SPRING 2026

THE BABBLER

Newsletter of the
Buloke and Northern Grampians Landcare Network



Salmon Sun Orchid



Eastern Mantis Orchid



Purple Bearded Orchid

Welcome to the Spring Edition of The Babbler!

As the days grow longer and the landscape comes alive with colour and activity, spring is the perfect time to celebrate the people, projects and partnerships making a difference across our region. In this edition, you'll find updates from local Landcare groups, upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, and stories showcasing the remarkable work being undertaken to enhance and protect our natural environment.

Thank you to everyone who continues to contribute their time, knowledge and passion to caring for our landscapes. Your dedication helps create healthier ecosystems, stronger communities, and a more resilient future for our region.

As this will be the final edition of The Babbler for 2026, we would also like to take this opportunity to wish all our members, volunteers, supporters and partners a safe and happy Christmas and New Year. Thank you for your ongoing support throughout the year. We look forward to sharing more Landcare stories and successes with you when The Babbler returns in 2027.

Happy reading, and best wishes for the festive season! 🌿🎄🐦

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40 YEAR CELEBRATION



If you're looking for something to do on Saturday 14 November, come along to the 40 Years of Landcare celebration. It starts at 10am and will be held at Camp Seed in Stuart Mill. There will be a line-up of great speakers - Annette Cavanagh (winner of the 2026 Next Gen Landcare Award), local farmer Luke Batters talks about biodiversity on farms research and a reflection on the past 40 years with Landcare legend Rob Youl OAM. We'll also recognise long serving committee members of Landcare groups in the region.

This event is FREE, but registrations for catering purposes are essential.

Afterwards, head into the Raillery Hub in St Arnaud for the opening of the Riverine Art Exhibition at 2pm (showcasing magnificent artwork by John Wolsley and others over 40 years on the Richardson River); or pop out to Luke Batters' property to learn more about how they are incorporating biodiversity on farm; or explore the magnificent Wax Gardens in nearby Kara Kara National Park on a self-guided walk.

For more details and to register head to our Eventbrite page.

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Buloke & Northern Grampians Landcare Network is excited to introduce our newly elected Committee for 2026/2027. These dedicated volunteers bring a wealth of experience, knowledge, passion, and community spirit to the Network. Together, they will help guide BNGLN as we continue supporting Landcare groups, delivering environmental projects, building partnerships, and creating opportunities for our communities to care for the landscapes we all value.

Please join us in welcoming:

- 🌿 President: Adam Campbell
- 🌿 Vice President: David Pollard
- 🌿 Secretary: Carol Campbell
- 🌿 Minute Secretary: Liz Russell
- 🌿 Treasurer: Luke Batters
- 🌿 Committee Members: Ken Coates, Prue McAllister, Debra Jenkins, Brian Melican and Marnie Durie

The future of Landcare is built on the dedication of volunteers, and we are grateful to have such a passionate team helping shape the next chapter of BNGLN.

VOTE FOR YOUR FAVOURITE PHOTOS

People's Choice voting is now open for the Picture Our Place photo competition. We received amazing photos so please have a look and vote for your favourite photo. Voting closes 19 November. Go to https://surveymars.com/q/TrQU7kXZh



WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

Avon Plains Banyena Landcare Group

During our work with the Striped Legless Lizard (SLL) we also compiled a list of flora species for the area. By this Spring (2026) we had amassed over 107 native plant species present on the site.

During our final survey for the SLL in October 2026, we added the Critically Endangered Flax-lily, Dianella longifolia var grandis to the list.

Leaf width is an identifier- 25mm when most other dianellas are 12mm or so. The plant itself stands tall and flowering stems are robust and are up to 1.2m tall. It can be found on roadsides (unploughed) and wet areas.





Avon Plains Banyena Landcare Group

Below are photos of some of the recent workshops and onsite actions.













Friends of Mt Wycheproof Landcare Group

Mount Wycheproof is a Reserve that directly adjoins the Wycheproof P-12 College. The school has a tremendous advantage to have such a great natural asset beside it. They undertake environmental studies and biology classes on the Mount itself.

Also the Year 12 students address the whole school as part of their farewells. These are carried out on one of the (late 1800s to early 1900's) stone quarries on the Reserve, which double as amphitheatres.
The attached photos show the 2026 edition held in mid October 2026, as well as the similar event in October 2025. Part of an ongoing tradition.

The Wycheproof people are most grateful to have such a wonderful playground for exploring or just enjoying the quiet; absorbing the natural ambience, and the tremendous views to the flat horizons all round. And the Friends of Mt Wycheproof are pleased to help preserve and improve the natural jewell on our doorstep.







Natte Yallock Landcare Group

Natte Yallock Landcare Group recently enhanced an existing rock structure in the Avoca River north of Natte Yallock to raise the water level. The structure has raised the water level up about 1.5m to a level that was back in the 1950s. The group is working with Fisheries Victoria to create a fish habitat in this area which will be restocked with fish.









GAZANIAS

A pretty flower with a big environmental cost

BEAUTIFUL IN GARDENS.
A THREAT IN OUR LANDSCAPES.



Originally introduced from South Africa as a garden ornamental, **Gazania (Gazania spp.)** has escaped cultivation and become naturalised across many parts of Victoria. It is commonly found along roadsides, coastal dunes, grasslands, disturbed bushland and urban fringes and reserves where it spreads rapidly and outcompetes native vegetation.

WHY ARE GAZANIAS A PROBLEM?

They smother native plants
Gazanias form dense mats that crowd out indigenous grasses, wildflowers and groundcovers, reducing biodiversity and preventing native regeneration.

They reduce wildlife habitat
As native vegetation disappears, food and shelter for birds, insects and other wildlife are diminished, reducing habitat quality across natural landscapes.

They impact agriculture
Gazanias are increasingly invading farming areas, including parts of Victoria's Mallee region, where they compete with crops and pastures and increase management costs.

They are difficult to control
Their success comes from:

- High seed production
- Spread by seed and underground rhizomes
- Drought and heat tolerance
- Ability to thrive in poor soils and disturbed areas

These traits allow gazanias to establish quickly and persist for many years.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Small actions make a big difference

- **Avoid** planting gazanias in gardens.
- **Remove** existing infestations before they spread.
- **Dispose** of garden waste responsibly (don't dump in bushland or on roadsides).
- **Replace** gazanias with indigenous groundcovers and wildflowers.
- **Report** significant infestations to local land managers where appropriate.

KEY MESSAGE

While attractive in gardens, gazanias are an invasive environmental weed that can smother native vegetation, degrade wildlife habitat and invade productive farmland. Preventing their spread is an important step in protecting Victoria's natural landscapes.

Healthy landscapes support thriving wildlife



CHOOSE INDIGENOUS ALTERNATIVES INSTEAD

Local plants. Lasting benefits.



Common Everlasting
(*Chrysocephalum apiculatum*)

- Bright yellow flowers
- Attracts pollinators
- Hardy and drought tolerant



Creeping Boobialla
(*Myoporum parvifolium*)

- Dense, hardy groundcover
- Great for weed suppression
- Drought tolerant



Running Postman
(*Kennedia prostrata*)

- Showy red flowers
- Supports native wildlife
- Fast-growing groundcover



Native Pigface
(*Carpobrotus modestus*)

- Striking pink-purple flowers
- Ideal for sandy and coastal sites
- Drought tolerant

Swap gazanias for local native plants

AND HELP PROTECT VICTORIA'S GRASSLANDS, BUSHLAND AND COASTAL ENVIRONMENTS.

Victoria's Nature Our Future

Healthy Landscapes Brighter Tomorrows

Sources: Victorian Resources Online (VRO) | Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria (VicFlora) | Agriculture Victoria | ABC Gardening Australia

GRANTS

FRRR (Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal)
FRRR has Strengthening Rural Communities grants open at the moment. There are two streams - Small & Vital and also Capacity Building. Both close on 3 December 2027 🌱

Learn more and apply
🌱 https://frrr.org.au/funding/src-small-vital/
🌱 https://frrr.org.au/funding/fdf-communities/capacity-building/

FUNDING & SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES

Below are some programs that may be of interest. Even if you're unsure whether you're eligible, it's worth making a phone call to find out.

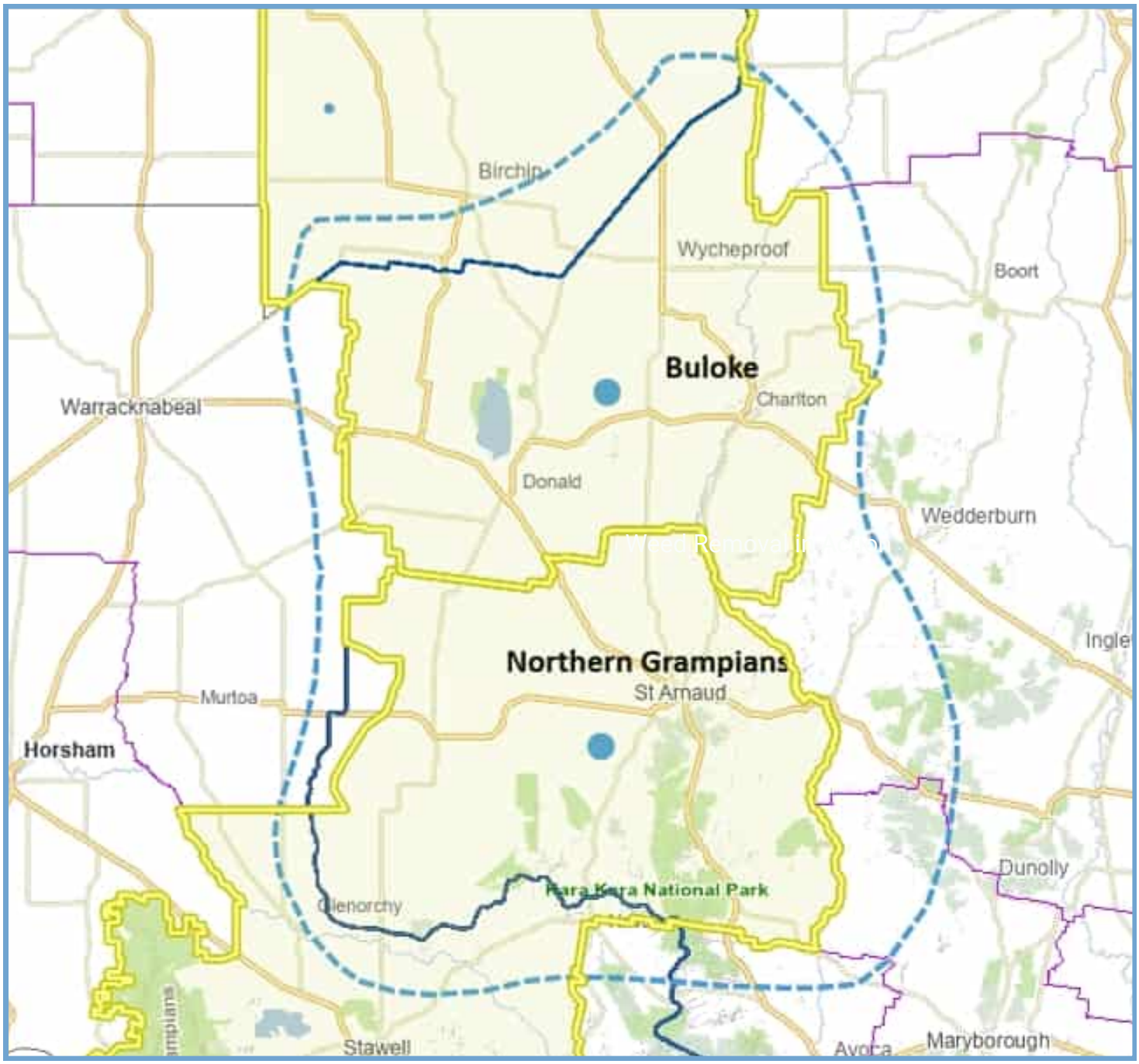
BushBank (Cassinia Environmental)
BushBank helps private landholders restore and protect native vegetation on their properties. Funded by the Victorian Government, successful applicants receive funding, technical guidance, and potentially assistance with project delivery.
Phone: 1300 572 164
Website: https://cassinia.com/bushbank/

Nature on Farms (Biolinks Alliance)
Nature on Farms supports farmers to use natural assets such as native vegetation, shelterbelts, grasslands, dams and large old trees to improve farm resilience, soil health, water retention and productivity. The program aims to help farming communities better adapt to drought and climate change.
Phone: 0422 227 471
Website: https://biolinksalliance.org.au/nature-on-farms

Climate Positive Farming Initiative (North Central CMA)
This initiative provides workshops and field days to help farmers improve soil health and build climate resilience. Topics are driven by local interest and may include practices such as subsoil manuring, gypsum application and compost use. North Central CMA is seeking feedback on topics and speakers that would be most valuable to local farmers. If you have ideas, please contact your Landcare Facilitator, Jane.
Phone: 0477 092 466
Website:
https://nccma.vic.gov.au/media/documents/Carbon_Positive_Farming_Iniatitive_EoI.pdf

OUR LANDCARE GROUPS

Below is a map of the Buloke and Northern Grampians Landcare Network's (BNGLN) network area. The network spans the townships of Wycheproof, Donald, Charlton, St Arnaud, Stuart Mill and Natte Yallock, as well as numerous smaller rural communities. Covering a diverse agricultural and natural landscape, the BNGLN supports landholders, community groups and volunteers to protect and enhance biodiversity, improve land management practices, and build resilient, connected landscapes across the region.



OUR LANDCARE GROUPS

GROUP	CONTACT DETAILS		
Avon Plains Banyena Landcare Group	Dougal McAllister	0407 756 214	avonplains@gmail.com
Callawadda Landcare Group	Jock McGregor	03 5359 8245	mcgregor772@bigpond.com
Carapooee Landcare Group	Barry Robertson	0408 966 564	earthwood@activ8.net.au
Charlton Landcare Group	Tessa Fitzpatrick	0437 621 898	charltonlandcare@gmail.com
Donald and District Landcare Group	Liz Russell	(03) 5497 1682	peterussell@iinet.net.au
Donald Natural History Group	Ann Dunstan	0427 976 208	donaldhistorysociety@gmail.com
Emu Landcare Group	Don Erwin		dserwin@outlook.com.au
Friends of Blue Gum Rise	Debra Borg	0457 044 774	acdlborg@gmail.com
Friends of Mount Wycheproof	Martin Duke	0458 788 747	friendsofmountwycheproof@gmail.com
Glenloth East Landcare Group	Robert Elder	03 5429 2917	rojann468@bigpond.com
Jeffcott North Landcare Group	Adam Campbell	0428 308 708	springbank@optusnet.com.au
Kara Kara Regen Ag Group	Luke Batters	0458 885 266	lukebatters@bigpond.com
Kooreh Landcare Group	Brenda Proctor	0427 331 171	proctorj@activ8.net.au
Natte Yallock Landcare Group	Alan Streeter	0419 594 181	nattelandcare@gmail.com
St Arnaud Field Naturalists Club	Anne Hughes	0419 632 688	starnaudfieldnats@gmail.com
Winjallok Landcare Group	Travis Fernandes	0427 098 332	travs454@gmail.com
Wycheproof & District Landcare Group	Marney Durie	0488 294 784	wycheprooflandcare@gmail.com

Interested in making a difference in your local environment? The BNGLN Landcare groups welcome volunteers of all ages and experience levels. Whether you're passionate about native vegetation, wildlife, sustainable farming, community projects, or simply meeting like-minded people, there are many ways to get involved. Contact your local Landcare group to learn about upcoming events, volunteering opportunities, and projects helping to care for and restore our region's landscapes.

BNGLN ACTIVITY CALENDAR

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

DATE/TIME	ACTIVITY	WHERE	DETAILS
14/11/2026 10am	40yr celebration of Landcare	Camp Seed, Stuart Mill	https://www.nccma.vic.gov.au/media-events/events/celebrating-40-years-of-landcare/
14/11/2026 11am	Aussie Wildlife Displays	St Arnaud Market	
14/11/2026 2pm	Opening of Riverine Exhibition & Workshop	Raillery Hub, St Arnaud	https://starnaudgallery.com.au/exhibitions/riverine/
15/11/2026 10am	Working Bee	Natte Yallock CFA station	For more information call Alan Streeter on 0419 591 181
13/12/2026	Bi-monthly working bee	Mt Wycheproof	

Weed Removal in Action

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 the Landcare Facilitator, 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.

Contact: Jane Bowker, Network Facilitator
E: info@bnglandcare.org
M: 0477 092 566

Our Website: www.bnglandcare.org
Our Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/bnglandcarenetwork



We acknowledge that our Network performs its activities on Dja Dja Wurrung and Barengi Gadjin Country. We acknowledge and extend our appreciation for the Dja Dja Wurrung and Barengi Gadjin peoples, the Traditional Custodians of the country 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 First Nations Peoples. We express our gratitude in the sharing of this Country, 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.