

Project Platypus Upper Wimmera Landcare

MISSION

To work in partnership with the Landcare community to improve the environmental health of the Upper Wimmera Catchment while maintaining and improving productivity.



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Down to Earth

JUNE 2021 UPDATE

Welcome to our newsletter *Down to Earth*,

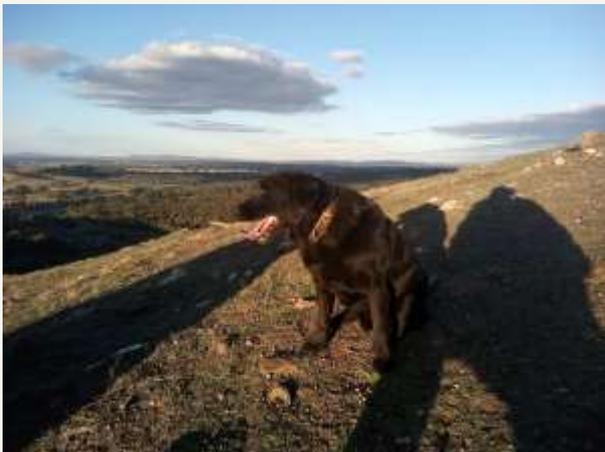
Hi there, I am excited to introduce myself as the new Local Landcare Facilitator for Project Platypus. Andrea Mitchell has handed the role over to me and I am looking forward to working closely with our member groups and stakeholders throughout the Upper Wimmera.

I will use this newsletter as a way of firstly sharing my experiences and interests in this project and secondly linking you into all the great work that is going on in our catchment. I will do my best to continue the great work Andrea puts into her newsletters. Your feedback on any improvements and content ideas to this newsletter is always welcomed.

I have enjoyed being a local landcare facilitator ever since the program began almost 10 years ago in the Dandenong Ranges, South East of Melbourne. My wife and I are familiar with protecting and enhancing biodiversity throughout the area

with several conservation covenanted properties of varying quality. Added to this is a lifelong project to restore degraded farm land in the Pyrenees Ranges while integrating commercial farm forestry. My background is in sustainable practices in NRM and extending into farm auditing and eco services.

Fulfilling two landcare facilitator roles at once is familiar to me as I assisted the South Gippsland Landcare Network, located in the West Gippsland CMA region, for several years delivering a wide range of programs such as fox & rabbit control, revegetation, weed control and community engagement activities.



While the landscapes of the three areas (Wimmera, Dandenong Ranges and South Gippsland) are very different, I feel comfortable in working with passionate grass roots people who work as groups to help form a catchment wide approach to NRM.

I am particularly interested in integrating landcare into farming practices and learning the history and background behind a variety of enterprises across our catchment and then challenging the barriers faced to help build our local capacity to farm sustainably. I enjoy helping people and groups achieve their goals and aspirations in the NRM field and encourage you to contact me at anytime to share your ideas.

I hope you enjoy our newsletter.

Cheers Glenn

Local Landcare Facilitator

llf@platypus.org.au



CALENDAR

June

Friday 18th Meeting - *Crowlands-Warrak Landcare Group*

Sunday June 20th – Annual Winter Farm Tour @ PPS member property “Boorook”

Woorndoo. 12 pm – 4 pm, Lunch provided. [More](#)

Tuesday June 22nd – Seasonal Climate Management workshop with Dr Kate Burke 4pm – 6pm at Joel Hall (TBC), smoko provided. [More](#)

Tues 22nd - 23rd Conference - [Orchid Conservation Symposium](#)

Mon 28th & 5th July School Holidays Program - [St Arnaud](#)

Weds 30th & 1st July School Holidays Program - [Stawell](#)

July

Thurs 1st Dinner - Girls and Grass Social night - *Perennial Pastures Systems*

Sunday 18th Planting - Plantout 1 - Bill Kilpatrick, Great Western

Save the date

4th to 6th of Aug - [2021 National Landcare Conference](#) (Online options available)

In this edition

[Latest news and grants](#)

[Around the grounds...](#)

[Plant Out 2021](#)

[Kunzea Leptospermoides](#)

[Boneseed control with DELWP funding Grampians to Pyrenees Boneseed work](#)

LATEST NEWS

Thanks to all our Landcarer contributors who send through some of the best news from around the traps, it all makes for thought provoking reading.

[Our farmers have been doing biodiversity and carbon work for decades and it's time they were paid for it.](#)

[Underpants experiments are taking place in Australian paddocks and gardens – all in the name of soil health](#)

[Sustainable Farming](#)

[Next time you see a butterfly, treasure the memory](#)

[Good Governance](#)

[Waterway Wanders](#)

[Carbon Neutral Wine](#)

[Bandicoots make a comeback](#)

[Ecotherapy and mental health](#)

GRANTS

[Victorian Landcare Grants](#) (Closes **Monday June 21st**). Landcare

and environmental volunteering groups and networks for on-ground works, education, and capacity-building projects that protect, enhance, and restore our land and natural environment.

[Here is a link](#) to more grants Bronwyn from the WCMA shares each month with us.

AWARDS

Nominate a Landcare Champion for a 2021 State and Territory Landcare Award - Go [here](#) for more details

Around the grounds....

Black Range Land Management Group

BRLMG has been busy planning and submitting funding applications for the Range, See [here](#) for their latest newsletter.



Elmhurst Landcare Group

ELG delivered an introductory hands on soil workshop covering a whole range of topics including:

- What is soil and why is it important?
- Practicals of what makes a healthy soil (soil pH, soil stability, soil texture, soil colour, soil critters)
- Compost and helping our soils to be healthy
- Soils of the Elmhurst region
- Identifying stock feed availability
- Condition scores

A very impressive part of the workshop was that participants brought their own bucket of soil that they could test



Concongella Landcare Group

CLG conducted their AGM after over a year of lockdown, brainstormed some new ideas and now have started the ball rolling on a new Aston's Scour conservation plan and restoration program in Landsborough West.

Perennial Pasture Systems

PPS events coming up include:

Thursday June 22nd – Workshop “Producing More in Varying Seasons” with Jason Trompf; 9.30 – 3.30pm @ PPS member property “Mt Glen” Joel South

Sunday June 20th – Annual Winter Farm Tour @ PPS member property “Boorook” Woorndoo. 12 pm – 4 pm, Lunch provided.

Tuesday June 22nd – Seasonal Climate Management workshop with Dr Kate Burke 4pm – 6pm at Joel Hall (TBC), smoko provided.

Soil Probes

The Crowlands Warrak Landcare Group have recently installed two soil moisture probes & weather stations; these will be added to the PPS email & periodic summary reports.

[Here is the latest newsletter.](#)

Stawell Urban Landcare Group

SULG met with Hannah Auld from Parks Victoria to discuss the future direction for management of the Deep Lead NCR.

Earlier this year, 2 cubic metres of rubbish was collected from the western highway by Ross, Aat, Andrew, Peter, Penny and John. They managed to get 80% of the roadway clean which was a tremendous feat and pretty physical work by all accounts. Thankyou to their mighty efforts.

A notable find was a High Vis vest 7XL.



Jallukar Landcare Group

JLG were building up for their planning meeting but unfortunately the short circuit lockdown put an end to that...here is [more](#) on their initiative.

Project Platypus

The board of Project Platypus, staff and consultants spent the day brainstorming new and innovative ways to build business for Project Platypus.



While further details will be coming out soon the emphasis was on moving towards more iconic species for the organisation to help protect and promote throughout the region. This event was a great opportunity for all members to share their interests and passions with a range of new ideas on how to build investment in Project Platypus!

The Shed

Watch this space...Project Platypus is moving, and by our next edition we should be all setup and ready to go. Still in Stawell the new venue has been refurbished by many helpers, especially directed by John Pye.



Project Platypus Work Crew

Works continue with the Project Platypus crew consisting of:

Lachlan McIntyre, Dene Marshall, Wayne Randall, Tony Dart and Julie Andrew



We want to hear from you ???

Expression of interest to groups who would like more assistance with social behaviour issues in and around our parks and reserves, waterways and private land. For example rubbish dumping, illegal firewood removal, motor/4wd use, damage to signs and graffiti....etc Let Glenn know your thoughts as there is some funding available to apply for that could assist in this.

Revegetation 2021

Winter is upon us and that means Plantout to anyone involved with Project Platypus. This year there will be only one Plantout event due to our program being comparatively small to previous years. This years event will be in conjunction with Onetreeplanted, an international not-for-profit organisation that has committed to funding 10,000 trees for the upper Wimmera for 2021 and hopefully more into the future. Check out their web site at <https://onetreeplanted.org/> to find out more about this exciting organisation.





This years event will be held on **Sunday the 18th of July** at Bill Kilpatrick's property "Allanvale" to the north east of Great Western. After Spiny Rush and rabbit control over the last couple of years, the site is ready for 4500 plants to go to revegetate the area and provide valuable habitat and linkage across the landscape. Registration and location information will be available on the Project Platypus website in the coming weeks. Bring yourself, friends and family and come along and enjoy the day and help us achieve more the natural environment for the upper Wimmera.

Please goto this link to [register](#).



We want to hear from you ???

Expressions of interests also include smaller allotments of plantings available for 200 - 500 plants that landowners might be interested in undertaking. Let Glenn know if you want more information.

Kunzea Leptospermoides

Project Platypus is working closely with the Halls Gap and surrounding communities to control the spread of *Kunzea Leptospermoides* (Yarra Burgan) and the threat it imposes on the Grampians National Park and surrounding reserves.

Yarra burgan (*Kunzea leptospermoides*, previously *K. ericoides*) is a tall (2-5 [<15]m) native shrub originating from eastern Victoria and the NSW coastal hinterland. It is not indigenous to Halls Gap or the Grampians National Park. Yarra Burgan was introduced to the region as an ornamental garden plant and has since spread forming dense thickets which are a biodiversity threat and fire hazard. Yarra burgan was initially thought to be a similar species, *Kunzea ericoides*, from New Zealand, but studies revealed it as an Australian native. It is a highly successful species in part due to changes in climate and hybridization. Yarra burgan looks very similar to the local Prickly Tea Tree (*Leptospermum continentale*) masking the problem as it looks to belong in the landscape. Its ability to out compete local native plants enables it to take over with grave implications for the surrounding Grampians National Park natural values. The highly elevated fuel loads of Yarra Burgan dominated thickets present a safety risk for residents in Halls Gap.

“With generous funding from the R E Ross foundation, we have the chance to carry out some detailed mapping and targeted control to get the major infestations down and look into the best treatment options”, said Lachlan McIntyre – Project Manager at Project Platypus. “This plant was first brought to our attention by a former Parks Vic ranger in the Grampian’s National Park who was concerned about what he was witnessing around 6yrs ago. We have utilised some funding in the past to conduct some initial trial treatments and initial mapping, but the current lot of funding from RE Ross Foundation allows to focus on controlling the plant for the next three years.” Project Platypus is worked with the Northern Grampians Shire Council and Halls Gap Community groups to get on ground works underway and look into town action plans and fire mitigation plans to have the plant identified as one of concern for the area.

Landmate drew from Hopkins Correctional Facility in Ararat have delivered the majority of the work under the guidance of Project Platypus and working closely with landholders. “The work conducted so far has been nothing short of astounding and the feedback from residents has been nothing but positive” said Lachlan. The map (below) shows the extent of the Yarra burgan (red) and the denser patches (crosshatched) around Halls Gap. Smaller infestations have been found on the Ararat-Halls Gap Rd through to Ararat, with large infestations around Trajul Rd and Pomonal.

Why remove Yarra Burgan?

- To avoid it proliferating and invading new areas.
- To maintain the beautiful natural values of local plants and animals.
- It represents a serious fire risk, far greater than endemic local vegetation.
- it prevents local species from establishing with implications for
- Insects and animals dependent on the local flora.
- Thickets 4 m high present high fuel loads with potential for increased wildfire severity.
- Infestations into the Grampians National Park threatens conservation significance.
- In the long term, as an invasive species, it will dominate the Grampians.
- Flow on effects for local tourism dependent on the natural park values to attract tourists.

“Project Platypus would like to thank R E Ross Foundation, all the landholders and project partners that have allowed us to map and treat the spread of Yarra Burgan. The work achieved so far has been beyond what we expected to achieve. This has largely been because of a small group of landholders that have not only allowed for us to treat it on their property, but because of the hard work they have assisted us in contacting absentee landholders and championing the message.” Anyone wanting more information on this plant and project please contact Lachlan McIntyre on 5358 4410 or 0409 740 521 or via email projects@platypus.org.au

Boneseed control with DELWP funding Grampians to Pyrenees Boneseed work

The Department of Environment Land Water Planning (DELWP) are working closely with Environmental agencies and organisations to conduct broad landscape treatment of boneseed in the Grampians Region. *Chrysanthemoides monilifera* or boneseed, also known as bitou bush, is an evergreen flowering shrub or small tree of the Asteraceae family that is native to South Africa. It's a woody, erect shrub growing to a height of 2 to 3m and 2 to 6m wide. Leaves are alternately arranged and oval-shaped with a tapering base and irregularly toothed margins. They are green in colour, 2 to 8cm long with thin blades. Flowers are bright yellow and daisy-like with 5 to 8 petals. Flowers are formed in late winter and spring, from August to October.

Project Platypus has been carrying out work treating boneseed around Ararat and Stawell on public land including – the Ararat Regional Hills, Deep Lead Nature Conservation Reserve, Pipe Track Nature Reserve, McCann Bushland Reserve, Fraynes Creek Bushland Reserve, Albion Bushland Reserve, Leviathan Bushland Reserve, Wildcat Hill Bushland Reserve and public managed land at the Stawell Racecourse. We are working closely with DELWP, local Landcare groups and landholders to identify sites and what would be the best treatment options.



Photos: plant form/flowers/leaves + on-ground work

This project is a timely follow on from the valuable work the Stawell Urban Landcare group completed in 2020 with private landholders and Landcare members. It also follows on from work delivered as part of the DELWP funded Biodiversity On Ground Action – Greater Grampians Threatened Flora, which Project Platypus delivered from 2016-2020. “With follow up finding and continued work over several years we’ve seen a huge reduction in boneseed and other weeds in our beautiful and very significant reserves locally”, said Lachlan McIntyre who manages the invasive plants and animals projects for Project Platypus. “A lot of the work will be manual/hand removal of plants due to the sensitive location and risk in using herbicide at this time of the year. Detailed mapping of controlled areas will assist DELWP and other relevant agencies to better ascertain the severity of the spread of this species”. The work will be delivered through to the end of June. If landholders and the general public have seen this plant, please take the time to report it to Lachlan McIntyre on 5358 4410 or email projects@platypus.org.au Anyone interested in controlling this plant and would like to more information about identification and treatment options can go to: <https://www.platypus.org.au/common-weed-species/>

<https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/biosecurity/weeds/priority-weeds/boneseed>



PROJECT PLATYPUS CONTRACTING SERVICES

- Specialists in broad-scale and targeted weed and rabbit control
- Provide environmental services such as tree planting
- Offering competitive rates on private and public land
- Insured and licenced.

FOR A QUOTE

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Geoff & Helen Handbury Foundation





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