



Brisbane Ranges Landcare Group

Newsletter



Chair: Robert Hall Treasurer: Chris Winfield Secretary: Mark Trengove
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Visit our website for latest news: <http://brlg.org.au>

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Membership News

The BRLG members meetings are the 3rd Thursday every second month. These dates are also printed in the Brisbane Ranges Landcare Group 2021 Calendar (there are a couple still available!! See details below). Visit the Brisbane Ranges Landcare Group website for more information.

The members meeting schedule for 2021 is:

- 18th February
- 15th April
- 17th June
- 19th August
- 21 October

The first members meeting for 2021 is 18th February..

This meeting all BRLG members are welcome, and we also encourage new community members to attend. If you know of any community members that may be interested in joining, let them know about our first meeting of the year.

Join us for an informal BBQ at Anakie Gorge picnic ground starting at 6:30pm. A chance to catch up and have a chat to friends you may not have seen for a year! Meat provided but if you can, please bring a salad or dessert to share. Don't forget your favourite camp chair and the Aerogard!

For those new to the area, the Anakie Gorge Picnic Ground can be accessed via Gorge Road, off Staughton Vale Road. The picnic ground is directly adjacent to the carpark at the end of Gorge Road. For catering and Covid purposes, unfortunately we've had to ask that all please register your attendance at Eventbrite on the following link:

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/brisbane-ranges-landcare-group-all-members-new-and-old-meeting-tickets-138214147235>

We're looking forward to seeing you all on the night to help us make all new members feel welcome.

All new membership expressions of interest can be completed on the BRLG website listed above or all new members are welcome to attend any of the members meetings to see what we're all about. BRLG encourage a diversity of interests and backgrounds, and you don't have to have any specific environmental or agricultural expertise, just a willingness to contribute and help make this group as meaningful as possible to the local community. There are many ways to contribute to the Group.



In this edition:

Page 1	Membership News
Page 2	Acknowledgement of country
Page 2	“Letter to the editor”
Page 3	BRLG membership with Geelong Landcare Network (GLN)
Page 3	Brisbane Ranges Landcare Group Calendar 2021- NOW ONLY \$10!!!
Page 4	Meet the Brisbane Ranges Landcare Group - Committee Members 2021
Page 5	BRLG Projects for 2021
Page 5	Recent Projects - Friends of Brisbane Ranges
Page 7	Junior Landcare
Page 7	Rabbit control
Page 9	For the BRLG photographers
Page 10	The General Jeffery Soil Health Award
Page 10	In other news.....
Page 11	In our Regular News.....
Page 12	Landcare Resources
Page 13	Last Laugh

Acknowledgement of country

We wish to acknowledge the Wadawurrung People, the traditional owners of these lands for their continuing culture and connection to Country. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present. We take inspiration from the legacy from the Wadawurrung people, who have produced food, while caring for the ecological systems that life depends upon, for tens of thousands of years.

“Letter to the editor”

We have a new segment in our newsletter and we invite all members to send “letter’s to the editor” that are of importance to them or points they wish to raise with the BRLG. Given that now is the perfect time for rabbit baiting and rabbit control programs, Trish Edwards is our first cab off the rank providing some valuable insight into the risks we need to be aware of with the use of Pindone. Thank you Trish.

RESPONSIBLE RABBIT CONTROL - Trish Edwards

Rabbit Control is an ongoing challenge for landholders with no solution guaranteeing complete eradication. Last century the ‘rabbito’ made a living from shooting then selling his bunnies in towns. Currently exclusion fencing, filling in warrens, and shooting, have been used at Mt Rothwell native fauna reserve, supported by daily monitoring of fence lines to ensure that rabbits don’t enter cleared areas. Large scale inputs like this are not available to many landholders, consequently poisoning is offered, but it is not without hazard.

Pindone is currently favoured, but impacts off target fauna, in particular native fauna. Given we are in the midst of the sixth mass extinction, we Landcarers have an obligation to look out for the creatures hanging in on the fringes. An alternative – if poisoning is your preferred control method – is 1080. This was recommended at a previous Landcare meeting by the Environment Projects Officer, Tim Bloomfield, from the City of Greater Geelong.

Choose carefully, keep an eye on results and if it all gets too hard come along to Landcare meetings and together we can look for solutions.

BRLG membership with Geelong Landcare Network (GLN)

Members who were in attendance at the last AGM will recall that we voted to step back from our membership of the Geelong Landcare Network (GLN) due to the administrative overhead on our volunteer group. GLN has kindly offered us affiliate membership which would allow us to retain a connection and communications with the good people of the GLN and to keep abreast of projects relevant to this side of our district. The Committee will be proposing that we accept this offer of affiliate membership of GLN. If any members are unable to attend our meeting next week and have a view on this option, please let a committee member know before the meeting.

Brisbane Ranges Landcare Group Calendar 2021- NOW ONLY \$10!!!



The calendar features photos from the Brisbane Ranges and surrounds, taken by locals who love where they live! You will be amazed by this collection of beautiful images which capture the diversity, tranquility and beauty of the land, and the creatures we share it with. The calendar costs just **\$10** so why not purchase one for yourself, and one to send to family and friends who live further afield?

Free delivery for locals or we will post to those further afield (add \$5 for postage).

By purchasing a calendar, you will be supporting the Brisbane Ranges Landcare Group (brlg.org.au), a group of locals who celebrate our local environment. To place an order or make an enquiry, please contact Nina Ellis, 0433 215 400 or fly2nina@gmail.com

Meet the Brisbane Ranges Landcare Group - Committee Members 2021

Now the Christmas rush is over, 2 of our executive members have told us little bit about themselves for our January Newsletter.

Treasurer – Chris Winfield

Mary and I and our two children, Ailsa and Jeremy, built our house and moved to Staughton Vale in 1977. We had often visited the Brisbane Ranges from our first home in Werribee so we soon came to appreciate the people and environment here.

I worked at the Department of Agriculture's State Research Farm in Werribee and when Peter Bufton suggested we form a Landcare Group in Balliang I thought it was a great idea. The treasurer's job soon came my way (perhaps because I was already the Anglican church treasurer) and I have enjoyed facilitating all the many and varied projects that the Group members have undertaken over the 20+ years. In particular it has



been great to see so many pest plant and revegetation works succeed during that time. I still enjoy being treasurer and look forward to the Group continuing its important work for the local environment.

Committee Member – Tony Wilson



I am a third-generation farmer in Balliang. After World War I, my grandfather and his brother began farming here side by side, on two soldier settlement blocks. My parents live in my grandparent's house and my wife Loretta and I renovated my Great Uncle's home after we were married five years ago and now reside there with our daughter Grace.

My interest in Landcare stems from my love of the land on which we live and make our livelihood. Whilst I endeavour to keep up with modern farming practices, I still believe there is a place for the ideas and traditions my father and grandfather believed in.

Our business operation includes broadacre cropping, merino sheep for wool and prime lambs. My wife and I also have a keen interest in birds and wildlife and we are working towards planting more native vegetation to encourage more of these to live on our farm.

I was very grateful last year for the project to have thousands of trees, shrubs and grasses planted along a lengthy section of the Balliang Creek. So far, our rainfall has been more than usual which has been very beneficial, and the plants are thriving!

My role in the committee provides a contribution from the agricultural community, raising awareness of the issues and ideas from the perspective of the local farmers.

I look forward to traditional meetings and guest speakers again! They're always interesting and informative.

BRLG Projects for 2021

The executive committee have identified a couple of projects to be explored for this coming year.

- **Buloke monitoring and recovery project**

BRLG are developing a program to evaluate, monitor and improve the health of remnant Buloke woodlands on the Balliang plains.



- **Trees for members**

The committee hope to again source indigenous trees for our triangle and community as we have done in previous years. We will keep you informed as this progresses.

- **This place project:** A collection of historical landscape references about our area that we make available on our website, including the area's agricultural history.

- **Triangle project:**

A continuation of weed control and tree planting from previous years aimed to improving the biodiversity and amenity of the land and protecting the significant trees already established. Especially the redgum.

- **Erosion hotspot project:** Although we have not seen a significant rain event at the Brisbane Ranges since 2011 the falls that have occurred since then, along with other factors, have increased the destructive erosion along Staughton Vale Road from McLeans Highway. The executive committee have identified this as a significant project and intend on seeking funding and support options, to repair the erosion and provide structure in preparation for future rain events that may generate catastrophic impacts on our environment and infrastructure. Below are some photos from the 2011 rain even which destroyed Staughton Vale Road at the tringle.



If you have an interest in these projects, make sure you bring yourself along to the next members meeting on the 18th February or send us an email at newsletter.brlg@gmail.com. We are looking forward to hearing from all our members.

Recent Projects - Friends of Brisbane Ranges

Mark Trengove

Two recently completed projects by our friends, the Friends of Brisbane Ranges and the Victorian Nation Parks Association, help us to better understand the values of the Brisbane Ranges National Park as well as some of the threats to these values.



Grasstrees under the microscope: is a 10 year project that began in 2007. However, it's origins go back further, based on the ground breaking work of the ecologist Gretna Weste, who in 1968 had the foresight to establish a long term monitoring program in the Brisbane Ranges (well before it's declaration as a National Park). The project has also been supported by Deakin University and Parks Victoria. The project monitors the spread of Cinnamon fungus in the Park and the impact it has on plant species, in particular Grasstrees. Cinnamon fungus (which we discover is actually a mould) kills Grasstrees. Grasstrees are a keystone ecological species within the Park. It turns out that after the initial alarming spread of Cinnamon fungus in the Park, its current spread is somewhat slower and that there is potential for recolonisation and re-establishment by methods such as direct seeding.

Listening for Nature 2018-2019: is a citizen science program that uses a relatively new and very useful technique called eco-acoustic technology (bioacoustics) to monitor bird populations in the Brisbane Ranges National Park and nearby private land. It was supported by Museums Victoria and the Moorabool Landcare Network. 2589 hours of recordings were collected across 14 sites. 26 bird species were identified, including Powerful Owls verified at 5 sites. Of concern to me was that the most endangered owl in Victoria, the Barking Owl (remember this guy from one of our past meetings?), which previously had the Brisbane Ranges as one of its strongholds, was not recorded by this study. This seems to confirm my suspicion that it might be extinct in the region, and hence south of the divide. I recall hearing the Barking Owl in the Little River gorge 10 years ago. Brad Blake, the guest speaker at our recent AGM, called for a dedicated local Barking Owl search program. An endangered species, there are thought to be less than 50 breeding pairs left in Victoria. The Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act Action Statement lists loss of habitat and secondary poisoning though eating Rabbits as threatening processes. Given there hasn't been much land clearing locally (and a lot of revegetation), I suspect Pindone is a factor.



Links to these projects for further information:

<https://vnpa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/VNPA-Report-Grass-trees-under-the-microscope.pdf>
<https://vnpa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/CLFN-Brisbane-Ranges-final-report.pdf>

Junior Landcare

"Hey Kids.... There is a Landcare for us too!" Junior Landcare provides children the opportunity to play an active role in ensuring the safe future of their environment. Launched in May 1998, Junior Landcare recognises the vital role young Australians play in caring for the land, their environment and other natural resources.

Junior Landcare encourages continuous participation from childhood to adulthood so that the children of today, become the Landcarers of the future. Junior Landcare helps young Australians to develop skills, share knowledge, create experiences, and foster connections with place and community.

Subscribe to the Junior Landcare newsletter and keep informed about the latest news, campaigns, grant announcements and the latest learning activities in the Learning Centre. Landcare encourages children to share knowledge, not only with each other, or their local community, but with the Junior



Landcare community.

Project ideas for children at home and in their community could involve removing weeds and rubbish, bush regeneration, planting trees, monitoring water quality or bird habitat, designing and planning rehabilitation activities and much more!

If your children or grandchildren are involved in Junior Landcare, let us know to discuss how we can support your children with their projects and to celebrate their success.

Rabbit control

In Victoria feral or wild populations of European rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) are declared as established pest animals under the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994. Under the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994 landowners have a responsibility to take all reasonable steps to prevent the spread of — and as far as possible eradicate established pest animals from their land.

For a successful rabbit control program, various factors need to be considered and implemented. Our BRLG President Robert Hall has prepared some information below regarding the baiting options for rabbit control. For those of you who may have missed this years Maude baiting program, feel free to discuss your rabbit control needs with our Group to prepare for next years rabbit control program. Additional information to prepare your rabbit control program can be found on the Agriculture Victoria Website.

[Integrated rabbit control](#) | [Invasive animal management](#) | [Pest animals](#) | [Biosecurity](#) | [Agriculture Victoria](#)

Baiting for Rabbits, and only Rabbits...

Robert Hall

Thanks to the Maude Landcare Group, some of us have recently taken up the offer to participate in their generous Pindone rabbit bait program. However, using poison baits for pest control isn't without risk to other wildlife (aka "off-target damage"). Our proximity to a National Park presents particular challenges, with the extra wildlife present.

Like many decisions related to environmental management, one needs to carefully weigh up the risks and the benefits of baiting alongside the threat of doing nothing. Unfortunately, rabbits breed rapidly, and they represent a clear and present danger to regenerating native flora. They need to be eliminated from our landscape.

Here are some recommendations on how to use Pindone safely and how to reduce the frequency with which you use it. These recommendations can help you minimise the risks and ensure the balance is tipped in favour of the benefits.

When you are baiting with Pindone:

1. Do a free feed of carrots (no poison) just before your baiting program. This will allow you to observe the location and the amount of carrots that get eaten, and therefore better target your poison bait laying.
2. Lay your bait late in the day and check your trails for uneaten bait next morning (minimising the time poison bait is available). Laying bait later in the day is also important on hotter days to prevent it drying out before rabbits come out to feed.
3. Dispose of any dead rabbits immediately to prevent them being eaten by native animals and bury any uneaten bait.

Poison baits are just one step in a good program of integrated rabbit control. When undertaken well, they can reduce the rabbit population by 80% allowing you to complete the next steps without large numbers of rabbits dispersing into the nearby environment. After you have baited, the next and most important step is to destroy the rabbit warren by deep ripping or implosion. The warren is where the rabbit breeds so by destroying the warren, you destroy future generations of rabbits and lessen your need to lay future poison baits! The final step in a rabbit control program is follow up checks and maintenance to ensure all your rabbit warrens remain closed.

For excellent information on controlling rabbits for the long term, from pest management expert Tim Bloomfield, have a look at this webinar: <https://vran.com.au/vran-resources/the-rabbit-recipe/>

A decision that needs careful consideration is the type of bait used of which there are two options.

1080 (active compound sodium fluoro acetate) is sourced from 40 various species of Australian plants, and native wildlife have a natural resistance to the low dosages used in the baits. However, there is no antidote available for humans or pets and you must undertake appropriate training and licensing (ACUP with 1080 endorsement) to be able to purchase and use it.



Pindone is the other option for which there is an antidote, but native animals are more susceptible to its poison if consumed. Pindone is considered the most humane poison for rabbit control.

Are poison baits needed at all? This is a real question for many. What about other methods like shooting, ferreting, or fencing? Fencing may be effective in particular locations (eg under sheds), but none of these methods will eliminate rabbits at scale. Much scientific research has demonstrated that

the most efficient and effective rabbit control strategy must entail an integrated approach involving baiting to quickly diminish numbers, warren destruction to eliminate the opportunity to breed and maintenance to ensure the benefits of your hard work are realised for the long term.

For the BRLG photographers

Hop to it and snap a feral for new competition!

The competition, coordinated by the Centre for Invasive Species Solutions, and competition collaborators Animal Trap Solutions, CSIRO Publishing, and Outdoor Cameras Australia is free to enter at feralphotos.invasives.com.au and is calling for anyone with an interest in invasive species to submit photo/s or video footage that showcases these 'ferals in action' and the damage they cause.

Dr Ian McDonald, Communications Manager with the Centre for Invasive Species Solutions said entries are open now and the competition aims to put invasive species under the spotlight. "Invasive species such as pest animals, weeds and exotic insects are environmental vandals and cause billions of dollars in lost productivity each year to our agricultural industries. "Since a picture (or video footage) paints a thousand words - this competition is a way to highlight the impact of invasive species in different Australian landscapes, and the damage they bring with it. "The competition has had a short hiatus after last being undertaken in 2017, and since then we've had a number of requests to bring it back. "We've not only brought it back but we've added some great new interactive features to really get our audience engaged, including live voting and commenting and social media sharing of all entries. "You can enter the competition as many times as you like, and the live voting means that the winners will be completely decided by you," Dr McDonald said.

Approved entries will be placed in the interactive gallery on the competition website where it can be shared with friends, family and work colleagues to seek votes and comment. "It's pretty simple, the entries with the most votes will win, so share your entry far and wide and ask everyone to vote," Dr McDonald said.

There are five amazing prizes on offer to the top five voted entries, these prizes are worth a retail value of nearly \$5000 and include state of the art trail cameras, brand new animal trap devices and ecology themed books thanks to our competition sponsors and Aussie owned and operated businesses Outdoor Cameras Australia, Animal Trap Solutions and CSIRO publishing.



Entries close at 12pm AEST Friday April 30th 2021 with voting open for another 2 weeks after this date. However you can vote for entries at any time, with one vote per person, per entry allowed. The competition winners will be officially announced and showcased at the 18th Australasian Vertebrate Pest Conference which begins on May 25th.

So get snapping and enter at feralphotos.invasives.com.au today!

The General Jeffery Soil Health Award

The General Jeffery Soil Health Award honours the remarkable work done by Australia's first National Soils Advocate, former Governor General, Major General the Hon. Michael Jeffery, AC, AO (Mil), CVO, MC (Retd).



As Australia's first National Soils Advocate, General Jeffery passionately advocated for improvements in the health of our agricultural landscape. By championing soil health from Parliament House to the paddock, he successfully changed attitudes towards soil sustainability and energised change on farms right across Australia. He relentlessly pursued his focus on the importance of integrated management of soil, water, animals and plants to the benefit of all Australians and our environment. A video produced for this award can be viewed on the following link. https://youtu.be/qVCoMGInI_I

The winner will receive a trophy and a cash prize of \$20,000 to further their contribution to improving soil health. The Award recipient will be required to use the prize money to further their education, and/or to undertake promotional and communication activities to improve soil health.

The Award will be presented at the 2021 National Landcare Awards Gala Dinner held on Thursday 5 August 2021, held during the National Landcare Conference. The three finalist award nominees will be guests of the organisers and will be invited to travel to Sydney to attend the 2021 National Landcare Awards Gala Dinner.

The award is open to any individual farmer, land manager, extension specialist or educator who is an Australian citizen.

NOMINATIONS OPEN DECEMBER 5 AND CLOSE MARCH 31, 2021.

So get your nominations in now. To nominate, select the following link: [Soil Health Award | General Jeffery | Landcare Australia Landcare Australia](#)

In other news.....

The Biodiversity Project (A Country Road and Landcare Partnership)

Landcare Australia is proud to announce a three-year partnership with iconic Australian brand Country Road who have committed \$600,000 over three years to support the conservation of Australian farming landscapes. Landcare Australia CEO, Dr Shane Norrish, says "Landcare Australia is very proud to launch this partnership with Country Road to develop projects focused on biodiversity conservation with cotton farmers. The projects will help to restore local ecosystems and contribute to the sustainable management and productivity of the landscape."

[The Biodiversity Project \(countryroad.com.au\)](http://countryroad.com.au)

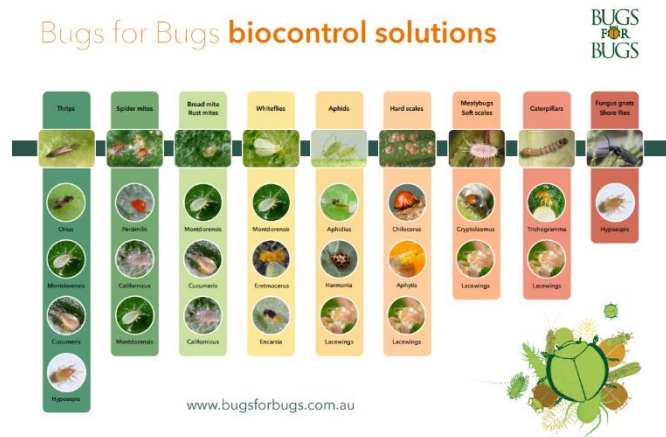


Companion Planting to Control the Insects in Your Garden

Companion planting is an age-old gardening practice, especially for vegetables. This is a practice that involves planting two or more different plants near each other to derive some type of benefit. That benefit could be more vigorous growth, higher yield, repelling pests, or attracting the predators of common pests.

<https://www.thespruce.com/companion-planting-1402735>

<https://bugsforbugs.com.au/wp-content/uploads/Biocontrol-solutions-poster.pdf>



In our Regular News.....

Weeds Website

A new 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 0429484644 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

In keeping with the rabbit control season theme.....



**This is the main entrance,
but the property has up to seven escape tunnels...**