

Surprise! The newsletter is back, written by Graeme and produced by Rowan, members are welcome to contribute articles and photo.

2022 AGM

Our 2022 AGM was held via Zoom Saturday 2nd October as the planned visit to Garth and Tona's Gruyere property had to be cancelled due to a bad weather forecast. The new Committee elected for 2022-23 was:

President - Graeme George
Vice-President - no nomination
Secretary - Mary-Ellen Wallace-Smith
Treasurer - Karen Garth
Ordinary Committee Members -
Hart Grieb
Garth Willey
Alan Scoble
Carol Hart
Pat and Neil Schalken

New Members

We extend a warm welcome to the following landcarers who have joined us during 2022-23:

Natasha Case and Kim Neville, Mt Toolebewong
George Shalevski, Yering
Adam Pastor, Mt Toolebewong
Yarra Valley Water, Upper Yarra STP
Rowan George, Badger Creek.

We now have 46 properties on our membership list.



Site Visits to Pat and Neil's, Healesville, December and February

Our Christmas break-up visit and barbecue last year was held at Pat and Neil's property on the Yarra River on the western edge of Healesville, 3rd December.

Pat and Neil run beef cattle on 70 ha of river flat with their house on a hill overlooking the valley. Picanniny Creek crosses their property on its way to the Watts River to their north. Their Yarra River frontage is lined with majestic Manna Gums, *E. viminalis*, (Wurun in Woiwurrung) but there's almost no remnant vegetation on the cleared flats. To improve on-farm biodiversity and shelter for their stock they have planted thousands of trees and shrubs under Council's Ribbons of Green program.

We were keen to see the results of this work. However, the very wet Spring last year and prolonged flooding of the Yarra flats made an inspection of their revegetation plantings impractical as most of their property was still under water when we visited for the December break-up, so we made a return visit Sunday morning 26th February. The

Karen Garth

prolonged flooding had killed most of their pasture which had been replaced by a massive infestation of unpalatable Smart Weed (*Persicaria decipiens*) and Drain-line Flat-sedge (*Cyperus eragrostis*). The flooding also resulted in an outbreak of noxious Bathurst Burr (*Xanthium spinosum*), an event noted in Council's Environmental Newsletter. Bathurst Burr is not commonly seen in the Yarra Valley so seed must have been spread by the flood waters from an infestation in the upper reaches somewhere. Neil and Pat were treating all the plants they could find to prevent them seeding and getting established.

Surprisingly, many of the planted Swamp Gums (*E. ovata*) had been killed by the prolonged flooding. Most Blackwood Wattles (*A. melanoxylon*) were also affected but many were found to be coppicing. Unaffected by the flooding were the planted River Bottlebrushes (*Callistemon sieberi*). Neil and Pat were planning to re-sow their pastures.



Late Autumn in the Yarra Valley.

Observing the seasonal changes in our part of the world indicates six or seven seasons, not the traditional four of temperate northern hemisphere. The Wurundjeri recognised six based on animal activity and the availability of harvestable food. Climate change seems to indicate an early dry autumn (the eel season of the Wurundjeri) prior to the Autumn break which then kicks off a wet autumn period. The break occurred mid March this year but in recent years hasn't come until April. The wetter conditions following these first good rains usually brings on a flush of mushrooms. Edible ones to look out for are the Field and Horse mushrooms in paddocks, introduced Saffron Milk Caps and Slippery Jacks under pine trees and two kinds of brown-topped agarics in the bush. Not so commonly seen are Wood Bluets (*Lepista nuda*) under exotic trees. Doris Pozzi (*Wild Mushrooms - the Beginners Foraging Guide*) lists a few others. Check any field mushrooms you find by scratching the skin first — if the younger ones turn yellow you have Yellow-stainers which can make you feel very sick if eaten.



Late Autumn also sees changes in the bird populations with Summer migrants like flycatchers heading north for the winter and winter migrants like robins moving from the mountains to lower altitudes. Look out for Flame and Scarlet Robins, Bassian Thrushes and Crescent Honeyeaters over the cooler months.



Spray Unit Trailer

Alan is donating an unused trailer which he's going to renovate for us to house our weed spray unit to make it easier to move around. The spray unit is rather heavy for lifting on and off trailers or utes for transport between members' properties, Thanks Alan!



Clean Up Australia Day Sunday 5 March

Karen, Jan and Alan joined HEWI and Badger Creek Community Group members this year for a clean-up and nature walk along Coranderk Creek.

Landcare Regional Forum at Beechworth on Friday 24 and Saturday 25 March

Karen represented us at this annual Landcare Victoria event. Among other activities she attended a peer to peer session Friday afternoon on diversity in landcare, and how to engage with diverse groups in our local community.

The landcare network is currently working with Pembroke PS in Kilsyth, a school of 80 students, many of whom are from the Karen community, for a planting in June at their local council reserve. On behalf of the network she has also contacted a secondary school in Mooroolbark whose LGBTIQ+ group needs help establishing a Rainbow Garden on campus. Our group will be informed if these go ahead and input from members sought. To work at a school you must have a current Working With Children card and list our group as a volunteer organisation on it. Anyone who hasn't this card and would like one will get it for free as a volunteer, and if you need a photo and you can't process this application through your mobile phone, we can pay for this.

Discussions were also held informally with a DEECA staff member and a few other landcarers about how to improve facilitator position employment options. An LVI meeting with those who have a facilitator, and those who wish to get one during the next round (July 2024-2027), has been requested.

It's time to celebrate 30 years of landcare in our patch

Mount Toolebewong Landcare started in March 1993 to tackle ragwort on Mount Toolebewong, expanding its reach to the wider landscape progressively over subsequent years, becoming Mount Toolebewong and District Landcare after absorbing the Don Valley group. Thirty years on the committee is wondering how best we can celebrate. If you have any ideas please let us know so we can discuss them at the next committee meeting Thursday 27th April.

April - May Events

<p>Wednesday 26th April 5:30 – 7pm</p>	<p>Child Safety Standards Webinar</p> <p>Landcare Victoria Child Safety Standards webinar. We urge all members with a WWC, or intending to get one, to attend this webinar on Wed 26 April, 5.30 – 7pm. Three new standards were added last July, which we must all be aware of. Bookings are required – https://www.landcarevic.org.au/resources/child-safe-standards/</p>
<p>Friday 28th April 2 - 3pm</p>	<p>World Environment Day</p> <p>“Platypus in Healesville” by Karen, Healesville Library. 2 – 3pm, free cuppa.</p>
<p>Friday 28th April 9am</p>	<p>Autumn Waterbugs Survey</p> <p>Grace Burn, from 9 am hosted by HEWI with Mt Toolebewong & District Landcare welcome.</p>
<p>Sunday 7th May 1:30 – 3:30pm</p>	<p>Healesville's Future Climate and Its Impacts On Us - The Memo, Healesville</p> <p>1.30 - 3.30 pm. Climate Change expert Prof David Karoly will present on the impacts of climate change for Healesville followed by a discussion by the Healesville Community Emergency Group on plans for an Emergency Hub to be activated in the event of future fire, flood or storm emergencies. More details and free registrations https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/590670971777</p>
<p>Saturday 27th May 9am – 4:30pm</p>	<p>First Aid Training</p> <p>Council is offering free First Aid training at Monbulk on Sat 27 May, 9 am – 4.30 pm. Bookings required https://au.openforms.com/Form/a0bf0043-b0f0-4c1d-aaca-3cde9f006159</p>
<p>Sunday 28th May 9:30 - Noon</p>	<p>Community Planting event Coronation Park</p> <p>9:30- noon. All members of the community, and groups which have planted an area along the Watts River, are invited to celebrate 21 years of plantings at this site. BYO cup for a drink and your gloves. Free morning tea provided. RSVP for catering to admin@hewi.org.au by Friday 26 May.</p>
<p>Sun 28 May 2 – 4pm</p>	<p>Bob Brown documentary, The Giants</p> <p>2-4 pm, hosted by HEWI at The Memo. Bob Brown documentary “The Giants” . Free afternoon tea. Tickets at Memo prices.</p>