



Brisbane Ranges Landcare Group

Newsletter



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Visit our website for latest news: <http://brlg.org.au>

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Agriculture in focus

Landcare as a movement was originally conceived to bring conservation and farmers together to resolve environmental issues. The Brisbane Ranges Landcare Group comprises a large proportion of farmed land, so let's get to know our farming community members a bit more to identify ways that Landcare can support them.



Read on to hear from some of our local farmers, including how they came to farm in our community and how Covid has affected them.

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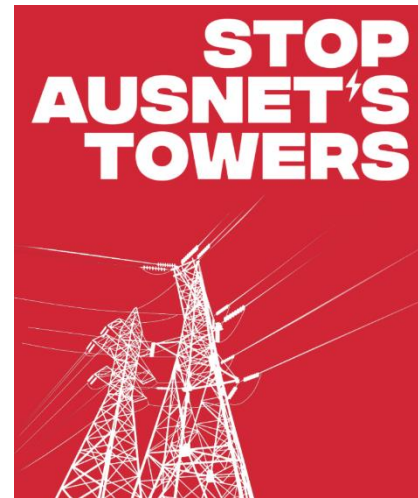
June Members meeting - Agriculture and Ausnet's Transmission Towers

Please join our next Landcare meeting for an interesting discussion about whether our government institutions are balancing agricultural interests with new electricity infrastructure.

In the face of climate change and our need to reduce carbon emissions, Australia is slowly shifting its energy mix to renewables. New wind and solar farms, such as those built in Western Victoria, require new transmission infrastructure to connect them to the grid. There are various options; each has a different price tag.



Emma Muir from the Moorabool Central Highlands Power Alliance will talk to us about the impacts on agriculture that are likely from the least expensive, but most likely to be chosen, option. Please join on Thursday 17th June but at **the revised time of 7pm sharp**. The meeting will be held on zoom due to Covid restrictions. Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84323498737>

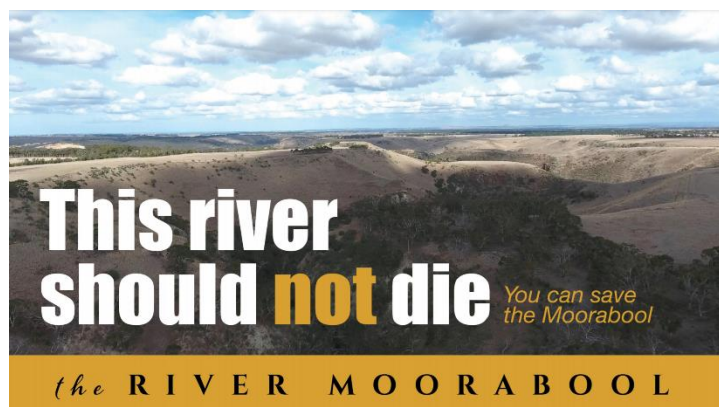


At the movies.... the River Moorabool

A film promoting more water flows for the Moorabool River will have its world premiere in Ballarat at the end of June. There will be another launch in Geelong during early July.

The River Moorabool was made by People for A Living Moorabool (PALM) and Sheoaks Films. It features local landowners, scientists, and healthy river advocates, as well a spectacular and wide-ranging views of the Moorabool river valley and catchment. The PALM website is <http://mooraboolriver.org/>.

Cameron Steele, Coordinator of PALM, says that the health of the Moorabool River and its wildlife are being damaged because so much of the river's water is taken for human use or not allowed to get into the river.



“By the time, the Moorabool reaches the Barwon at Geelong, about 90% of its original natural flow has been trapped in water authority reservoirs and farm dams and taken from groundwater.”



You can watch the official trailer for "*the River Moorabool*" here:
<https://vimeo.com/349830144>.

Screenings as follows:

Ballarat:

Date: Saturday 26 June

Time: from 7pm

Venue: Ballarat Mechanics' Institute, 117-119 Sturt St.

Geelong:

Date: Saturday 3 July

Time: from 7pm

Venue: Peter Thwaites Lecture Theatre, Deakin University, Waurin Ponds Campus.

Tickets (\$16.50 each) are available from Eventbrite

Ballarat - <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/the-river-moorabool-ballarat-tickets-156201403603> and

Geelong - <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/the-river-moorabool-geelong-tickets-156033350953>.

More information is in the short [article](#) by Ian Penna and the [Ballarat](#) and [Geelong](#) flyers.

Our local farms

This edition aims to bring a focus on the importance of agriculture in our community, to identify how we can support our farmers to get the most from the land, and how we can support our farmers to support the land for future generations. Two of our local farming families have been kind enough to offer their stories to share with our members. Thankyou to Tony Wilson and Tim & Sheryl Anderson for sharing your stories with us.

Elenstan

The Wilson family have been farming in the Balliang district for 100 years now, as Stan Wilson received a WWI Soldier Settlers block around 1921. Both sides of my family have farming links within 20kms of Bacchus Marsh for much longer.

Balliang is well known as a great barley growing area. More recently the varieties of crops and the area sown have greatly increased. The constant advancements in technology and farming practices have seen better varieties and generally higher yields despite



challenging weather. Unfortunately, the number of new and uncontrolled weeds, urban

encroachment and pressures from government regulation and the like are also challenging. Absentee land ownership is now much more prevalent.

We must remain resilient to the different weather we always receive. The local history is one of extremes. The house burnt down where we now live in a nasty fire on March 30 in 1940, still one of the hottest weeks ever recorded here. The 1940s were mainly years of drought, a time that has been imprinted in my father Stuart's mind as to what can happen in any year. Probably like the Federation Drought from the turn of the last century would have been a strong memory for Stan before he moved to Balliang.

We try to spread our risk as much as possible running sheep for wool and meat, and growing crops. The last couple of decades has been difficult with sheep with the lack of water in dams. The prevalence of continual cropping explains some of this, as stubble paddocks absorb much more water, creating less runoff. We have found with dam levels often low, we are seeing more erosion at dam inlets when water does run.

We were lucky in agriculture that the impacts of Covid were relatively minor. There were some supply issues, but compared to some industries, we were quite lucky.

We've been happy with the environmental changes we've made recently on our property, with the large Grow West project and the removal of almost all boxthorns with a great deal of help from the [Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority](#) (PPWCMA) work crews. We hope to make further improvements that should benefit both the environment and the working farm.

I see many examples in Australia of mutual benefits of the agriculture sector being involved with Landcare.

Tony Wilson

Boundary Park -

We purchased a vacant block off Cecil and Mary Beggs about 22 years ago. We sourced seeds from both local and Lara trees, and to this day we are still growing and planting trees on our property. We have found that conifers are a good windbreak but are very susceptible to long dry conditions, where gums manage the conditions far better.



Covid hasn't really impacted us apart from holidays away, farming is business as usual. Last year, along with this season's outlook is very promising at this point in time, but lots can happen between now and Christmas. Climate change is real but it is not something we can measure in our situation, but we have experienced some extreme weather events over the years. It is something we as individuals need to do and not relying on governments to make a difference (we could be waiting a long time). The smallest things can make a difference, like investing in renewable energy, being self-sufficient in water, looking after soil health, planting

trees for windbreaks or future wood lot's, we need to be more resourceful and think beyond our future.

We have made a number of changes to the way we operate, using new varieties of seeds that suit our conditions and are more palatable for animals. Animal husbandry is a high priority and is accountable.

We hope this insight into our small operation can show you that no matter how big or small you are, we can make a difference.

Tim & Sheryl Anderson

Erosion Hotspot Project Update

Over the last few months, our Landcare group has been working with the [Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority](#) (PPWCMA) and their [Working for Victoria work crews](#) to tackle some significant erosion across three properties along Staughton Vale Road.

The erosion included both significant tunnel erosion across the hillside (with rabbits) as well as open eroded gullies that were metres deep in places. The worst of the erosion is a result of a Council culvert pipe under Coynes Road that funnels a lot of water to a single location.

Advice from an erosion specialist included the need to make the soil friable to permit the moisture to soak in rather than run-off, establish ground cover, bind the soil particles together and slow the velocity of water traveling across the surface. The formula was provided that for every doubling of water velocity across the surface, the erosion capacity of the flowing water increases to the power of 5.

Works kicked off in late April with the arrival of a D6R dozer. Funded by the landowners the dozer used its considerable horsepower to address the significant tunnel erosion present across 3 ha of the hillside.



You can view a short video of the dozer in action [here](#).



The dozer spent two and a half days working across all three properties. He also generously shared his skills with a young local operator who received his first “on the job” training in heavy machinery management.

Following the dozer works, the work crews hand raked a combination of seeds into the soil: rye corn for fast erosion control, coxfoot for deep-rooted stabilisation plus a range of native tree, shrub and groundcover seeds. Approximately 400 plants and shrub seedlings were also planted and guarded.



In the gullies, coir matting was laid out and pinned to the ground. Coir logs were also strategically placed to slow down the water velocity and reduce its erosive capacity.

James Bufton arranged the donation of many large straw bales and helped place them across the escarpment. These were then spread about with a bobcat to aid with ground cover and minimise moisture loss.



A few days after the completion of these initial works, we received a downpour of 60mm rain. The coir matting performed well overall, but it did highlight a few refinements needed with placement. The [PPWCMA's Grow West project](#) will fund a contractor to add some further matting and complete the spread of the hay.



Brisbane Ranges Landcare Group thanks the PPWCMA for their generous contribution to help remediate this erosion problem in our area, and also the Working for Victoria crew members for the days of effort.



We also thank Daryl Craig from Inverleigh for his donation and delivery of the straw bales and to James Bufton and his assistance with placement.

Melbourne Water also funded some of the tubestock used for planting.

With very special thanks to Robert Hall for providing this detailed article for the newsletter, for coordinating this Project and making all this wonderful work happen.



Blanket Weed (Galenia)

One of the noticeable weeds taking over at the moment is blanket weed or carpet weed often found along roadsides and popping up on properties. BRLG Committee have discussed a working bee for the removal of blanket weed from roadsides and private properties on request. If you have blanket weed on your property and would like some assistance with removal, let the BRLG Committee know.

Particularly prevalent around Bacchus Marsh, Galenia is a groundcover weed that seeds prolifically and out competes all other grasses and groundcovers (hence the common name, blanket weed). Despite being a groundcover, it is considered a *woody weed*.

A greyish-green shrubby groundcover, forms a dense mat. Older plants have a tough woody stem, relatively thick for its size with a deep growing tap root. Leaves are oval or spoon-shaped, hairy and green in colour. Bees love it, but it threatens the honey industry as it taints the taste!



The blanket in-situ



The woody tap root



Close-up

Petals can be white, green-ish white or pinkish in colour. Small inconspicuous flowers occur mostly in summer.



Failure to manage

Galenia will out compete all other grasses and groundcovers.

Control options

Method	How	Timing
Manual	Chip out using a mattock or hoe making sure you get the tap root.	Best to do after rain when the soil is wet to aid removal of the tap root
Herbicide	<p>A selective herbicide registered for use on Galenia. Trials undertaken by Jon Kay Agricultural Services in Melton determined that Grazon Extra was the most effective herbicide for control of Galenia.</p> <p>Note that Roundup (glyphosate) is not effective on established plants. It will burn off the leaves but the plant will re-grow from the tap root.</p>	Most effective when applied during the spring and summer growth period.

Other than blanket weed, do you have any other weed problems? Let BRLG know what your weed problems are as it could be a good opportunity to have a weed blitz. Please contact BRLG via email: newsletter.brlg@gmail.com
Or Leena via mobile: 0400 926 151

Planting in July

BRLG have been fortunate again with the donation of approximately 300 trees from 15 Trees. A small quantity of the trees will be utilised to continue the beatification of the triangle, and approximately 120 have been sourced for the East Balliang Hall, but approximately half of the 300 will be available for property owners. If you would like some trees for your property, please contact BRLG via email: newsletter.brlg@gmail.com
Or Leena via mobile: 0400 926 151



Tax deductions for Landholders

Did you know the Australian Tax Office are offering tax deductions for establishing shelterbelts on land used in a primary production business and Landcare, riparian and similar expenses for primary producers?

For more information and to find out if you are eligible, please go to the following link:

<http://www.basalttobay.org.au/interest-areas/tax-rebates>

Agriculture Victoria Newsletters

Take a moment to peruse the Ag Vic newsletters and subscribe to keep up to date while enjoying your morning cuppa?



A sample of the newsletters on offer include:

- **Chemical Industry News:** A quarterly newsletter that shares news and tips on agricultural and veterinary chemical use legislation
- **Milking the weather:** Takes a regular look at climate impacts on dairy farmers in Victoria
- **Newsflash newsletter:** Industry and technical updates and upcoming events of interest to the BetterBeef and Bestwool/BestLamb network
- **Sheepnotes newsletter:** Covers general health and welfare, production, market protection and biosecurity issues for sheep producers

There is also something for the weed spotters and those interested in soil monitoring. The newsletters can be viewed on the following link:

<https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/support-and-resources/newsletters>

Funding Opportunities for Landowners

Growing Carbon - Opportunities for Landholders



The Port Phillip and Westernport CMA (PPWCMA) is partnering with Yarra Valley Water, Melbourne Water and City West Water to deliver local revegetation projects that will provide carbon offsets for the water corporations, as well as other local environmental and social benefits.

The project will benefit landowners through improved biodiversity, healthier soils, building drought resilience and water efficiency and improved aesthetics on their properties.

PPWCMA are seeking expressions of interest from landowners who are interested in supporting carbon planting projects on their properties. A link to the Growing Carbon Landowner fact sheet can be found [here](#).

More information can be found at [Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority | Growing Carbon \(ppwcma.vic.gov.au\)](https://ppwcma.vic.gov.au)



Melbourne Water's Rural Land Program

Melbourne Water's Rural Land Program provides assistance and funding opportunities for landholders to undertake works that will keep soil and nutrients on their farm and out of waterways.

Applicants can continue to apply for funding through the Rural Land Program until late 2021.



[Click here for more information & to apply](#)

Webinar: Agricultural innovation – building better food systems



The fifth and last in the series of Australian National Food Systems Summit Dialogues, hosted by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, is coming up soon. This webinar will explore:

- The role of agricultural innovations in building better food systems
- Australia's policy approaches to support the development of new agricultural and value chain innovations and to promote widespread uptake of innovative ideas and technologies
- How stakeholders across the supply chain are utilising innovation to deliver sustainable and efficient food systems.

If you are interested in joining the discussion – [Register here for the webinar](#).

Webinar Date and Time: Tuesday 13 July, 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm (AEST)

The Australian Food Systems Summit 2021 hosted by The United Nations (UN) produce these informative webinars with the aim of raising awareness of the critical role that agriculture and food systems play in achieving a sustainable future.



The Food Systems Summit aims to bring together policy-makers, farmers, industry, academia and community groups from around the world, to discuss these challenges and share potential solutions and innovations.

Visit <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/market-access-trade/un-food-systems-summit-2021> for more information on the Summit.

Melbourne Food Bowl Virtual Farm

The Melbourne Food Bowl Virtual Farm is an interactive tool that shows you how farms in Melbourne's foodbowl get food and fibre from their paddocks to your plate, and how they interact with and support the local environment along the way. To meet the nutritional needs of Melbourne's 5 million residents, we need constant access to a wide variety of nutritious locally grown food. The farmers at the forefront of Melbourne's foodbowl strive every day to produce sustainable products that supports a growing community.

The virtual farm allows you to take a self-guided tour and explore the key elements of a farm system and how these elements contribute to sustainability, for the benefit of the environment and the community.

The Melbourne Foodbowl Virtual Farm was created through the Farms2Schools project. It's the legacy resource launched by the Hon. Mary-Anne Thomas Minister for Agriculture.

The following link will take you to the website:

<https://virtualfarm.melbournefoodbowl.com.au/home.html>



Dung Beetle Nursery sites



The Regional Agriculture Facilitator project has some funding to support 3 Landcare Networks/groups to establish dung beetle nursery sites for the release of new species in Australia or address a local seasonal gap in a Landcare area.

Interested networks can submit an EOI form by June 30th 2021. A suitable nursery site must be secured with a partner landholder willing to host the nursery site and support the distribution of dung beetles to future nursery sites and/or farms once established.

For more information or to express your interest, complete the EOI attached along with this Newsletter, or contact: Karen Thomas, Regional Agriculture Facilitator M: 0427480170

Email: karen.thomas@ppwcma.vic.gov.au

In our Regular News.....

Weeds Website

Weeds Australia website is designed to connect you with knowledge to make informed decisions about managing invasive weeds within Australia. The site includes an extensive list of 398 weeds profiles to help you better identify, plan and manage your weed problem.

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



BRLG Weed Sprayer

Available for use by BRLG members. Please contact Chris Winfield on 0429 484 644 to discuss your spraying needs.

Landcare Resources

I want to know about...	Here is a good place to start...
Aboriginal cultural heritage location mapping	https://www.vic.gov.au/aboriginalvictoria/heritage/heritage-tools-and-publications/heritage-tools.html then select "online map tool"
Biodiversity mapping and recording	http://maps.biodiversity.vic.gov.au/viewer/?viewer=NatureKit http://natureshare.org.au/ http://avh.chah.org.au/
Boxthorn	http://weeds.ala.org.au/WoNS/africanboxthorn/docs/African_boxthorn-national_best_practice_manual.pdf
Chilean needle grass	https://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive/weeds/publications/guidelines/wons/pubs/n-neesiana.pdf
Feral goat control	https://www.pestsmart.org.au/pest-animal-species/feral-goat/
Fox control	https://www.pestsmart.org.au/pest-animal-species/european-fox/
Gorse	https://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive/weeds/publications/guidelines/wons/pubs/u-europaeus.pdf
Landcare networks	Moorabool Landcare Network Geelong Landcare Network
Melbourne Water Stream Frontage Grants	https://www.melbournewater.com.au/community-and-education/apply-funding/stream-frontage-management-program
Rabbit management	http://www.mln.org.au/images/PDFS/rabbitactionguide.pdf https://www.pestsmart.org.au/pest-animal-species/european-rabbit/
Serrated tussock	https://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive/weeds/publications/guidelines/wons/pubs/n-trichotoma.pdf
Weeds - identification and control	http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/pests-diseases-and-weeds/weeds/a-z-of-weeds
Weed status in Victoria	http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/pests-diseases-and-weeds/weeds/invasive-plant-classifications http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/pests-diseases-and-weeds/protecting-victoria-from-pest-animals-and-weeds/legislation-policy-and-permits/declared-noxious-weeds-and-pest-animals-in-victoria

Last  *Laugh*

