



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

DECEMBER 21st Christmas & New Year update

Welcome to our final 2017 newsletter, ***Down to Earth***,

Some light Christmas reading below: events into 2018; Chairperson's summary 2017; Landcare group updates; grant opportunities x 3; Bring your Landcare story to Life; Future Farming Expo; Winter farm tour in summer; Climate and the Bureau of Meteorology summer forecast; recipes - Christmas roast pork and the crispiest crackle ever - video instructions included and not to forget landcarer **Wendy's Impossible pie recipe - a sweets treat for summer!**



and a safe and happy NEW YEAR.

2018 here we come!

From the Project Platypus team

Events at a Glance

Office Closed 22 Dec 2017 - 2 Jan 2018

21st Feb 2018 Future Farming Expo, Donald Stadium, North Central CMA

25th Feb 2018 Winter farm tour in summer [Perennial Pasture Systems](#) (tentative date)

1st March [Celebrating Women in Conservation](#), Breakfast at Federation Square, Melbourne

16 - 18th March 2018 [Women on Farms Gathering](#), Rosebud, Victoria

Landcare groups update

[Stall Urban Landcare](#) Christmas BBQ at Federation Park.

Stawell Urban Landcare had a very unusual Christmas BBQ meeting with a few unexpected guests: a flock of very friendly Pacific black ducks; moorhens and coots; a brown snake; and a surprise happy

birthday entourage with cake for birthday boy and Project Platypus manager [John Pye](#).

[Jallukar Landcare](#) have been a buzz with activities. They managed a seed collection workshop, Christmas party and meeting all in the one day! Great social evening with plenty in attendance at Glenda Lewin's property.

Crowlands Landcare. Catch up with [Crowlands Landcare](#) and the Project Platypus Board for Christmas BBQ and discussion of future directions led by Michael Greene.

Project Platypus. John Pye, manager, was interviewed by Win News last week about the demise of the platypus. Check out PP's facebook page for the full [interview](#).

PODCAST: If you have a bit of time download this podcast from *Freedom of Species* who are in the studio, chatting with wildlife ecologist Joshua Griffiths & conservation photographer Doug Gimesy about threats to the platypus. It is a good half hour of conversation - so one to download and listen to in the car.

Landmate have been out and about in Hall's Gap spraying *Kunzea ericifolia* which is endemic to Western Australia but has naturalised in the Grampians and become a problem weed. (Sometimes called spearwood, *Kunzea ericifolia* is an erect shrub, (0.4-)1-4 m high. Fl. yellow/cream-white, Jul or Sep to Dec. Peaty sand, grey sand, quartzite. Prefers seasonally wet swamps, moist situations, amongst rocks on summit.

Halls Gap Landcare (newly formed) had funding which has resulted in project Platypus spraying blackberry, Watsonia, Arum lillies and some rabbit fumigation in December.

Girls in Grass coffee morning at Salinger's cafe at Great Western this week. Regular catch ups at different venues to share ideas for women on farms are planned for 2018. Watch this space or contact **Debbie Shae (0418 205353)** for more information.

Project Platypus Board

Chairperson Michael Greene's summary, 2017

The year of 2017 has been one of great difficulty for the organisation. Project Platypus along with other networking and landcare organisations have experienced significant financial constraints as the Government continues to cut back funding for landcare works. The significant decrease in revenue and general funding streams has meant that Project Platypus has had to make decisions that it would have preferred not to, such as putting off staff, and reorganising the management of the organisations roles.

There was an obvious need to reinvent the organisation, and touch base with our origins, where it all began, in the 1990's.

Whilst the financial aspects and decisions that followed have been a pre-occupation of the Board, and how we best move forward, good works continued to be done. Chairman P. Hall, AGM report, all eleven landcare groups have completed projects for the year, and Project Platypus has had expenditure of over \$750,000 (2016). Volunteers from landcare groups and the wider community have stepped up and supported Project Platypus, to help deliver thirty-five different projects. The organisation requires that continued support and belief for the long term.

The organisation has enjoyed and benefited significantly from the role of John Pye, coming in as volunteer Manager of Project Platypus. John, with his wealth of experience and other skills, has injected a new sense of enthusiasm and motivation to the role.

In finance Project Platypus have greatly appreciated the volunteer role of Julie Andrew, now on staff, along with assistance from Leanne Jackman, with their experience in Myob software, general accounting and financial practices. Other financial measures are being considered, in order to reduce overheads, such as the office, technical support, and equipment.

We have also secured the services of Andrea Mitchell, as Local Landcare Facilitator, a position which was open for far too long, a Government decision process. Andrea, also brings experience, enthusiasm, and new ideas to Project Platypus.

It is with regret that the organisation say goodbye to Bronwyn Bant, who has been a valued staff member with the organisation for a number of years, more recently the Regional Landcare Facilitator. She is having a career change and Project Platypus wish her every success.

Loki McIntyre has been appointed role of Regional Landcare Facilitator which is funded till the end of June 2018.

The Board is developing a new sense of responsibility and diversity towards maintaining relevance in a future with Landcare and the landcare groups in the Upper Wimmera. The Board members are committed to the organisation, and all believe in the continued values and ideals of Project Platypus.

The organisation is interested in developing a wish list of ideas, and actual projects that can fit to funding, rather than applying for funding first, and then looking for projects. Project Platypus seeks your project ideas and support in this area.

Project Platypus current financial position is much improved, and that improvement needs to continue, some new projects and contract work, give the organisation stability, though challenges still exist.

In this summary of the organisation, 2016/17 it must be acknowledged the services of all previously employed staff members, who filled a valuable role in the development, and the environmental understanding of Project Platypus, and the Region. Also those Board members who gave their time in a

voluntary capacity, and having to make hard rational decisions, in order that Project Platypus has a significant role to play in the future.

A review of the strategic plan, understanding our position with Wimmera CMA, and a closer communication with landcare group members, are all ways that the organisation considers a means of getting back in touch with landcare, given the changing circumstances of Governments, and financial constraints.

Michael Greene.

Grants

Junior Landcare Grants 2018

200 x \$1,000 grants for Victorian school, childcare centre or youth group.

Momentum Energy and Junior Landcare are partnering again next year to fund 200 sustainability or environmental projects. Applications will open in term one and close on 22 March. They're looking for projects that involve young people caring for their natural environment, such as veggie or bush tucker gardens, composting or recycling projects or other sustainable ideas. Project Platypus are happy to help out with [applications](#).

Wettenhall Environmental Trust [Small Environmental Grant Scheme](#)

Looking for projects around:

- **flora and fauna conservation**
- **threatened mammal conservation**
- **landscape restoration and education (Victoria only)**

These projects should involve any of the following:

- **monitoring, recording and sharing data**
- **delivering community education**
- **providing community capacity building (e.g. training)**
- **research and science**

There are opening dates for these grant rounds, but no closing dates – round closed when suitable number and spread of applications present to the Trustees. Best to get in as soon as you can when the round opens.

- 12th December 2017 (funding in February 2018) [OPEN NOW](#)

INTERNATIONAL GRANTS ROUND

The **National Geographic Society** invites applications to support research, conservation, education, storytelling and technology. Grants US \$30K each. Applications outside the US are encouraged.

Deadline 3 January 2018. <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/grants/what-we-fund>

Bring your Landcare story to life

Would your Landcare group like a free, professional video to raise awareness of the fantastic work you're doing to educate our next generation of Landcarers?

Landcare Australia introduces [Landcare Video Storytellers](#). Just follow the quick and simple guide to upload pictures and video, and they'll do the rest! They will create a free 40 second professional video clip to tell your very own Landcare story which can easily be shared on social media platforms.

Future Farming Expo 2018

Managing Risk by being open to opportunity

6th annual 2018 future Farming Expo

- Where to invest?
- Integrated Pest Management
- Farmer stories
- Virtual herding
- Weather forecast
- Succession planning
- Business management
- Drones and aerial imagery
- Grain marketing

Date: **Feb 21st 2018**

Time: **8.30am**

Place: **Donald Stadium**

FREE event including lunch

RSVP: **ph 0354487124** or info@nccma.vic.gov.au

Winter Whole Farm Tour in Summer - Perennial Pasture Systems

Annual farm tour at "Titanga" which is a large grazing and cropping enterprise owned by the Lang family and managed by PPS member Stuart Robinson. Members will be able to inspect the 1500 Ha of

phalaris based pasture as well as lucerne, sorghum, fodder rape and tillage, radish which provides for 17,000 sheep.

Date: **February 25th 2018 (tentative date)**

Time: **3.30 pm**

Place: "Titanga" near Lismore

Conclude with a BBQ in the historic woolshed

More info ph Rob Shea 0438 521 357 or yadin@netconnect.com.au

Climate Outlook Bureau of Meteorology [Dec 2017 - Jan 2018](#)

The end-of-month Climate and Water Outlook video covers rainfall, streamflow and temperature for the next three months. It includes a wrap-up of recent conditions and a look at which drivers are influencing the climate.

Wendy's Impossible Pie

Ingredients

- 1 cup frozen berries
- 4 eggs
- 1/2 cup plain flour
- 1.5 cup milk
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup coconut
- 2 teaspoons vanilla essence

Method

1. Thaw berries.
2. Beat all ingredients together for approx 2 mins. Add berries.
3. Pour into a greased pie dish.
4. Bake in Mod oven 45-50 mins

So if you have made it to the end I have included a Christmas roast pork recipe "[Tips for the crispiest crackling](#)" courtesy of NFF and Pork Australia - looks delicious.

Our mailing address is:

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