

YARROWEE LEIGH CATCHMENT GROUP



*Working together to achieve
sustainable ecosystems,
agriculture and communities.*

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



We wish to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land we work on, the Wadawurrung people of the Kulin Nation, and pay our respect to Elders past and present. We recognise their connection to Country and their role in caring for and maintaining this land over thousands of years.



CHAIR'S REPORT

The year 2022/2023 has been yet another active and successful year for the Leigh Catchment Group. We have continued our mission of preserving and enhancing our catchment area's natural resources and environment. This report highlights the key achievements, challenges, and individuals who have contributed significantly to our cause.

First and foremost, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated staff, as well as the Landcare groups that have been instrumental in executing our group's strategies and managing day-to-day activities. Their unwavering support has been the backbone of our success.

We bid farewell to Nick McKinley, who served as a facilitator for 7 years, and we welcome him as a valuable board member. Nick's contributions in bringing various projects and people together are deeply appreciated. His work has been integral to our progress. We also express our gratitude to Anthony Handley for his brief stint as Nick's replacement. Currently, we are seeking a part-time facilitator to assist Bianca into the new year.

Bianca Fammartino has taken on the facilitator's role, supporting groups, engaging with landholders, councils, and schools, and coordinating a wide range of activities, from tree plantings to educational training. Her proactive use of social media has elevated the profile of our catchment work and increased attendance at group events. Many of our activities have garnered attention in local press as worthy news items. The "Celebration of Volunteers" event and Fungi presentation by Alison Pouliot at the Clarendon Recreational Reserve was a well-attended success. School-based activities have seen high demand this year, and we've secured several grants to support them. Bianca's efforts also brought Salt Bush Kitchen on board as a sponsor, and we extend our heartfelt thanks to Bridget from Salt Bush Kitchen.

Our member groups continue to excel in their respective areas, and we've had the privilege of conducting board meetings in conjunction with them, providing us with a firsthand view of their remarkable work. These meetings have offered valuable feedback and insights into what the Leigh Catchment can offer and what its needs are. It's clear that there is much unrecognised but essential work within the catchment area, underscoring the need for additional resources and expertise.

Bianca's support extends to various groups, answering inquiries, and providing resources and information for the general public. Our move to the new office space at the Buninyong RSL has been a long-awaited development, providing a public space for contact. Bianca's support, knowledge, and enthusiasm continue to inspire and grow all those who engage with our group.

While we've seen some groups thrive, others have faced difficulties due to a lack of individuals willing to take on office-bearer positions. The Leigh Catchment Board also faces challenges in recruiting board members and office bearers. Encouraging and supporting individuals to participate and take on positions is a critical issue we must address.

In August, we hosted the Corangamite Catchment Chair and Facilitators meeting, providing an opportunity to exchange reports, discuss issues, and share ideas among different networks. Valuable insights were gained from breakout group discussions, and we were updated on Landcare's social media guide.

Michele Harvey's support and expertise in financial matters continue to be invaluable, enhancing the board's understanding of our increasingly substantial business operations.

Our board is actively seeking more members to further support Landcare within the Leigh and Woody Catchments. If you can contribute your time and expertise, please don't hesitate to contact us.

In closing, this report is a testament to the incredible work being carried out by the various groups in our catchment area. We remain committed to our mission and look forward to continued success in the coming year.

HEATHER FAGG

Chair



BOARD MEMBERS 2022-2023

Heather Fagg (Chairperson)
Sandra Weller (Secretary)
Angela Aldred (Treasurer)
Nick McKinley (Human Resources)
Murray Norman
Joel Ellis
Judith Bailey
Ellen Scott



MEMBER GROUPS

Garibaldi Landcare
Napoleons/Enfield Landcare
Ross Creek Landcare
Upper Williamson's Creek Landcare

Wattle Flat/Pootilla Landcare
Friends of Canadian Corridor (FoCC)
Friends of the Woody
Friends of Yarrowee River

OUR MISSION

The Yarrowee Leigh Catchment Group Inc. (LCG) is a network of Landcare groups in the Corangamite Landcare region. It is one of ten Landcare networks in the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CCMA) region. The LCG was formed in 1997 following recognition by the Landcare groups within the catchment that a combined and coordinated approach to management of the catchment would result in improved works and lead to an increase in funding for larger scale Natural Resource Management projects. These Landcare groups are listed above.

OUR PURPOSE

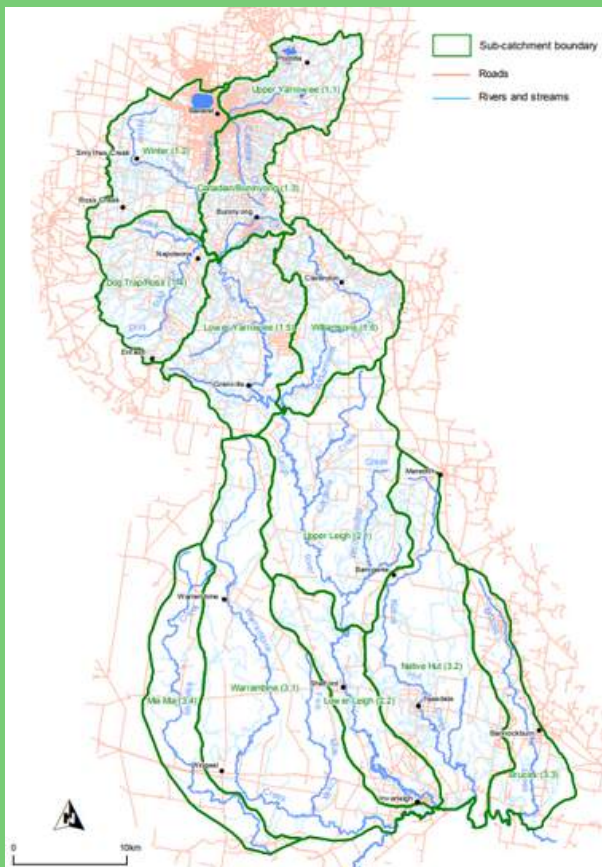
- To work together to ensure the preservation of natural heritage, sustainable agriculture, and communities
- To ensure the ecologically sensitive restoration, development and maintenance of the Yarrowee/Leigh River, all tributaries, corridors and associated ecological communities within the Yarrowee Leigh Catchment group area.
- To support our network of Landcare groups and community-based natural resource management groups and community.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Leigh Catchment covers an area of 1,580 square kilometres. The Leigh River arises north-east of Ballarat as the Yarrowee River, which becomes the Leigh River at its confluence with Williamson's Creek. The Leigh River flows into the Barwon River at Inverleigh. It also includes the Barwon River sub-catchments of Warrambine Creek, Native Hut Creek, and Bruce's Creek and the Lake Murdeduke sub-catchment of Mia Mia Creek.

The current 2017-2023 Leigh Catchment Strategic Plan establishes an updated long term direction and identifies priority actions for the protection and enhancement of natural resources within the Leigh Catchment Group region. Focusing on the following areas:

- Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Community support, engagement and capacity building
- Cultural and historical heritage protection and management
- Pest plant and animal management
- Protection, enhancement and restoration of biodiversity
- Salinity and soil health management
- Agricultural best practice
- Waterway and wetland protection and enhancement
- Disaster recovery
- Governance, networks and staff



Partners: Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, Corangamite Catchment Management Authority, City of Ballarat, Golden Plains Shire, Moorabool Shire, Federation University, Seeding Victoria, Central Highlands Water and many community groups, landholders and individuals.

OUR STAFF

It's bittersweet when someone as dedicated and valuable as Nick McKinley transitions from one role to another. Although it was sad to see him leave his role as a facilitator, it's heartening to know that he's continuing to contribute to the organisation by joining the board. Nick's commitment and expertise will undoubtedly be an asset in his new capacity, and his experience as a facilitator will bring valuable insights to the board's discussions and decision-making.

This transition is a testament to Nick's ongoing commitment to the Leigh Catchment Group and its mission. It's a reminder of the strong sense of community and shared purpose within the organisation.

Our Landcare Facilitators Nick McKinley, Bianca Fammartino, and Anthony Handley managed projects and activities undertaken through LCG and provide support to Landcare Group members. Nick, Bianca, and Anthony are essential in coordinating and managing Landcare projects and maintaining a strong connection with Landcare Group members. Their role involves a combination of project management, community engagement, and communication through various channels to support the Landcare initiatives effectively.

Our Landcare Facilitators job share the position with Nick at 0.2 that Anthony took on in February moving to 0.4, and Bianca at 0.6 bringing the role to our funded full time equivalent. We greatly appreciate the ongoing expertise and dedication that Bianca has given over this time of personnel transition.

This year Nick and Bianca completed project management for our Waterways Incentive Program, Communities For Environment Program, Connected Communities and Landcare Victoria Grants.

Our facilitators are our groups' first point of contact, either face to face, on the phone, or increasingly through our social media platforms.

Staff attended two Landcare Facilitator Meetings with the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority. These meetings provide opportunities for our staff to network with employees from the nine different Landcare Networks within the Corangamite Catchment Management Region. Bianca undertook VACCHO (Victorian Aboriginal Communities Controlled Health Organisation) Cultural Safety Training, as well as Appy Business Risk Management Processes training. Bianca also attended the National Koala Monitoring Program run by the Moorabool Catchment Landcare and the CSIRO, the Golden Plains Shire's Cultural Heritage Talks and Water Races and Sluice Fields Talk with Prof. Susan Lawrence. Bianca also participated in the City of Ballarat's Biodiversity Policy Workshop. Nick completed a Workplace OH&S course. Anthony was accepted into DEECA's Caring for Landcarers' Facilitators Mentoring Program, and also attended the Landcare Victoria's Landcare Professionals Forum in Beechworth.

In her role as Executive Assistant (0.1 FTE), Michele Harvie oversees all financial activities, including general bookkeeping, payroll management, and conducting audits when necessary. Michele also offers her expertise in governance, policy, and procedures to ensure our group complies with all statutory requirements.

Michele is an invaluable asset to our team, and her contributions are greatly appreciated.



OUR PARTNERS

Over the past 12 months we have worked and been involved with the following partners: Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, Corangamite Catchment Management Authority, City of Ballarat, Golden Plains Shire, Moorabool Shire, Federation University, Central Highlands Water, Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, Parks Victoria, Bunanyung Landscape Alliance, Landmate, Buninyong Community Bank, Ballarat Wildplants, Moorabool Catchment Landcare Group, Ballarat Probosc Group, Saltbush Kitchen, Ballarat Grammar, Dereel-Enfield Cub Scouts, Damascus College, Covenant College, Ballarat Clarendon College, Fifteen Trees, Buninyong Primary School-Buninyong and Scotsburn Campus, Napoleons Primary School, Mount Clear Primary School, Smythesdale Progress Association, CFA, Victorian Gorse Taskforce, Seeding Victoria and Ballarat's Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment Program.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT, EVENTS & ENGAGEMENTS

This year, the Leigh Catchment Group has taken the lead in organising and supporting various community and school group planting initiatives in our region. These group plantings play a vital role in advancing our project goals to restore and enrich our natural environment. They also serve as a catalyst for community engagement through volunteer participation. Furthermore, these activities serve as a platform for educating participants about the environment and emphasise the significance of revegetation in promoting biodiversity within our area.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT, EVENTS & ENGAGEMENTS

WOMEN'S CHAINSAW WORKSHOP

LCG hosted a Battery Operated Chainsaw Operation and Maintenance Workshop designed exclusively for women. This workshop aimed to empower women with the knowledge and skills needed to operate and maintain battery-operated chainsaws safely and effectively. All participants had the unique opportunity to engage in practical exercises. They learned how to clean and service a battery-operated chainsaw, gaining valuable insights into its mechanics and maintenance requirements. The event garnered significant interest and received positive feedback, prompting consideration for future sessions. The workshop was followed by a delightful Bush High Tea, skillfully catered by Saltbush Kitchen and Kittelty's Kitchen. The high tea provided a perfect platform for participants to relax, socialise, and network. The workshop received overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants, who appreciated the opportunity to learn in a supportive and empowering environment.



BUNINYONG SMART LIVING EXPO

The Smart Living and Building Expo held at Royal Park in Buninyong on Sunday, March 20th, was a resounding success, drawing in hundreds of attendees. Visitors were treated to a delightful experience, including live music, a wide array of stalls and displays, and delicious food options. One of the primary objectives of the event was to educate visitors about sustainable living choices for their homes and communities, and the stallholders played a pivotal role in achieving this. They engaged with attendees, providing valuable insights and information on sustainable living practices. The community's enthusiasm and participation highlighted the importance and relevance of such expos in promoting sustainable living and building practices. The Leigh Catchment Group's stand, a perennial favorite, drew significant attention. The waterbugs display and the availability of informative brochures on local flora and fauna proved to be major attractions.



INDIGENOUS SEED COLLECTION WORKSHOP

In a year filled with growth and learning, the Leigh Catchment Group hosted more immensely successful Native Indigenous Seed Collection Workshops. These workshops, featuring guest presenter Dan Frost from Seeding Victoria, played a vital role in advancing our conservation efforts.

During these workshops, attendees had the invaluable opportunity to delve into the intricacies of indigenous seed collection and seed preparation for propagation. Dan Frost, our esteemed presenter, shared insights on the optimal times for seed collection across various species in our region, various seed collection and extraction techniques, and the essential treatments necessary before propagation. We are thrilled to witness the positive outcomes of these workshops, with attendees now actively engaged in propagating and nurturing their own tube stock. These plants will play a pivotal role in upcoming revegetation projects, both on their own properties and within their respective Landcare Groups.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT, EVENTS & ENGAGEMENTS

CELEBRATION OF VOLUNTEERS WITH ALISON POULIOT

In recognition of the significant contributions made by Landcare volunteers, the Leigh Catchment Group hosted a Celebration of Volunteers event on the 4th of June 2023. Landcare volunteers are the backbone of our organisation, and we wanted to express our appreciation for their hard work and dedication. We commend their unwavering efforts, which not only contribute to the betterment of our local environment but also strengthen our community bonds. The event featured a special guest presenter, Alison Pouliot, and included an afternoon tea held at the Clarendon Recreational Reserve. During the event, Alison Pouliot introduced guests to the fascinating world of fungi and shared captivating stories from her adventures while writing her recent book, "Underground Lovers: Encounters with Fungi." Guests were treated to a charming display of fungi showcasing her extensive collection, and had the opportunity to purchase copies of her book and have them signed by the author. Alison charmed the audience with an informative and engaging presentation on fungi, leaving everyone enthralled. We savored delectable catering provided by Maggie and Kate's, courtesy of the Bendigo Bank Community Gold Program.

One of the key takeaways from Alison's presentation was the crucial role that fungi play in the ecosystem. Not only do they help plants access water and nutrients, but they also increase their resistance to drought and disease. Fungi contribute to the construction of soil architecture, aerate the soil, and facilitate water penetration, making them essential components of a healthy and thriving environment.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT, EVENTS & ENGAGEMENTS

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY

We're thrilled to announce that this year's Clean Up Australia Day event saw an impressive turnout, with over 40 dedicated volunteers working diligently. Together, they collected an astounding 20 large bags of debris from the Yarrowee River vicinity in Sebastopol, filling two sizable trailers. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Ballarat Cub Scouts for their invaluable assistance and to the Sebastopol Lions Club for their efforts in running the barbecue. The City of Ballarat later collected the gathered rubbish, with a particular focus on addressing the issue of discarded drink bottles."



MEETINGS WITH MEMBER GROUPS

This year, the Leigh Catchment Group Board has taken a proactive approach to engage with our Landcare groups by conducting field meetings to foster collaboration and gain insights. In February, we visited the Upper Williamsons Creek Landcare Group at Scotsburn Hall, where we had the opportunity to hear about their ongoing projects and funding needs. In March, we had the privilege of touring the Ross Creek Reserve with the Ross Creek Landcare Group, witnessing their dedicated efforts to restore and enhance the natural ecosystem. In May, our board visited the Hardies Hill Reserve alongside the Garibaldi Landcare Group. We were impressed by the remarkable work they've undertaken, including the removal of spiny rush from their proposed wetland site and the tree plantings along the creek. We are committed to maintaining our collaborative efforts with member groups in the coming year.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT, EVENTS & ENGAGEMENTS

NEW INDIGENOUS INSECT BROCHURE

This brochure had been a work-in-progress in late 2021, and its draft templates were largely complete by early 2022. Early in the financial year, though, is ultimately when its completion and printing became official. An original work, this brochure is the first-of-its-kind, and a great credit to its co-founding groups, Leigh Catchment Group, and Friends of Canadian Corridor. Based on the template of the Indigenous Wildlife, and Indigenous Plants, editions that preceded it, it features 121 species of insects (and invertebrates). Sections include Butterflies & Moths; Beetles & Bugs; Grasshoppers, Katydid & Crickets; Ants, Wasps, Bees & similar; Dragonflies & Damselflies; and Assorted Invertebrates (e.g. praying mantids, friendly spiders, scorpion, yabby, etc.). The featured species were chosen based on frequency of reported sightings in Ballarat and nearby, according to iNaturalist and Atlas of Living Australia – plus some wildcard selections to give representation to some lesser-known local invertebrate fauna. Bonus features include some split images to demonstrate different ages, e.g. the caterpillar that matches with the butterfly. Featured species selection; ethical procuring and selection of images; drafting of templates; and authoring of the informative text on the back panel – all a great privilege of Joel's to work on. Paul McKenna, at Colourfield Design, was again our loyal graphic designer. I'm told the brochures were very popular... the rest, as they say, is history.



INDIGENOUS WILDLIFE OF SOUTHERN BALLARAT: 40 FAUNA FOR JUNIORS

The brochure project of 2023, and another first-of-its-kind original work. This one made the Indigenous [Species] of Southern Ballarat trilogy a quartet. An idea originally conceived in Friends of Canadian Corridor Committee meeting in early 2023. Brand new FoCC Committee member, Hayley Inglis raised the idea of modifying the 'Wildlife' brochure, to be specially designed for Primary School-aged students. As a mother of Primary-aged children, and a teacher at Primary schools, with professional experience in educational publishing, Hayley is very well-qualified to lend her services to a brochure of such specifications. So what might the brochure entail? Hayley proposed fewer featured species, larger images, omission of scientific names, and check boxes for students to tick off each species when they see them. This idea was roundly received with intrigue and ultimately approval – a compelling model with lots of potential!



COMMUNITY SUPPORT, EVENTS & ENGAGEMENTS

INDIGENOUS WILDLIFE OF SOUTHERN BALLARAT: 40 FAUNA FOR JUNIORS CONTINUED

From that early 2023 FoCC Committee Meeting, I relayed Hayley's pitch to the Leigh Catchment Group Board at our next Board meeting. The Board was unanimously in support of Hayley's idea. Next, a brochure taskforce subcommittee, featuring Sandra, Angela, and myself, held a meeting at Fed Uni cafe on the Mt Helen campus, one afternoon. We discussed prospective brochures, from Junior Wildlife, to Fungi, and Weed ID. Later, with considerations of logistics and finances duly mulled over, the verdict was reached that the Junior Wildlife brochure would be the brochure project for 2023.

This go-ahead verdict gave me the impetus to set about producing draft templates. It was decided that we would use the same images of those that appeared in the Indigenous Wildlife (and Indigenous Insect) brochure — it was just a matter of how many featured species, and which ones. I landed on 40 as the perfect number of species to feature. The reasons for this were threefold: 1) 40 is a large enough number to showcase a variety of faunal groups, but not too large a number that young readers' attention would wander; 2) with 2x2 images on each panel of the brochure, 40 species would fit neatly into the layout; and 3) from 40, I ultimately conceived the title of '40 Fauna for Juniors', which I thought would be catchy.

Now to select the species. Only the most commonly-encountered, easy-to-identify species would make the cut. In addition to a pool of very visible birds, I resolved to include some diurnal (day-active) mammals, the most-common frogs and lizards — and, rather pleasantly, as it turned out there were enough spaces left to include some species from Indigenous Insects (i.e. butterflies, moths, beetles, bugs, etc.). So include some I did.

Featured species now decided, the wheel was well and truly in motion, and a draft template was promptly compiled. Check boxes added. Any other adaptations to bring to life an interactive, educational document? How about under each image we include a brief fact about the species, and a clue on how to identify it or where to look for it? Done, added! Any other bonus features? How about a blank text box on the back panel for readers to record or draw any species they encounter that aren't featured in the 40? Done, added! Looks good! Print copy. Report progress to Hayley, arrange a meeting.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT, EVENTS & ENGAGEMENTS

INDIGENOUS WILDLIFE OF SOUTHERN BALLARAT: 40 FAUNA FOR JUNIORS CONTINUED

A one-hour meeting with Hayley, at her home, was all that was needed to pivot the brochure in the direction it ultimately landed. By this stage, the 40 Fauna for Juniors brochure was four A4 pages that were needing a clever format tweak to make the document more user-friendly, outdoor-compatible, and paper-conservative. And we needed to plan to ensure the document could be easily accessible, and easily printed. Bearing all of those aforementioned considerations in mind, Hayley masterminded that the document ought to be an A3 fold-out brochure. The four A4 pages would seamlessly transfer into a double-sided A3 page. Hayley went about some cutting and pasting, and using a blank A3 sheet, she folded it accordingly to how she envisaged it. Paste the front panel on, paste back panel on, and all in between. Suddenly, we had our prototype, albeit in black-and-white and roughly mashed together! Genius, by Hayley!

Now, I just needed to customise the Word doc version into a document that marries up with the prototype, and would be ready for folding, once printed. This isn't as straightforward as it sounds, as the foldings meant that a section of the document would be upside-down as it appears on the screen, then on the hardcopy once folded this section would be the right way up. All of that was tackled. Two (landscape) A4 pages printed on either side of an (portrait) A3 sheet – awesome! Print out a few demo copies. Go about folding them. Seamless folding? Not quite, a few trimmings needed. Back to the Word doc, edit the margins, accordingly – now, *hopefully* the hardcopy should be able to fold without a single trimming! And that's where we are at to this day.

A few orders of business to note. This brochure, I believe it has been agreed upon by both co-founding groups, is intended to be accessible via a PDF link on Leigh Catchment Group's, and Friends of Canadian Corridor's, webpages. That way, teachers, parents, teenagers, and other consumers, will be able to easily download and print it. Therefore, it would be free-of-charge and non-profit. The production of the brochure bypassed the commissioning of professional graphic designer services, and printing costs, thus requires no investment of funding. Paul McKenna, of Colourfield Design, our loyal brochure designer was notified about this brochure, to ensure we're not liable for stealing intellectual property. Paul was very happy for us, and obligingly assured us that the document was sufficiently divergent from his works that we needn't acknowledge his brand in the acknowledgment section. - Joel Ellis



CONNECTING TO COUNTRY

As part of our 'Connecting to Country' project, we engaged with Napoleons Primary School, working alongside students ranging from prep to grade 6 to create posters that showcased traditional language related to the local flora, fauna, and insects. This collaborative effort involved the use of the Wadawurrung language app as part of their art classes. During our sessions, we delved into the cultural significance of native indigenous plants and animals, while identifying the region's indigenous flora and fauna that these young learners might encounter in their surroundings. The children produced remarkable artworks and enjoyed the process of learning the Wadawurrung language through the app.

Our initial plan was to exhibit these posters along the Franklin's Bridge Reserve walking trail along the Yarrowee River, as a feature of the Napoleons/Enfield Landcare Group's open day. Unfortunately, the event had to be cancelled due to flood damage at the site. However, we were able to successfully reschedule the display once the weather improved.

The Napoleons Enfield Landcare Group did organise a smaller open day at the reserve on December 4th, which was attended by group members and the Napoleons Primary School. The Indigenous language posters that we had the privilege of creating with the primary school were prominently displayed for the occasion. Many students and their families attended to appreciate the posters, relish a BBQ, explore a waterbug display, and take home some native plants.



ACHIEVEMENTS OF OUR MEMBER GROUPS

FRIENDS OF THE WOODY LANDCARE GROUP

July 2023 sees the end of our first year as a fully fledged landcare group and it has been a busy and successful one. Our dedicated members Dennis and Meralin have been attacking the gorse, blackberry, and hawthorn along the Woody at Smythesdale with extraordinary vigour, supported by other volunteers on our monthly working bees. We have also been supported by work crews from the Landmate program of the Department of Corrections who have been hitting the weeds hard.

We have been successful in obtaining 3 years of funding from the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority to pay for professional contractors and to fund replanting work. Our spray contractor will be commencing work soon spraying a section on the west bank of the Woody which was groomed last year through the assistance of the Leigh Catchment Group. We have finished spending our Golden Plains Shire Community grant and donations from the Smythesdale Progress Association and the Smythesdale Community Coordinators. This funding paid for two years of registration with Landcare Victoria and equipment purchases. Our relationship with the Progress Association remains strong with them providing insurance for our equipment and secure storage facilities on site.

We are set to attack the heavy infestations of gorse on the west bank of the Woody which will involve a huge amount of work as this area is difficult to access, rough and close to the riverbank.

We have also made an application for Landcare funding to undertake a land management plan for both our existing project site from Whites Rd to the Snake Valley Rd in Smythesdale and a section of the Woody continuing south to the Smythesdale Equestrian Centre. We hope this will be successful as we intend doing a considerable amount of community and school engagement as part of the project.

All together a great year and hopefully building a secure base for committed long term community activity restoring the Woody Yaloak River.

Bill MacNeill
President
Friends of the Woody Landcare Group



ACHIEVEMENTS OF OUR MEMBER GROUPS

Napoleons Enfield Landcare Group embarked on numerous activities and events this year, aimed at conserving and enhancing our local environment. Despite challenges such as flooding and unexpected setbacks, our dedicated volunteers and community support ensured that our mission continued to thrive.



Planting and Restoration:

In July 2022, as part of National Tree Day, we successfully planted 500 trees, shrubs, and grasses along the Yarrowee River at Yarmalok Plain. This effort was made possible with the invaluable assistance of 78 volunteers, including the students from Napoleon's Primary School. Over 1000 small, low-canopy plants were planted in rabbit-protected areas within the main reserve during our open monthly working bees.

Open Day and Flooding:

Regrettably, much of the preparation for our planned Open Day in November was lost when we had to cancel the event due to extensive flooding in October and November. This impacted both the reserves and car park areas.

Despite the flooding the majority of our planted flora, including the low-canopy plantings, survived, though some fencing was affected.

Last year's new frog ponds thrived, and many habitat logs found new homes further downstream.

Instead of the Open Day, we held a Volunteers Thank You party in December, which featured a river dipping activity.

Infrastructure and Collaboration:

A new footbridge was finally installed during the high summer months, greatly improving access to Yarmalok Plain. This project received significant support from the City of Ballarat. We also collaborated with the Garibaldi Landcare group to install an irrigated holding bench for tube stock native plants, facilitating easy access to our plants.

Working bees involved various tasks, including installing concrete and wooden seating, mowing paths, rescuing guards and stakes for reuse, spreading kangaroo grass bales on the bridge embankment, and flood damage work including replanting.

Our commitment to providing excellent snacks at working bees, thanks to Kath's efforts, may have contributed to the steadily increasing number of volunteers each month.

Community Support and Growth:

We are grateful for the consistent support from other groups, including the Local Geocachers and Clarendon College classes.

We also benefited from regular weekly working bees at both Scotchmans Lead reserves and Cambrian Hill reserve.

In total, we recorded an impressive 2,927 volunteering hours this year, marking a 25% increase from the previous year. This growth can be attributed to the dedication of our committee members.

We are grateful to our dedicated volunteers, the community, and our partners for their unwavering support. Our commitment to environmental conservation remains stronger than ever as we look forward to the future.



ACHIEVEMENTS OF OUR MEMBER GROUPS

Friends of the Yarrowee River



Friends of the Yarrowee River is ticking along with a few individuals and one little group that are getting a few things done. It's a case of "think globally, act very locally" you might say. If you've got a favourite bit of the Yarrowee or a local reserve that's in our catchment that you'd like to clean up and/or do some planting in, get in touch and we'll get you supported.

Our Friends of Specimen Vale "branch" has re-emerged thanks to the efforts of Merrie Harvey and Ellen Scott, and I've really enjoyed supporting them and attending their working bees. Their National Tree Day event was an absolute hoot – twenty people on a Thursday morning! Some people had even taken time off work to be there. But then their regular Thursday morning working bees are also great fun. Weeding, spreading mulch, planting plants, sitting about in the occasional sunny moment to sip cuppas and chat relentlessly. Just exactly the kind of thing that keeps us going.

Wattle Flat Pootilla Landcare Group held what you might call a flash planting event to help us out at Black Hill Flat Native Garden. My goodness, they knew what they were doing, including how to cook the snags. Then the Geocachers squeezed in an hour into what sounded like a very busy day to plant a quick 100 or so grasses.

Gareth Jones gave me a tour of what he and some neighbours have been doing next to Little Bendigo Creek, including woody weed removal and a bunch of planting. Hedley Thomson and his helpers manage to get a few things done at Sparrow Ground. And I've brought Alan Walker, someone who's been planting along the Skipton Rail Trail, into FoYR, so now he doesn't have to pay for his plants, bags and stakes anymore and he (and the one or two of his friends who sometimes help out) are insured.

The on-going silt run-off from the development site in Brown Hill since December 2021 has been an on-going issue. For the first time, the EPA is using its recently-acquired criminal prosecution ability, and the developer very quickly put in some effective silt retention works when they were finally taken to court in October last year. Although there still seems to be problems.

Friends of Black Hill Reserve wound up and the assets with tools, barbecue, gloves, bank balance transferred to us. This is a good thing, as for the first time since FoYR reformed in 2016, it is sufficient for us to pay the LVI membership without having to wait until the CCMA support grant arrives.

The Facebook group is growing. It's clearly being watched by journalists from The Courier and the local ABC. As well as the repeated silt run-offs, people have been posting about the fish kill at Sebastopol, the erosion control also at Sebas, the sewer overflow at Brown Hill, ideas for how the river could be managed better, relevant events and TV shows, the CHW sewer upgrade at White Flat, as well as all the usual stuff we post.

City of Ballarat's contact person, Daniel Siemensma, is definitely on-side with what we're doing, and despite having most of his time taken up with other work, has been helping us out with materials and support tasks whenever he can. It took over a year of lobbying to get our first load of mulch back in 2018, but I'm pleased to say things are definitely getting better.



ACHIEVEMENTS OF OUR MEMBER GROUPS

In the year 2022-2023, the Wattle Flat-Pootilla Landcare Group continued its dedicated efforts to promote environmental conservation and community engagement. The various events and achievements that took place throughout the year are listed below.



National Tree Day - Sunday, July 31, 2022

On this day, the Landcare Group, in collaboration with the Ballarat Cubs Group, organized a tree planting event at Rosestone's Property on Bush Inn Rd, Wattle Flat. Thirty enthusiastic attendees collectively planted 220 trees, with an additional 61 planted later. This project received partial funding through our Small Projects Grants for members.



Napoleons Landcare Site Visit - Sunday, August 7, 2022

A site visit to Scotchman's Lead Reserve attracted twenty-five participants, where we witnessed the remarkable environmental conservation efforts undertaken over the years. The day concluded with a meal at the Royal Mail Hotel, generously funded by Napoleons Landcare Group.

Wattle Flat-Pootilla Landcare Group 20th Anniversary Celebrations - Sunday, October 30, 2022

The group marked its 20th anniversary with a memorable event at the Invermay Hall, attended by around 30 individuals. The event featured a delightful afternoon filled with delicious food, old photographs, and cherished memories.



Above: Four generations of the Martin family: Andrew holding a photo of his father David and his daughter Kate holding a photo of her recent baby scan.

Media Coverage

We were featured in the Victorian Landcare Magazine - Spring 2022, Issue 85. The article gave an insight into our group, its history and 20-year anniversary of caring for our local environment.

Planting on Yarrowee River Ballarat East - Sunday, December 13, 2022

Our group collaborated with Friends of Yarrowee River for a planting event on the Yarrowee River, where approximately 200 plants were added. The day was capped off with a delightful BBQ.

Hepburn Shire Landcare Grant

Funds from this grant were utilized for roadside spraying in Wattle Flat during the autumn of 2023.

Flora and Fauna Survey with Roger Thomas

Our members took advantage of a subsidy to conduct vegetation surveys on four properties in Brown Hill and Wattle Flat.

Project Maintenance - October 23, 2022, & April 30, 2023

Two maintenance days were organized at Sutherland's property in Pootilla to remove tree guards.

Landcare Trailer Purchase - Hepburn Shire Bio-Diversity Grant

The Hepburn Shire provided a grant for the purchase of a new Landcare Trailer. Our trusty blue trailer, which had served us for nearly 20 years, was sold and will be repurposed as a camping trailer.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF OUR MEMBER GROUPS

Over the past 12 months, the Garibaldi Landcare Group has had to adapt its activities due to prolonged and excessive damp weather conditions. As a result, the following limited activities were conducted:



Local Seed Collection and Cultivation: We continued our efforts in local seed collection and the nurturing of wildflowers and shrubs at Linda's nursery. Our dedicated members regularly attended to the needs of these plants as required.

Plantings on Private Properties: Despite the weather challenges, we continued our commitment to enhancing the environment. One of our focus areas over the past few years has been the riverbank at Dave Holden's property. In the past year, 17 members and their families came together to plant 600 rushes and 30 Wirildas, contributing to the preservation of this important area.

Spiny Rush Follow-Up: After mulching in early 2022 at Hardies Hill Water Reserve, we conducted a spiny rush follow-up spray. Our tentative plans to create a wetland on this site are currently on hold, but we remain committed to its development in the future.

Weed Control at Garibaldi Bridge Reserve: We are pleased to report that the Garibaldi Bridge reserve received ongoing weed control efforts carried out by dedicated students from FedUni. Despite the weather challenges, the commitment to maintaining this site continued unabated.



ACHIEVEMENTS OF OUR MEMBER GROUPS



Summary of This Year's Key Activities for the Upper Williamsons Creek Landcare Group:

Geordies Lane and Hopgoods Rd Maintenance Day:

We started the year with a highly successful maintenance day at Geordies Lane and Hopgoods Rd. Our dedicated team worked diligently to uncover previous plantings, tackling overgrown grass, weeding, and replacing any deceased plants. The day culminated in a delightful communal lunch at Scotsburn Hall.

Pryor's Rd Maintenance Day:

We continued our efforts with a maintenance day at Pryor's Rd, where once again, we restored plantings hidden within tall grass. Our team utilised whipper-snippers and chainsaws to tackle woody weeds, weeded the area, and replaced any plants in need. A special thank you to the Masons for graciously hosting us and providing lunch.

Planting Days at David Wells' Property:

We organised two planting days at David Wells' property. These days were made even more memorable with the generous support of the Buninyong Community Bank, who catered for us. On National Tree Day, we had a fantastic barbecue thanks to Lucas. In total, we planted over 1000 new trees and shrubs. A job very well done by our team!

Mac's Rd Maintenance and Planting Day:

We also had a maintenance and planting day at Mac's Rd, during which we successfully planted 100 new plants, contributing to the enhancement of the area.



SECURING GRANTS & SPONSORSHIP 2022-2023

Project Title	Source of Funding (name of funding provider)	Purpose (on-ground, engagement, communications, ex GST) coordination, other)	Amount (ex GST)
Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program Milestone Five	State - DELWP	Facilitation to support Landcare groups and networks as they strive to create sustainable landscapes for future generations.	\$ 29,428
Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program Milestone Six	State - DELWP	Facilitation to support Landcare groups and networks as they strive to create sustainable landscapes for future generations.	\$ 29,869
Waterway Protection Program: Rivers of Gold & Western district lakes MS1	CCMA	Targeting specific geographic areas and waterways under the Corangamite Water Strategy.	\$ 41,574
Victorian Landcare Grant: Connecting to Country	CCMA	Increasing and building community knowledge and understanding of our local cultural heritage and natural resource management issues through educational workshops, to enhance the protection and restoration of the environment and provide a connectivity to the way Traditional Owners managed the land in the past, but also ensure we include them into our future planning.	\$ 9,420
Engaging Community in the Woody Yalook	Transferred from the Pittong Hoyles Creek Landcare Group	Supporting local group with activities including major work in removing gorse from creek.	\$ 15,390
Connecting local community to the local wetland & nature reserves in Sebastopol	City of Ballarat	Easy, accessible & free activities to encourage local residents and school groups to engage with their local environment.	\$ 8,727
National Tree Day	Bendigo Bank Buninyong	Supporting Volunteer activities with our member groups for National Tree Day	\$ 650
TOTAL			\$ 135,058

SPECIAL MENTION AS IT DOES NOT SHOW IN THE FINANCIALS: The Buninyong Bendigo Bank also gave the group \$250.00 in vouchers to be spent within Buninyong. The vouchers were to recognize the outstanding support of our volunteers. The Leigh Catchment Group put the money towards catering for the 'Celebration Of Volunteers' featuring Alison Pouliot who captivated the crowd with her informative and engaging presentation on fungi.

ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2022-23

Yarrowee Leigh Catchment Group Inc.

ABN 53 973 990 946

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS

YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	Note	2023	2022
RECEIPTS			
Grants	2	135,058	152,430
Interest		197	237
Other Income	3	100	26
GST Collected & Refunded		13,738	10,213
		149,093	162,906
PAYMENTS			
Management Costs	4	90,980	86,435
Projects	5	31,102	41,160
Other expenses	6	5,860	9,286
GST Owing, PAYE & Repaid		11,019	11,088
		138,961	147,969
CASH SURPLUS / (DEFICIT) FOR YEAR		10,132	14,937
ADD: Cash at bank 30 June 2022		197,557	
CASH AT BANK 30 June 2023		207,689	

BALANCE SHEET

30 JUNE 2023

	Note	2023	2022
ASSETS			
Current Assets			
Cash at Bank	7	207,689	197,557
Debtors	8	0	2,789
TOTAL ASSETS		207,689	200,346
LIABILITIES			
Current Liabilities			
Creditors	9	3,272	1,372
Projects	10	70,183	35,763
TOTAL LIABILITIES		73,454	37,135
YARROWEE LEIGH CATCHMENT GROUP FUNDS		134,235	163,211

NOTES TO ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2022-23

NOTE 1 – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The Statement of Receipts and Payments is prepared on a cash basis and the surplus (deficit) shown has not been adjusted to reflect amounts due to, or owing by the Group as shown in the Balance Sheet. The Annual Financial Statement is prepared as a special purpose financial report.

An external review was not conducted for the Financial Year 2022-23, as required by Consumer Affairs, Annual Statements for an Incorporated Association, where income exceed \$250,000, as the total revenue for the year was under \$250,000.

NOTE 2 & 5	SUMMARY OF CURRENT PROJECTS			
	Received		Spent	
	Management	Project		
Corangamite Management Authority				
The Revegetation Cycle	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 14,500	
Waterways 2022-2024	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 14,307	
Waterway Protection: <i>Rivers of Gold & Western</i>	\$ 5,734	\$ 35,840	\$ -	
Connecting to Country	\$ 3,220	\$ 6,200	\$ -	
Woody Community Engagement	\$ -	\$ 15,390	\$ -	
Victorian Government				
Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program Milestone Five	\$ 29,428			
Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program Milestone Six	\$ 29,869			
City of Ballarat				
Connecting local community to the local wetland & nature reserves in Sebastopol		\$ 5,855		
	\$ 2,872			
Golden Plains Shire				
Community Strengthening Grant, Friends of the Woody (nee Smythesdale Progress Association)			\$ 2,295	
Bendigo Bank Community Grant				
National Tree Day		\$ 650		
TOTAL GRANTS	135,058	\$ 71,123	\$ 63,935	\$ 31,102

NOTE 3 OTHER INCOME

Donations for Brouchures	100
	<hr/> 100

NOTES TO ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2022-23

NOTE 4 MANAGEMENT COSTS

Office Rent / Room Hire / Zoom Subscription.	781
<i>Includes reimbursement to Staff for home office use while we had no office</i>	
Bank Fees	42
Printing, stationary & postage	214
Board amenities	428
Insurance	728
Internet & Phone	1,044
IT Expenses	1,631
Project Officer Travel Expenses	2,122
Project Officers Salaries / Wages, Superannuation & Workcover	71,394
Accounting, Xero & Book keeping	8,221
Training (not including staff hours)	526
Office Equipment *New Laptop /Phone etc for new staff member	3,849
	<hr/> 90,980

NOTE 6 OTHER EXPENSES

Staff Uniforms	200
Brochure Cost	1,780
General Expenses Subscriptions	3,681
& Registrations Tools & Equipment	61
	138
	<hr/> 5,860

NOTE 7 CASH AT BANK

Cash Management Account	99,965
Cheque Account	36,720
Debit Card Account	1,004
Term Deposit	70,000
	<hr/> 207,689

NOTE 8 DEBTORS - NA

NOTE 9 CREDITORS

ATO - Net GST	486
ATO- PAGY Withholding Payable	2,786
	<hr/> 3,272

NOTES TO ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2022-23

NOTE 10 FUNDS COMMITTED TO PROJECTS

Bendigo Bank National Tree Day	650
Connecting to Country	6,200
Connecting to the Local Community Sebastopol	5,856
Scotsburn Phoenix Project	10,320
CCMA Waterways	5,442
CCMA Waterways 2018-2020	19,270
CCMA Waterways Protection	21,533
Woody Engaging Communities	3,206
Golden Plains Community Strengthening Auspicing	<i>*PD by Golden Plains Shire 18-07-23</i>
	-2,295
	<hr/>
	70,183

NOTE 11 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS REVIEW / AUDIT FOR LODGING AN ANNUAL STATEMENT FOR AN INCORPORATED ASSOCIATION

Three tiers of association

Under the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (the Act), an associations falls within one

- Tier 1 – less than \$250,000
- Tier 2 - \$250,000 to \$1 million
- Tier 3 – more than \$1 million

Total revenue refers to the association's total income from all its activities during its financial

TIER 1

Tier 1 associations do not have any additional reporting requirements. They do not need to have their financial statements externally reviewed under the standard rules.

TIER 2

The financial statements must be reviewed by an independent accountant, in accordance with

TIER 3

The financial statements must be audited by an independent auditor in accordance with the For the Financial Year 2022-23, the Yarrowee Leigh Catchment Groups falls into tier 1

Yarrowee Leigh Catchment Group Inc. - Annual Financial Statement 2022-2023





YARROWEE LEIGH CATCHMENT GROUP INCORPORATED

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