

PRESIDENTS REPORT

August 2015

Barrabool Hills Landcare Group AGM

When I came to write this report, to jog my memory I went back through the groups bimonthly newsletters, and I must admit I was quietly chuffed at all that our community are involved in!

The newsletters are a fountain of information! How exciting is it to experience first hand the establishment of Geoff and Joan Anson's new "forest" in "The diary of a budding agroforester". This is a wonderful example of the partnerships our landcare community fosters, Geoff and Joan have an Otway Agroforestry mentor to support their project, they received some funding from the Geelong Landcare Network's Biodiversity Grant and the planting of the trees. shrubs and grasses on their site was done with the help of the ATO "Green Team" and students from the Gordon TAFE.

Also we are extraordinarily fortunate to have been able to tap into Treeholme Nursery's Stephen Murphy's amazing knowledge about our local native vegetation. His series of articles, "The Flora of the Hills", in the last four editions of the newsletter I believe will become a "best seller", or perhaps we could convince him to produce a coffee table book!

Jim Seager seems to be able to hit the nail on the head with his regular "Farm Planning Check List", We have to remember that thanks to the Leigh family, a hard copy of this newsletter goes out to over 350 households across our landcare area, and Jim's practical advice, I am sure, is benefiting many experienced and budding farmers alike when they come to make timely decisions about managing their farm sustainably.

The newsletter has also featured most of the events we have held during the year. The presentation by the CEO of G21, Elaine Carbines, at our last AGM, was the prompt for some navel-gazing, and the Chair of the Geelong Landcare Network, James Pettit, and facilitator, Elissa Ashton Smith, attended our October meeting to help us think ahead about what is working and not working in our group, and what we would like more (or less) of.

I think around 50 attended an amazing Christmas breakup at Sally and Anthony Jones' property, with wonderful bush tucker and an electrifying presentation

from the Chair of Australian Native Food Industry Limited, and renowned local chef, Amanda Garner

Then of course was what is becoming an annual event, our film night, courtesy of Ric and Sheila Walters. The movie, "The Healing" was wonderful in itself, but the first act, with Martin Scuffins talking about rehabilitating raptors as he fed his barn owl, was a real hit.

Finally our mid winter meeting was an excellent presentation from Corangamite's Regional Landcare Facilitator, Karen O'Keefe, about sustainably managing pastures and water supplies when grazing horses.

A huge thankyou to all of those who have attended these events. We try to put an eclectic program together that will interest a range of our members, and we are always open for suggestions for future activities.

We have also continued our war on the rabbit! Our annual baiting program in February attracted around 100 orders, and an enormous thank you to our retiring Treasurer, Gayle Cameron for so adeptly handling all the finances and invoices for this program. The group also applied for a grant of \$5000 to support landholders to remove rabbit harbour and rip warrens, and 10 landcare members took up this offer and hopefully there will be fewer places for the rabbit to hide now! The final year of our Chilean needle grass trial is also nearing completion and it will be interesting to see what has worked when we do our annual "walk" later in the year.

We also launched a small grants program for our members with the savings made from growing our own trees at the community nursery. The first successful recipient has completed their project. An area revegetated with native trees, shrubs and grasses and 200m + of a watercourse on the slopes of Mt Moriac, protected. For details of how to apply for this grant please see the latest newsletter or the website.

The executive of the group, Jim, Ian, Sally and Anthony, Denis and Judy and Neville have met regularly and have already planned a number of activities for the coming year.

Firstly as you would have seen from the newsletter, rabbit baiting is on again in February, so please mark down the dates and be ready to place your orders.

Secondly of course is our involvement in helping the intrepid walkers follow their dream and walk our section of the Barwon River. We have been

instrumental in applying for a Community Landcare Grant to help manage this event, so hopefully we and our partners will be successful in this endeavour. I just want to reinforce the message from Jennifer and Mandy, this is a once in a life time event, so please put your hand up to help or participate.

We are also partnering with the Geelong Landcare Network in applying for funds from the Serrated Tussock Working Party to hold a field day in the region to talk about serrated tussock, Chilean Needle grass and other Nassella species..... the Surf Coast shire has also offered to support this event, so watch out in the newsletter and through your emails for this upcoming event. A timely reminder too, if you have an email address, please give Brent Rodden a ring so that he can include it in our email circulation list, and then you will be first to hear all the news from the group, and won't miss out on a coloured email copy of the newsletter.

Finally an enormous thanks to the team ...who have helped to keep the show on the road..

Especially

Jim Seager, who as vice president has been a terrific support and as well as providing the regular farming hints in the newsletter, has also ably managed the tree growing program at the nursery. 5000 again this year I think

Geoff Anson, who continues to delight readers with the newsletter

Gayle Cameron, who has kept our books up to date and so ably managed the rabbit orders

Judy Trotter who has managed the secretary's role this year

And her husband Neville who is keeping track of the Group's equipment

My husband, Brent, who maintains our website and email data base. And continues to drop everything (almost) to circulate information out to our email data base.

And of course Sally and Anthony Jones, Denis Richards and Joan Anson, who always say yes when help is needed.

Finally thank you all for supporting the Group. We are only as strong as you make us. As I said before, this is not a closed shop, we always need your ideas and your help to provide opportunities and enjoyable entertaining events that

will continue to attract participation from old and new members of the community alike.

Kaye Rodden