



Barrabool Hills Landcare Newsletter

February 2021

Locals of the Hills having a good time at the BHLG end of year get together – photo credit Brien Cohn.

barraboolhillslandcare@gmail.com

What's On.

February 15th, 18th and 22nd – Rabbit baiting dates for 2021 – More info Page 2.

Get involved – More info page 5 on 'Hills Snaps' segment.



Above: Locals of the Hills gathered at our end of year get together event with guest presenters Janine Duffy and Andrew Maclean. Thanks to Brien Cohn for taking this photo.

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Rabbit baiting in 2021 and beyond

Hopefully by the time you receive this you will all have ordered your bait for the Barrabool Hills Landcare Groups annual rabbit baiting program. Don't forget the program's success depends on everyone participating as "rabbits know no boundaries".

If you haven't already done so make sure you order through the website by 5th February.

If you have missed out ordering from the group, there is still an opportunity to order bait through programs run later by our neighbouring Landcare communities.

Please see the dates and contact details below:

Batesford – Early Feb

Dates: 5th Feb, 8th Feb and 11th Feb (carrots to be collected between 4pm and 5pm)

Collection point: 29 Cullinan Rd, Batesford

Contact: Jacinta Langdon at jacinta@bwpc.net or 0429 418 819 or Felicity Spear, Secretary BFS Landcare Secretary (52761453)

Maude/ Brisbane Ranges –Early Feb

Dates: 5th Feb, 8th Feb, 11th Feb (carrots to be collected between 2pm and 4pm)

Collection point: Maude Recreation Reserve, Steiglitz Road, Maude (opposite the CFA shed)

Orders due by: 30th Jan

If you have any questions, please either contact us by email: maudeanddistrictlandcare@gmail.com, or ring Lex Stray, 52819293, or Elaine Johns, 52819395.

Barrabool Hills – mid Feb

Dates: 15th Feb, 18th Feb and 22nd Feb (carrots to be collected between 4pm and 6pm)

Collection points: either 232 Hendy Main Rd, Mt Moriac 0407568292 OR 25 Kingsbury Lane, Waurin Ponds

0414835833

Contact: Order from website <https://barraboolhillslandcare.org.au/shop/> or contact Kaye Rodden on 0438 317 499 or Jim Seager on 0409 935 700

(SCRAN) Freshwater Creek - mid Feb

Dates: 12th Feb, 16th Feb and 19th Feb (carrots to be collected between 12 and 2pm)

Collection point: Freshwater Creek Hall, Dickens Rd, Freshwater Creek

Contact: Rob Bullen at rob.bullen@bigpond.com or 0407 353 575 or Colin Cannard lcannard@gmail.com or 0417 522 352

(SCRAN) Modewarre – late Feb / early March

Dates: 23rd Feb, 26th March and 2nd March (carrots to be collected between 12 and 2pm)

Collection point: Scout Hall Modewarre Reserve, Cape Otway Rd

Contact: Rob Bullen at rob.bullen@bigpond.com or 0407 353 575 or Colin Cannard lcannard@gmail.com or 0417 522 352

Remember that the baiting of rabbits is just a small part of managing this pest animal. Removal of harbour, such as gorse and boxthorn, and destruction of warrens is also an essential component of the annual program.

For any assistance in this follow up management, please contact either Kaye Rodden or Jim Seager or check our website.

Connecting the dots in the new decade

We've all played join the dots when we were kids and I remember being amazed and excited as the image of a kangaroo or a Wedge-tailed eagle took shape. Then came the even more interesting challenge of adding the colour that brought the image to life.

One of the biggest challenges facing Australian Landcare this decade is connecting the dots and dashes. This is an essential process that will breathe life into existing plantations (the dashes) and the remnant paddock trees (the dots).

A lot has been achieved over the past four decades putting trees on farms. We now have more shelter and we have restored some of the lost biodiversity. Though if we examine these planted landscapes on Google maps what do we see? A countryside of disconnected dots and dashes. We have created islands of trees in open seas of cropping and grazing paddocks.

Charles Darwin on his journey to the Galapagos Islands noted a reduced diversity of species on small islands; *'The species of all kinds which inhabit the oceanic islands are few in number compared with those on equal continental areas'*.

This 'island affect' has been observed again and again in studies. A study of Lord Howe Island in 1984 showed that birds on islands face fifty times the normal threat of extinction because of their isolation. If you have lived in an isolated country town you know how difficult it is to restock the pantry. Thank goodness we have roads to travel safely for supplies

Paddock trees are vegetation islands on farms that provide homes for wildlife and sleepovers for migrating species. If paddock trees are within 'line of site' (25m – 100m), they provide an invisible yet critical link in the vegetation chain that supports the migration of many species of insect and birds.

Paddock trees provide so many key benefits to biodiversity and to a farming enterprise that planting them across our rural landscapes is a logical first step to re-

establishing the missing vegetation connections.

To read more about paddock trees, google:

Paddock trees - part 1. Their beauty and their bounty.

Paddock trees - part 2. Their economic benefits on farms

Paddock trees - part 3. How to protect, regenerate and replant

Shelter belts, woodlots and biodiversity plantings support a different group of wildlife that need the seclusion and resources of mixed plantations.

Linking them is a powerful way to provide the vital feature of continuous vegetation connections.

Now it's time to play the adult version of connecting the dots and dashes on an aerial view of your property. Making these links will allow wildlife to forage more widely for food and to migrate safely. Safe migration of birds and insects is also essential for wildlife to evolve and to adapt to our changing climate.

Check out Stephen's blog for more great articles like this.

Stephen Murphy, *Sustainable Biorich Landscapes*

To read more interesting articles from Stephen Murphy check out his blog at

www.recreatingthecountry.com.au/blog

Below: An aerial photo of paddock trees and tree lines showing dashed and dotted islands of vegetation.



Platypus listed as vulnerable in Victoria – How we can help!

Earlier this year, the Victorian Government announced that it was responding to the recommendations from its key scientific advisory panel and taking urgent action to protect the platypus with the global icon now officially a threatened species and listed as vulnerable in Victoria.

<https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/protecting-our-iconic-platypus>



Now threatened in Victoria.

The Barwon River, upon which so much of our Landcare work in the Barrabool Hills is focused, is home to platypus and we are hoping it will continue to be, but this hinges on how we look after our river and its catchment and monitoring whether what we are doing is working.

You may remember at our 2018 AGM when the inspirational guest speaker, Josh Griffiths, acclaimed wildlife ecologist, recounted his observations of the decline in platypus numbers across Victoria. Many of his initial observations were based on physical sightings by community members and his own research work, but with the growth in the availability of specific platypus DNA analysis in water, we can now easily monitor for the presence of individual platypuses across large lengths of our waterways with a single water sample. This will then help us work out where we should focus our

Landcare efforts to protect and rehabilitate areas where the platypus live.

We are very excited to announce that after 4 + years of lobbying, Barrabool Hills Landcare Group has been asked to be part of a Friends of the Barwon/Geelong Landcare Network project to monitor many sites across the mid Barwon for e-DNA in spring this year.

Tim Trottier, the GLN facilitator will be running information sessions for individuals and groups who would like to be the citizen scientist water samplers and observers.

So if you are interested please let him know.

Tim’s contact details are as follows.

geelonglandcarenetwork@gmail.com

0438525502

Article by Kaye Rodden

Equipment for loan to members

The following equipment is owned by the Barrabool Hills Landcare Group and is available for use by members:

- 400 litre spray unit trailer mounted
- 2 Kidney tree buckets
- 1 Potti Putki Tree planter
- 2 Hamilton Tree planters
- 1 60 litre motorbike mounted spray unit
- 1 Rabbit Smoker (for non-culinary purposes)

Members are requested to return all equipment to Trevor promptly after use.

Contact Trevor Jones on 0407 009 855.

BHLG End of Year Get Together Report

The annual Barrabool Hills Landcare Group end of year gathering brought numerous members of our community together for a socially distanced friendly chat and yarn. The crowd of more than 35 members of the Hills’ community relished the opportunity to meet and converse with their friends and neighbours and catch up after the tumultuous Covid 19 disrupted year we have had.

The crowd was privileged to hear from two guest speakers at the get together, Andrew Maclean, the recently appointed CEO of Landcare Victoria Inc., spoke of the importance and future of Landcare and Janine Duffy, President of the Koala Clancy Foundation, spoke of the importance of trees for

Koala habitat and planned Koala habitat tree planting projects for the area for 2021.

Below: Andrew left and Janine right presenting.



Ian Kelly, our current Vice President, thanked Kaye Rodden (*pictured below*), our past President, for the tremendous contribution she has made to the Hills community during her time in the role. A brief bio about Kaye and a summary of her achievements and voluntary contributions to our community is included on page 8 of this newsletter.



Our thanks go to Heike and Mark who kindly hosted our end of year get together in their beautiful garden, and those who assisted in organising this community gathering, who together facilitated an event that enabled our community to come together after a trying year.

Tim Harte – thanks to Brien Cohn for taking the photos for this segment.

Hills' Snaps Segment

In previous years we have held a photographic competition to encourage locals to value the Hills' environment and share their interest and care for nature with the rest of the community. Our executive committee recently decided that starting a regular segment of Hills' pictures in the newsletter would be a good way to share interesting nature happenings around the Hills with the whole community.

Every two months our executive committee will select the best photo that has been sent in and this photo will be included in our newsletter.

Please send us your pictures taken in the Barrabool Hills and surrounding areas, they can be before and after pictures of revegetation projects, interesting weeds, trees, the Hills' landscape and environment or native animals.

Please send your 'Hills' Snaps' (photographs) to the newsletter editor when you take them.

Tim Harte

Presidents Report 2020 Annual General Meeting

Well, what a year it has been! We started off with such high expectations, a very successful Christmas break up at the Jones, another well supported rabbit baiting program and plans finalised for promoting our Landcare programs at the Geelong Forum in April and supporting the Geelong Landcare Network in hosting the Future Farming Forum in June.

Plans which were quickly shelved as the Covid-19 pandemic shrouded every corner of our lives.

Nevertheless, our group has stood tall, with our bimonthly newsletter keeping everyone in touch, and our online messaging through the website and Facebook page well subscribed. We continue to receive regular enquiries from landholders for advice about planting guides, weeds and whole farm planning. Whilst it has been easy to manage these in a Covid safe way, unfortunately our social activities have had to take a back seat. Hopefully we can celebrate all that the Barrabool Hills community is renowned for in the not-too-distant future.

Normally I would document all the activities we have organised during the year, but as this is my last report as the group's president, I thought I would document my family's journey in Landcare, which I hope will shed some light on why community Landcare is so vital to the health and well-being of our landscapes and also us as individuals.

When we first purchased our property Belvedere in 1991, we inherited land which to a large extent had been forgotten. Whilst the arable land had received attention, the non-arable escarpments and rocky barriers had effectively been ignored. These areas housed a thriving rabbit population, were increasingly being infested with box thorn and gorse and wind-blown serrated tussock, and to put it mildly were potentially a significant biosecurity threat to our neighbours.

Below: Brent Rodden and Gordon TAFE students halfway through hand planting one of the escarpments on Belvedere. Year 3 of the project. White "dots" are tree guards.



Our property was not the only one in this boat and a number of us across the hills felt that if we banded together, we could tackle these problems together... and so the Barrabool Hills Landcare group was formed in 1995. May I say from the outset there was little financial help on offer, but what was available was knowledge, support, experience and a shared

commitment to leave our landscape in a better state than when we found it.

It is this that has been at the heart of the Barrabool Hills Landcare community from the start.

Like many of those who first formed the group, whilst our initial focus was on finding a sustainable way to manage the wicked problems that we had inherited, as our landscapes improved, our vision expanded to include new biodiverse corridors, fencing off the waterways and protecting the dams, looking at increasing perennial pasture and crop cover, whilst all the while keeping our pest plants and animals in check... now expanded to include a whole range of insidious introduced tussock like grasses that are almost indistinguishable from native ones! I am referring for example to Chilean needle grass and Texas needle grass.

Our network and support base has expanded significantly over the 25 years. We are the go-to organisation when there is a question about sustainably managing our landscape. There is always someone in our Landcare community who can help. Those who were part of the initial group, our family included, often forget what our landscape was like before we all started looking at it with a different perspective.

The rolling green hills that so enraptured the National Trust, earning a commendation as a significant regional geological and geomorphological landscape, are now crisscrossed with wide plantations of native species. Providing a haven for native animals, a barrier to wind-blown serrated tussock and great shelter for our animals.

Our membership and supporter base is made up of people who want to get their hands dirty as they contribute to a sustainable future, enjoy our social gatherings, seek advice, or just believe in a strong resilient and cohesive community and are willing to support us however they can..... Or all of the above. This year when we needed it most, we received two significant donations towards our programs. I say needed it most because obviously government support has almost dried up but also because such generous acts really boost the spirit of all of us at the coal face... and makes you realise that what you are doing is making a difference.

Every year I reference the incredible job that the entire executive committee has done in maintaining their commitment to our organisation, and this is even more the case this year as our traditional meet

and eat meetings have been on hold and replaced by the ubiquitous and very dry ZOOM affairs.

Below: Before (2010) and after (2014) photos of Reardons Landcare planting at the "head water" of Merrawarp Creek. Taken from Ballanlea Road looking up Barrabool Road.



Firstly, a huge thank you to our retiring treasurer, Anthony Jones, who has guided our finances for a number of years from a paper-based ledger system to one which is now entirely electronic based, with the ability to record and report with the flick of a button. Luckily Anthony has agreed to stay on the committee to facilitate the hand over to the next treasurer.

Thank you to Heike, our secretary, who has really grown in the job and her management of our day-to-day records and establishment of Standard Operating procedures for a number of our activities will really hold us in good stead in the future.

A reason that our group has continued so effectively during this tough year has been because Tim Harte, our newsletter editor, has stepped up to another level to engage everyone across the community with his great publications and photos. He has not missed a beat for the whole year, even though our sponsorship was on the line for printing and engaging our new federal representative was pivotal... so successful that we are now in colour!

While I am talking about the newsletter, even though over 200 of our friends, members and supporters receive an electronic copy, over 400 are printed, folded and distributed across the hills, to

everyone with a mailbox on the Leigh's postal run. This opportunity for engagement I believe is one of the main reasons our group and the work we do remains on people's minds, keeps them up to date and makes them feel that they are part of a community. Many of our enquiries for help come from these people, sometimes new residents, but

often not, but they are not on our radar in any other guise.

Jim Seager, our Vice president, continues to be an amazing back stop. He is always available to support our projects and enquiries and is an essential part of the team.

Geoff Anson and Maddie Steel have been important contributors to the Geelong Landcare Network.

And Trevor Jones continues to house, maintain and manage all our equipment.

Whilst the remaining members of our executive don't have particular titles, they have all helped to keep the show on the road. Provide valuable advice, support and importantly before the lock down wonderful food!

I look forward to watching the group grow and expand over the coming years.

Finally, an enormous shout out to Brent who drops everything to support me when I need him, and at other times too when I don't know I need him, may I add! Not only does he manage the email database, but he has agreed to guide the website through what has been a difficult phase and we hope that it won't be long before it is fully functional again.



Thanks again to you all for your support.... Here's a photo of the Belvedere escarpment in 2011 to inspire you.

Above: North/East facing escarpment taken from over the Barwon River.

Article by Kaye Rodden

Kaye Rodden

At our AGM in 2020, Kaye Rodden, our then President retired from that role and we want to sincerely thank her for her contribution to our group and the broader community. Whilst Kaye will be missed as the "leader" of the Barrabool Hills Landcare Group, she will continue as a member of our Executive team.

The Barrabool Hills Landcare Group team felt it was appropriate to include a brief bio about Kaye Rodden in this edition of the newsletter to showcase the achievements and contributions Kaye has made to the local and broader community.

Brief biography - Kaye Rodden

Kaye grew up on a beef cattle farm in the Yarra Valley east of Melbourne and now farms sheep with her husband and daughters on a property west of Geelong, on the Barwon River. Kaye is a founding member of Barrabool Hills Landcare Group, in its 25th year, and has recently retired as its president, a position she held for 6 years. She is a member of the Geelong Landcare Network Committee of Management and chair of the newly constituted Friends of the Barwon. She was a Corangamite delegate on the Victorian Landcare Council for 7

years, and its executive secretary for 5 years, until its merger with the Farm Tree & Landcare Association, and was the foundation Deputy Chair for Advocacy and Partnerships for Landcare Victoria Inc. She is currently the Victorian nominee and non-executive director of the National Landcare Network.

She spent nine years as a Board Member of the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority, and its deputy chair for 3 years, retiring in 2009. Kaye chaired the Otway Agroforestry Network for 5 years and was a director on the board of the Australian Agroforestry Foundation.

Kaye is a government appointed representative on the Victorian Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability's Reference Panel and a board member and secretary of the Victorian Rabbit Action Network, which recently won a United Nations Public Service Award.

Kaye was awarded a doctorate for her research into trace element nutrition of sheep and holds an honours degree in Agricultural Science, a Diploma of Education and a Master Tree Grower Certificate. Her postgraduate work with CSIRO and the Victorian government focused on modelling complex biological systems.

Article compiled by Tim Harte with material provided by Ian Kelly and Kaye Rodden.

What bird is this?

Denis Richards, Ric Walter & Jeremy Sager identified the bird in the December BHLG newsletter correctly, well done to Denis, Ric and Jeremy. The bird was a Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike (*Coracina novaehollandiae*). Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes feed on insects and other invertebrates which catch mostly in the air, or from foliage or on the ground, they are found in almost all wooded habitats in Australia with the exception of rainforests. Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes have a curious habit of shuffling their wings upon landing, a practice that gave rise to the name "Shufflewing", which is a common name used for this species.

This issues mystery bird was observed feeding 3 of its fledglings in a backyard in the Hills recently, this particular little bird was very adept at finding large moths from the stems of fennel plants, the moths seemed to be popular food for its very small and fluffy fledglings. The ring around this birds' eyes is a distinguishing feature and a clue to its common name. Email the newsletter editor with your 'what bird is this?' answer, the first person to answer correctly will have their name published in the next newsletter.

Tim Harte



Contact us.

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	Instagram: barraboolhillslandcaregroup	
	Website: www.barraboolhillslandcare.org.au	

Let your fellow members know what is happening in the Barrabool Hills. Contributions to the newsletter are welcomed. Send articles and photos to Tim Harte (balletcadet@gmail.com), deadline for next issue is 16/03/21

Members are able to advertise their Barrabool Hills business in the newsletter @ \$30 per issue (space allowing). Ads. are approximately 50 mm x 70 mm, and will be printed provided there is space

A special thanks goes to the Leigh family for distributing the newsletter.