

SUMMER 21-22, ISSUE 3

THE BABBLER

The official e-newsletter of the Buloke and Northern
Grampians Landcare Network



WHAT A YEAR!

BY ANDREW BORG, FACILITATOR BNGLN

Hello Everyone! This edition of 'The Babblers' forms our Annual Report, in preparation for our AGM to be held at Wycheproof on 21 Mar 22 - and what a year it has been!

Despite enduring another year of pandemic, our Network Groups and Volunteers have continued to excel and make significant improvements to the health of our regional landscapes. Our important work here hasn't gone unnoticed; and we were rewarded with the Landcare Network Award at the Victorian Landcare Awards late last year. You can read all about this, and more, in this edition.

I hope you enjoy this latest issue of *your* e-zine.

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION TO A DIFFICULT YEAR

In what has been another frustrating year - with restrictions making life very difficult for the Network to meet and plan - the year ended very successfully.

My thanks go to the members of the BNGLN Steering Committee for persevering to ensure that everything was completed in a timely and efficient manner.

Due to the excellent work of our facilitator, Andrew Borg, we successfully applied for many grants, the most significant being the Regenerative Agriculture Project.

Our thanks to the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) for Federal funding for the project, and North Central Catchment Management Authority's Regenerative Agriculture Project for the State funded portion.

Two new groups were also formed, and it was pleasing to see a younger demographic being engaged.

For our efforts, we won the Network Award at the Victorian Landcare Awards. All involved should be very proud of this achievement.

It was also extremely heartening to see that previously-inactive member groups have begun to re-invigorate, apply for grants and to prepare themselves to do even more on-ground works in our region.

We look forward to another successful year, though it will be hard to top last year's award!

Cheers,

Ken



Ken Coates - President, BNGLN



SUCCESS FOR OUR NETWORK

In 2021/22, we were rewarded for our collective efforts via two separate award ceremonies.

VICTORIAN LANDCARE AWARDS - LANDCARE NETWORK AWARD

Buloke and Northern Grampians Landcare Network (BNGLN) was awarded the prestigious Landcare Network Award at the 2021 Victorian Landcare Awards, held in November.

Unfortunately, COVID meant that we couldn't attend the ceremony in-person, originally to be held at Government House. Instead, network members watched the online awards ceremony via Zoom, as Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio announced BNGLN as the winner.

The award is made to an outstanding Landcare network (for efforts in 2020-2021) that foster sustainable land use; through the adoption of improved land management practices to protect, enhance or restore a significant area on behalf of the community.

No doubt, a significant influence in 'getting the nod' for this award was the Network's creation of the Kara Kara Regenerative Ag Group, which continues to go from strength to strength (*more on that later!*).

There is also no question that 2020-2021 was a challenging period for community projects, yet, the network coordinated 28 revegetation projects, which saw 20,032 seedlings established across 32 hectares of the region. Other activities in the past year included network members attending rabbit management workshops which resulted in approximately 7,000 hectares of both private and public land being surveyed to develop ongoing rabbit management treatments. Additionally, biodiversity surveys were completed in the network area, invasive weeds were treated, erosion scours were fixed, and rubbish removed from waterways and bushland.

The Steering Committee, and Facilitator, were very thrilled to have the BNGLN recognised through this award, and gratefully accepted it on behalf of all of our Groups and Members.



Network Award Certificate. This and other awards will be displayed around our region over the next few months.



The Keep Victoria Beautiful Awards were also held online this year!

KEEP VICTORIA BEAUTIFUL AWARDS

The Network was also pleased to accept a 'Highly Commended' award from Keep Victoria Beautiful (Community - Environment category).

This award was presented in recognition of the '**BNG BioBlitz**' project. The BioBlitz (now entering its third year), seeks to get the community back out into nature, through walks, talks and Citizen Science activities.



A RUNDOWN ON GRANT FUNDING, SINCE THE LAST AGM (FEB 21)

Our Network's success rests on the ability to generate funding and partnerships. Since the last AGM in February, we - and our member groups - have been fortunate to secure several significant grants which allow us to continue our on-ground works. A total of **\$355,624** (inc GST) in Grants has been received for our area during this period..

Smart Farms Small Grants (April 21) - \$109,763.50

This Grant was provided to enable the formation of the Kara Kara Regenerative Agriculture Group (KKRAG), the development of two trial/demonstration sites, and the contracting of several guest speakers to talk on various regenerative agriculture topics.

NCCMA Regenerative Agriculture Program (July 21) - \$49,500

This Grant enables the conduct of additional activities for the KKRAG. From this activity the KKRAG Group Strategic Plan was developed, and several additional activities - including soil health, multi-species cropping, erosion management and other regenerative agriculture elements have commenced.

Adapt Grampians (January 22) - \$29,700

This grant, provided by DELWP, will allow for the conduct of several community events in St. Arnaud. These events (scheduled for April and May 22) will seek to 'normalise' the discussions about Climate Change and facilitate resilience to its effects throughout the St. Arnaud District.

GRANT FUNDING (CONT.)

Victorian Rabbit Action Network Grant (March 21) - \$5,456 (plus extension AgVic/Parks Vic ~\$18,000) (March 22)

The BNGLN - on behalf of Avon Plains-Banyena Landcare Group - was successful in obtaining a Victorian Rabbit Action Network grant. These funds allowed for the engagement of Agriculture Victoria to conduct workshops and demonstrations on best practice Rabbit Pest Management. As part of this activity, volunteers mapped 100s of rabbit activity sites, which were uploaded to the 'feral scan' app.

Due to the success and commitment of this community-led program, Agriculture Victoria allocated an additional \$15,000 (for their expenditure) to commence a 'Good Neighbours' rabbit management program in the Avon Plains area. AgVic staff have spent the last few weeks in the area working with landowners and managers to manage the rabbit issue. Parks Victoria have allocated an additional \$3,000 (approximately) for rabbit control costs.

Northern Grampians Shire - Community Grants 2021 (May 21) - \$2,959

This grant was provided to assist with the conduct of the BNG BioBlitz. This activity consisted of school engagements, group nature walks at various locations (when allowed by COVID!), Landcare popup information sites and the recording of Spring biodiversity across our entire Network area. The observations and photographs will also be used to compile a Spring flowering-native-plants guide for the Kara Kara National Park.

Field Naturalists Club of Victoria (March 21) - \$789.80

This grant provides funding for the production of a book "Walks on Country" which will be comprised of photos taken by BNG BioBlitz participants.

15 Trees (Apr 21) - 3,525 Trees (valued at \$4,935)

Once again, our wonderful partners at **15 Trees** in Ballarat funded a total of 3,525 trees, which were planted across our network.



The Field
Naturalists
Club of
Victoria



GRANT FUNDING (CONT.)

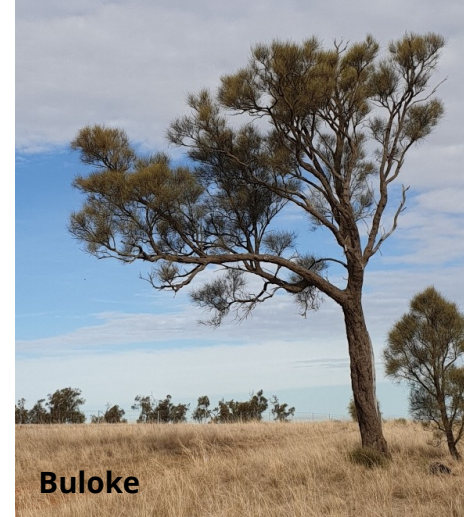
Victorian Landcare Grants

Network Member Groups received several **Victoria Landcare Grants** in the 21-22 funding round.

The BNGLN received **\$28,776** to conduct **Project Windharp**. This Project will investigate the health of remnant Buloke populations throughout the Network area.

Wycheproof and District Landcare Group received about **\$6,000** to engage its local community, and to reinvigorate Landcare in the area.

Carapooee Landcare Group received **\$5,120** which will fund some nesting boxes for the area, as well as a 1200 tree plant-out as an extension to an existing biolink project.



The **KKRAG** received **\$23,210** to investigate wind and water erosion across the region in order to restore the agricultural landscape.

Winjallok Landcare Group will also manage some erosion issues, at two locations, and conduct a biolink plant-out. thanks to a VLG of **\$26,930**.



Nine other groups within our region each received **\$500 VLG Maintenance Grants**. Additionally, the Network received **\$57,985** to fund the **Landcare Facilitator position**.



A BRIEF LOOK AHEAD - 2022

Conversations on Climate Change (April/May)

The **Adapt Grampians Grant** (DELWP) will provide the opportunity for residents of the Northern Grampians Shire to come together in St Arnaud, and 'discuss the weather' over a cuppa. Partnering with **Make-a-Change Australia**, different themes will be discussed, at four different locations, covering Backyard Gardens, Upcycling, Future Farming and Community Resilience. For more information, visit www.bnglandcare.org

BNG BIOBLITZ (September/October)

The third **BioBlitz** will occur later in the year. Once again, we will be conducting Springtime walks, pop-up information displays and school sessions. In October, we will be competing in the Great Southern BioBlitz for the third year running. We did really well last year, showcasing our Biodiversity to countries all across the Southern Hemisphere. It would be wonderful to get more participants this year and see how many species we can find! Details of both the Spring Walks and the **Great Southern BioBlitz** will be advertised through print and Social Media, as well as e-mails to member groups. If you (or your group) want to be involved, just contact Andrew (Landcare Facilitator) at bnglandcare@gmail.com

BNGLN NETWORK AWARDS (November)

We need to ensure that we recognise members who have contributed significantly over our 35 year Landcare journey. Accordingly, we are continuing to seek nominations from member groups and individuals (past and present) to **nominate someone worthy of recognition**. Please contact Andrew (Landcare Facilitator) at bnglandcare@gmail.com

LANDCARE & HARMONY GARDENS - PROPOSED PROJECT

The Network was contacted by the **Raillery Hub in St. Arnaud** to assist with the development of garden spaces around the railway station. Our proposal is to design two gardens. The first will act as a tribute to the traditional owners of our area - the Dja Dja Wurrung - which will incorporate edible, native plants, sculptures and a yarn circle. The second will be a memorial to the 'pioneers' of our District. There's a lot of work to be done, but we are currently working on a proposal for funding the design. How good would it be if we could get this project off the ground, and then replicate it throughout the towns and localities in our Network area?

WORKING WITH THE DJA DJA WURRUNG - A CULTURAL EXCHANGE (PROPOSED PROJECT)

Forming partnerships is a key to reinvigorating Landcare, and finding a group focus in an often busy (and confusing) world. We are currently working with the Traditional Owners (TO) to develop a program of cultural exchange. This will include the prevalence of TO involvement in our activities, and a discussion of cultural artefact management and repatriation.

COLLECTING NATIVE SEEDS FOR THE FUTURE - A PARTNERSHIP WITH SEEDING VICTORIA (PROPOSED PROJECT)

Another new partnership is being developed with Seeding Victoria. Projects arising from this partnership will include native plant identification and seed collection workshops; and seed storage (at Creswick) as an 'insurance policy' for our future.



*The Babbl*er is a publication of the **Buloke and Northern Grampians Landcare Network**

Contact: Andrew - bnglandcare@gmail.com

Our Website: www.bnglandcare.org



We acknowledge that our Network performs its activities on Dja Dja Wurrung Country. We acknowledge and extend our appreciation for the Dja Dja Wurrung People, the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work. We pay our respects to leaders and Elders past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and the hopes of all Dja Dja Wurrung Peoples. We express our gratitude in the sharing of this land, our sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of that sharing and our hope that we may walk forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing.