



SUMMER 2025 / 2026

THE BABBLER

Newsletter of the
Buloke and Northern Grampians Landcare Network



SAVE THE DATE

29 March 2026

Hall of Fame &
40yr Anniversary of
Landcare



FROM THE GROUND UP - WE MAKE IT HAPPEN

Welcome to the Summer Edition of the Babbler.

I thank the Committee, Group members and our partners for such a warm welcome. I'm settling into the role with all your wonderful support. I'd also like to personally thank Andrew Borg for guiding me in the new role. I acknowledge Andrew's hard work and dedication in his time as BNGLN Facilitator. I have big shoes to fill (and not referring to Andrew's feet!!). Andrew, I wish you all the best in your new Facilitator role with Mid Loddon Sub Catchment Management Group.

I'm excited about the year ahead and working with each of you. It is really refreshing for me to work with like-minded people. The wealth of knowledge in the Network is wonderful and looking forward to learning from you all.

Get your thinking caps on about what projects you'd like to do in 2026. I'll be contacting you in the New Year.

Wishing you all a wonderful Xmas and a safe and happy New Year. Enjoy your time with family and friends and remember it is OK to have an afternoon snooze!

Cheers Jane

IN THIS NEWSLETTER

President's Report - Pg 2

AGM 2025 - Pg 3

Hall of Fame - Pg 4 to Pg 5

Projects - Pg 5

Awards - Pg 6

Group Reports - Pg 7 - 10

BNGLN Activity Calendar - Pg

11

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

A YEAR OF GROWTH AND IMPACT

Dear Members,

As we close out 2025 and find ourselves in the midst of harvest or the mad scramble before the end of the year, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on what we've achieved this year.

It's been 12 months since I stepped into the President's role, and although it took a little while for me to settle in, I'm excited about the direction we're heading. A special welcome to Jane, our new Facilitator, who has already made a tremendous impact in supporting our projects and bringing fresh energy to the team.

This year, we:

- Planted 1200 native trees revegetating 3.5ha
- Secured \$94,691 in grant funding for 6 projects
- Bought an equipment trailer
- Hosted 4 events
- Hosted 5 workshops
- Received additional funding for the Facilitator role

None of this would be possible without the passion and hard work of our volunteers and the support of our funding partners.

Next year marks 40 years of Landcare with our very own Winjallok as the birthplace.

We have exciting plans to host another Hall of Fame event to coincide with this momentous occasion and celebrate all our volunteers - past and present.

With your help, I'm confident that together we'll continue to make a meaningful difference to our local environment. Thank you for being part of this journey.

Wishing you a safe and successful harvest and a well-earned rest over the holiday season.

Maddie
President



Maddie Grant - President, BNGLN

AGM 2025

The AGM was held on 17 October 2025 at the beautiful Summerfield Winery in Moonambel. It was a terrific evening with a great turnout.

The new Committee has been elected as follows:

- President: Maddie Grant
- Vice President: Adam Campbell
- Treasurer: Luke Batters
- Secretary: Carol Campbell
- Committee Members: Liz Russell, Ken Coates, David Pollard, Prue McAlister and Debra Jenkins

Congratulations to Maddie, Adam, Luke, Carol, Liz, Ken, David, Prue and Debra.

A summary of business from the AGM:

- Transitioning to a Board is on hold atm
- BNGLN now holds charitable status
- Rules of Association changed in relation to Deductible Gift Recipient status
- Windharp Horizons Action Plan nominated for the Victorian Volunteering Awards and the Tidy Towns Award
- Farewell to Andrew Borg and welcome to Jane Bowker as Facilitator
- Current project - Partnerships Against Pests & Climate Positive Farming Initiative
- Treasurers Report circulated with \$118,000 in the bank

The full set of AGM minutes can be found on the BNGLN website.



Plenty of socialising and chatter



Guest Speaker Rob Youl speaking about Global Landcare





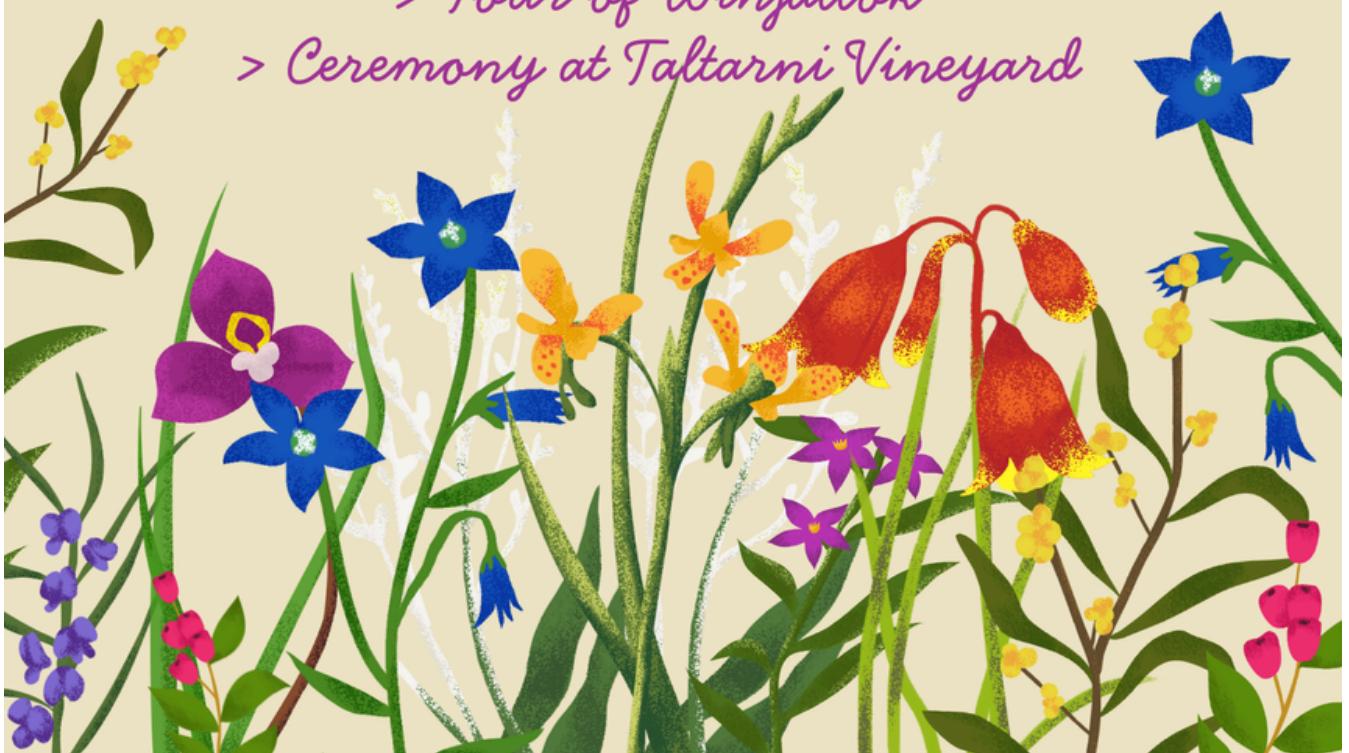
SAVE THE DATE

29 March 2026

*Buloke and Northern Grampians
Landcare Network*

Hall of Fame & 40yr Anniversary of Landcare

- > Tour of Winjallok
- > Ceremony at Taltarni Vineyard



2026 BNGLN HALL OF FAME

The 2026 BNGLN Hall of Fame ceremony will be held on Sunday 29 March 2026 at the beautiful Taltarni Vinyard in Moonambel. The Hall of Fame is a special occasion to celebrate the wonderful work that BNGLN volunteers do. This event coincides with the 40-year anniversary of Landcare which was officially launched in 1986 by Joan Kirner and Heather Mitchell. Landcare was born in Winjallok with a group of farmers and community members planting trees and caring for the environment well before Landcare was officially recognised. The day will start with a tour around Winjallok followed by the Hall of Fame ceremony. More details will be provided.

Nominations

Do you know someone or a group that makes our environment a better place? If so, why not nominate them for a Hall of Fame award to recognise their tireless efforts and outstanding contribution to caring for the environment in the BNGLN area.

The nomination form will be sent out shortly. The form can be emailed to info@bnglandcare.org or posted to PO Box 244, St Arnaud Vic 3478

You can also complete the form online on the BNGLN website.

For more information, please contact Maddie Grant or Jane Bowker.

PROJECTS 2026 →

It's time to get your thinking caps on and start planning your group's projects for 2026 and beyond, if you haven't already. Landcare grants will be opening soon along with other grants so it would be great to have a list of projects you'd like to do. Jane will be in contact in early 2026 to start working through projects with your group.

For help and support, on planning, events, grant applications please contact Jane.

AWARDS

KEEP AUSTRALIA BEAUTIFUL AWARD

A huge congratulations to the Network!

We're thrilled to be the winner of the Environment Category at the 43rd Annual Tidy Towns & Cities Sustainability Awards, presented by Keep Australia Beautiful VIC.

This award is for the incredible work done to produce the Windharp Horizons project, developed through the New Futures for Victorian Landcare program.

Windharp Horizons lays out an exciting vision for the next 20 years, with the goal of revitalising 700,000 hectares in our region. It's all about promoting sustainable farming and environmental practices, reconnecting fragmented ecosystems, and protecting unique local species.

New Futures is a \$1.9m two-year pilot program, delivered by Landcare Victoria and proudly supported by the Natural Resources Conservation Trust and The Ian Potter Foundation.



Pictured is (L-R) Keep Australia Beautiful Victoria CEO Josh Reid Jones, Landcare Victoria CEO Claire Hetzel, Buleoke and Northern Grampians Landcare Network's Andrew Borg and Landcare Victoria Project Manager Anthony Gallacher.



VICTORIAN VOLUNTEER AWARD

Congratulations again to the Network!

We're also thrilled to be a finalist in the Volunteering Partnerships Award at the Victorian Volunteering Awards 2025.

This award is again for the incredible work done to produce the Windharp Horizons project, developed through the New Futures for Victorian Landcare program.

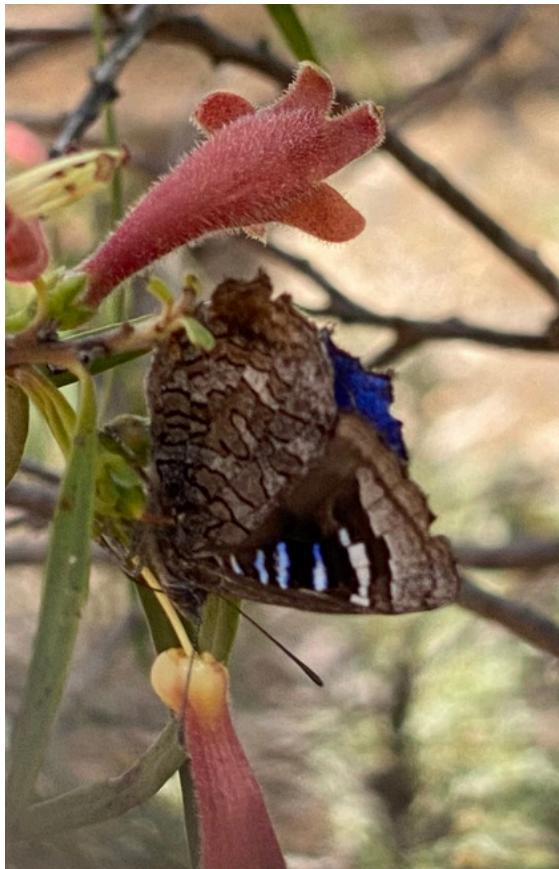
While we didn't take out the big award, it is a real honour to be nominated and to be a finalist. Well done to everyone involved, you're awesome!!



GROUP REPORTS

DONALD AND DISTRICT LANDCARE GROUP

WOW WEE MOMENT -
THANKS FOR SHARING



Significant Flora and Fauna at the Donald Field and Game Reserve (by Liz Russell)

During a recent project undertaken at the Donald Field and Game Reserve, I completed the identification and labelling of significant trees and plant species within the reserve boundary. This work contributes to ongoing ecological awareness as part of an environment plan which the club was funded for by Shooting Victoria, it supports conservation efforts managed by the Field and Game Association.

Endangered Australian Azure Butterfly (*Ogyris* spp.)

While conducting the labelling project, I observed an iridescent blue butterfly known as an Australian Azure, a species recognised as endangered and vulnerable in several regions.

The butterfly was recorded actively feeding on the nectar of *Eremophila longifolia* (commonly known as Weeping Emu-bush), highlighting the ecological significance of habitat preservation within the reserve.

The Donald Field and Game Reserve contains a diverse range of native vegetation, including numerous untouched and mature species characteristic of Buloke/Black Box grassland ecosystems. These habitats are increasingly rare in Victoria and are critical for supporting biodiversity, including vulnerable insect and bird species.

The identification and labelling project has increased awareness among Field and Game members regarding the ecological value of their reserve. Members are now more informed about the presence of endangered species and significant native plants and are committed to maintaining and protecting these environmental assets. This aligns with their long-standing stewardship of the land.



FRIENDS OF MOUNT WYCHEPROOF

Celebrate a mountain of work on International Mountain Day (by Jackie Noonan)



On International Mountain Day, the Friends of Mount Wycheaproof reaffirmed that Landcare is as much about people as it is about place, with local volunteers working together to protect, restore and celebrate the natural, cultural and water values.

The Friends of Mount Wycheaproof (FoMW) continue to demonstrate that caring for landscapes begins at a local level. Since 2020, the group has marked International Mountain Day (IMD), officially recognised by the United Nations, to highlight the environmental, cultural and social importance of mountains and the vital role they play in healthy ecosystems and resilient communities. Held as close as possible to the official IMD date of 11 December, the 2025 celebration showcased FoMW's ongoing commitment to land stewardship, biodiversity protection and community-led environmental action on Mount Wycheaproof, the world's smallest registered mountain, yet one of significant ecological and community value.

Community Care in Action: Gather & Work

Throughout 2025, FoMW adopted a practical and inclusive approach to caring for the land, through its regular 'Gather & Work' sessions. These informal working bees alternate with monthly formal meetings and bring volunteers together on the mount to address priority environmental tasks while fostering shared responsibility for the landscape.

Recent activities have focused on litter removal, targeted weed management and tackling persistent invasive species such as Sedum, with planning underway for steam weeder usage and gazania control. Broader discussions on IMD centred on improving grassland health, enhancing habitat values, and maintaining the overall presentation of the precinct for both ecological outcomes and sustainable tourism.

FoMW also identified the need for specialist support to assist with complex plant identification, reinforcing the group's evidence-based approach to land management.



Another key focus has been the revitalisation of the historic Kurrajong Tree plantation, including watering and conservation works, with a formal re-launch planned for Anzac Day 2026, noting the trees were originally planted to honour servicemen from across the district.

A Mountain Tribute with a Global Perspective

Adding a unique dimension to the day, FoMW welcomed Ambulance Victoria paramedic and mountaineer Alison Bowen as a special guest. Alison is currently based in Ouyen and boasts an extraordinary mountaineering résumé that includes summiting Mount Everest and nearing completion of the Seven Summits* challenge. Alison climbed Mount Wycheaproof following the morning's 'Gather & Work' activities.

Photo: this is Alison at the summit of Mt Everest (not on the top of Mt Wycheaproof!!)



FRIENDS OF MOUNT WYCHEPROOF CONT.

Treating the ascent with the same respect as her international expeditions, Alison spoke about weather assessment, risk management and environmental awareness, reinforcing that mountains, regardless of size, deserve care and consideration. Her presence highlighted the universal value of mountains and the shared responsibility to protect them, from the highest peaks to local landmarks.

Alison shared fascinating insights from her summit adventure experiences spanning the globe, talking through equipment items she had brought along for display too, alongside engaging with FoMW volunteers, community members, Buloke Shire Mayor Cr Graeme Milne and representatives from Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water (GWMWater). FoMW President, Martin Duke commented '*Hearing Alison speak about mountains from around the world reinforced that, regardless of scale, these environments deserve respect and thoughtful care. Mount Wycheproof may be small, but our responsibility to manage it sustainably and ensure safe, respectful access for all, is just as significant*'.

Celebrating Water, Heritage and Environmental Education

A highlight of the day was the official launch of a commemorative storyboard recognising the historic water basin on Mount Wycheproof and its critical role in local water supply and distribution. The project was led by local historian Allan 'Prof' Milburn, a member of both the Wycheproof Historical Society and FoMW, in collaboration with GWMWater.

The thoughtfully designed storyboard documents the basin's history while serving as an educational resource for walkers, visitors and schools. Installed in the rotunda, a natural pause point for those exploring the mount, the signage connects water history alongside encouraging conversation.

FoMW volunteer Alex Morrison assisted with the installation and crafted a custom frame using repurposed local timber, reflecting the group's strong ethos of reuse and environmental responsibility.

GWMWater's involvement reinforced its commitment to supporting regional communities and environmental education. The team also shared water-wise resources on the day, alongside introducing their well-known mascot, 'Phil the Bucket', who prompted practical conversations about conservation and responsible water use via meaningful resource giveaways.

Local Action, Lasting Impact

International Mountain Day in Wycheproof was a timely reminder that meaningful Landcare outcomes are achieved through collaboration, local knowledge and sustained community effort. Through hands-on conservation work, environmental education and partnerships with organisations such as local Landcare networks, local government and water authorities like GWM Water, FoMW continues to protect and enhance this unique landscape for future generations.

In a year marked by steady progress and shared purpose, FoMW demonstrated that when communities come together, even the smallest mountain can make a significant environmental impact.

International Mountain Day reminds us that mountains play a vital role in ecological health and community wellbeing. In caring for Mount Wycheproof, the FoMW continue to prove that meaningful Landcare action is built through steady effort, community partnerships and a shared responsibility for the landscapes that define our communities.



FRIENDS OF MOUNT WYCHEPROOF CONT.

*What is 'The Seven Summits' Challenge?

The Seven Summits is a coveted mountaineering challenge that sees climbers tackle some of the world's tallest mountains in order to reach the highest peaks located on each of the seven continents. Despite being no small feat, over the years there has been a rise in popularity of this prestigious challenge as an increasing number of people make an attempt to reach the peaks.



L-R: Cr Graeme Milne (Buloke Shire Council Mayor), Alison Bowen (Paramedic Mountaineer), Robbie Somers (GWM Water Rep), Martin Duke (President FoMW), and Phil the Bucket (GMW Water Wise Mascot)



L-R Buloke Shire Council Mayor Cr Graeme Milne (back to camera), Robbie Somers, Phil the Bucket, Alison Bowen, Prof Milburn (back to camera), Martin Duke.

Water Basin Storyboard Unveiling - history meets stewardship, unveiling of the Mount Wycheproof water basin storyboard, celebrating local water heritage and future-focused Landcare.



(Pictured: Phil the Bucket, Robbie Somers and Alison Bowen (Paramedic Mountaineer)).



When weeds mount up, volunteers step up, Alex Morrison's ute is loaded full of hard-won results from hands-on Landcare on Mount Wycheproof.

BNGLN ACTIVITY CALENDAR

This calendar is for BNGLN group activities. Please let Jane know of any up-and-coming activities/events. These will also be listed on the BNGLN website

DATE/TIME	ACTIVITY	WHERE	DETAILS
29/03/2026	BNGLN - 40 Year Anniversary of Landcare and Hall of Fame	Winjallock then Taltarni Vinyard, Moonambel	Tour of Winjallock where Landcare started then lunch and Hall of Fame event at Taltarni
25/04/2026	Friends of Mt Wycheproof - ANZAC Day	Mt Wycheproof	Friends of Mt Wycheproof and Wycheproof RSL sub-branch are hosting a re-dedication of a lost WW1 avenue of honour
12/04/2026	Bi-monthly working bee	Mt Wycheproof	
14/06/2026	Bi-monthly working bee	Mt Wycheproof	
12/07/2026	BNGLN - Xmas in July	TBC - somewhere warm!	For all group members to get together
02/08/2026	Bi-monthly working bee	Mt Wycheproof	
04/10/2026	Bi-monthly working bee	Mt Wycheproof	
13/12/2026	International Mountain Day	Mt Wycheproof	Working bee and event

The Babbler is a publication of the
Buloke and Northern Grampians Landcare Network

The Babbler is produced quarterly - Summer, Autumn, Winter and Spring.

If you would like to receive a copy of the Babbler, please contact Jane via the details below. The Babbler is also available on the Network's website.

If you would like to place an article in the Babbler, get in touch with Jane.

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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 Custodians of the land on which we work and volunteer. We pay our respects to leaders and Elders past and present 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.

