). At the moment, however, there are few clear incentives, support services, or aspirations to do so.

LULUCF (i.e. land use and land use change and forestry) emissions will also rise to 25% above 2016 levels, though the sector will remain a net sink. Sequestered carbon will be lost as short-rotation plantations are harvested with little to no re-establishment and only weak policy drivers. Since 1990, LULUCF has twice switched from nett source to nett sink. In 2016, it sequestered 9% of Victoria's total emissions.

Emissions from landfill will fall somewhat owing to recent reforms in management.

Transport emissions are also rising, driven by population growth, while fugitive emissions are falling with a decline in natural gas consumption and distribution.

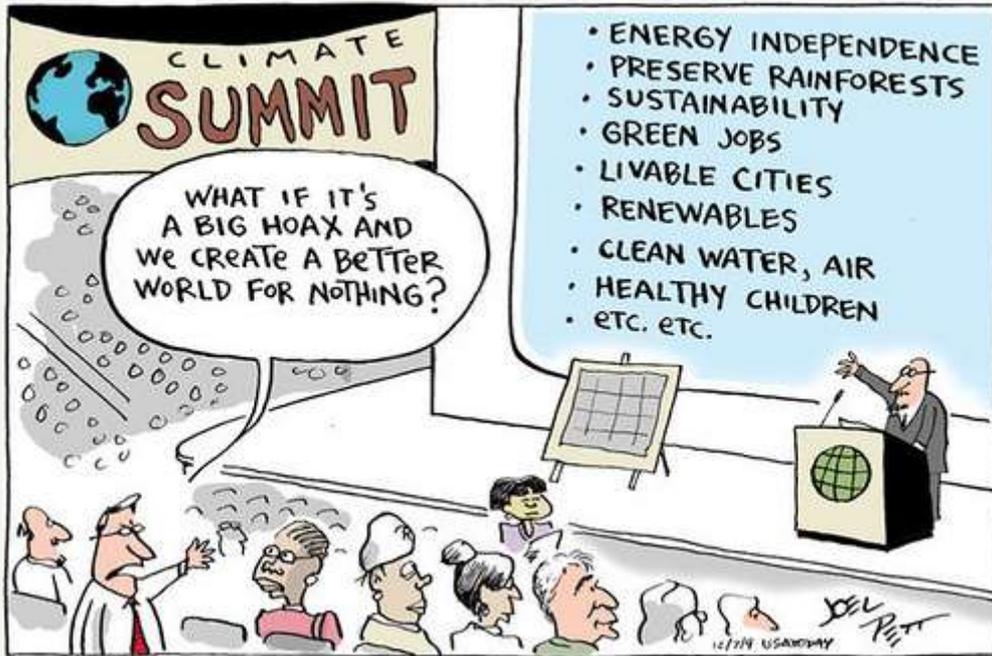
Link to full report [Victorian Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report](#)

Why extreme rains are gaining strength as the climate warms?

The moisture in the air changes depending on temperature: heat that air by 1 °C, and it can hold approximately 7% more water. **Global rainfall** records between 1999 and 2014 were studied. For the **median** of all locations in the study, it took only **12 days for half of the year's rain to fall**.

Looking ahead with a **climate model**, the researchers found that this kind of unevenness will increase. **If greenhouse-gas emissions continue to climb quickly in the future, half of the extra rainfall will happen during the wettest six days of the year.**

Link to article [Nature - international Journal of Science](#)



Source: Joel Pett, cartoonist 2018

Cheryl Hall's Christmas Trifle recipes

Cheryl Hall makes trifle for sweets on Christmas day and she has sent through a few ideas or try Taste.com.au for the best in Aussie recipes:

Ps (of course trifle is all in the layering)

"One of the recipes I used was a base of lightly broken **chocolate brownies** sprinkled with **Cointreau**, then fresh **stone fruit, ie nectarines, peaches**, etc. I made a **chocolate egg custard** and topped it off with cream and chocolate shavings. Quite rich, but delicious.

Chocolate custard

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup milk
- 300ml thickened cream
- 1 vanilla bean, halved lengthways
- 4 egg yolks
- 1 tablespoon cornflour
- 1/3 cup caster sugar
- 100g dark chocolate, chopped

METHOD

Step 1. Combine milk and cream in a medium saucepan. Scrape vanilla seeds from bean. Discard bean.

Add vanilla seeds to milk mixture. Cook, stirring, over medium heat for 5 minutes or until hot (do not boil). Remove saucepan from heat.

Step 2. Whisk egg yolks, cornflour and sugar in a large heatproof bowl until combined. Gradually pour hot milk mixture over egg yolk mixture, whisking constantly.

Step 3. Return mixture to saucepan. Add chocolate. Heat over low heat. Cook, stirring constantly, for 10 minutes or until custard starts to bubble and coats the back of the spoon (do not allow custard to boil). Serve warm or cold.

"The other one was a **rich fruit cake** broken up and used as a base and sprinkled with **port or brandy, fresh fruit** and a **crème Anglaise custard**, topped with **cream**."

Crème Anglaise custard

INGREDIENTS

- 1L (4 cups) milk
- 2 teaspoons vanilla essence
- 10 egg yolks
- 75g (1/3 cup) caster sugar
- 125ml (1/2 cup) thickened cream

METHOD

Step 1. Place half the milk and half the vanilla essence in a medium heavy-based saucepan. Heat over low heat, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes or until the milk just comes to the boil. Remove from heat and set aside.

Step 2. Whisk half the egg yolks and half the sugar together in a heatproof bowl until thick and pale.

Step 3. Gradually stir the milk into the egg mixture.

Step 4. Place the heatproof bowl over a saucepan of simmering water (make sure bowl doesn't touch the water, as this will cook the custard too quickly). Cook, stirring constantly, for 25 minutes or until the custard coats the back of the spoon.

Step 5. Stir in half the cream. Strain crème anglaise through a fine sieve into a heatproof jug.

Step 6. Repeat with the remaining ingredients.



Merry Christmas and a safe and Happy New Year to all.

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