



BARRABOOL HILLS LANDCARE GROUP

OCTOBER 2021 NEWSLETTER



Koala Clancy Foundation planting – Heike and Mark Dunn’s Barwon River frontage. Article overleaf.

WHAT’S ON

Sunday 10th October – Platypus e-DNA water sampling information sessions, Fyansford and Inverleigh – contact Andrea glnplatypus@gmail.com

Sunday 17th October – Full Moon Festival (rescheduled) – Bannockburn Bush – All day Bookings essential – Details inside

Saturday 6th November - Dung Beetle Field Day – Inverleigh - Details inside

October & November - Geelong Nature Festival – National Wool Museum – public opening dependent on covid restrictions – check COGG events for updates

November – date to be determined – Barrabool Hills Landcare bus trip to visit past projects

Friday 10th December – Barrabool Hills Landcare end of year gathering

17th, 21st & 24th February 2022 – Barrabool Hills Rabbit Baiting Program

Printed by Senator the Hon. Sarah Henderson, Liberal Senator for Victoria

Message from the President

Once again the group has had to hold its AGM remotely. It was disappointing that we couldn't enjoy the traditional wine and cheese sampling before listening to our scheduled guest, Greg Peters from Riverness. As soon as restrictions allow, we will definitely be making up for lost opportunities and reschedule this event.. We did get an opportunity to formally farewell, albeit over our computer screens, our long standing treasurer, Anthony Jones, and our outgoing newsletter editor, Tim Harte. Again thank you to them both for their support of the group. And thank you to Heike Dunn for stepping into the treasurer's role, and Christa Jones for accepting the secretarial responsibilities.

We are still looking for a Newsletter Editor! This newsletter is effectively the glue that has kept our whole Barrabool Hills community together, especially over the last 18 months. For this reason two of our committee have kindly agreed to compile this edition until we have found a new permanent volunteer. Hence the different format. Please though if you would like to chance your hand at this great role for our community, contact Christa on barraboolhillslandcare@gmail.com for details about what it involves.

Jim Seager

Kangaroo Grass – the crop that just keeps on giving

Kangaroo Grass (KG), *Themeda triandra* can live for more than 100 years if it is well managed and to emphasise its longevity Dr John Morgan from La Trobe University calls it 'a tree without a trunk'. Regular cool burning every five to ten years is part of the secret of keeping KG healthy and long lived.

KG is a valuable crop and will return consistently \$1000/ha or more. Its seeds can be harvested in late December when the mature flower heads (florets) are stripped

with a purpose built harvester and blown into wool-bales. One hectare will usually yield one wool bale which is valued at \$1,000 - \$2,000 for revegetation projects. That's not bad for a perennial crop that needs no fertiliser and will provide good yields for 100 years or more without needing to be re-sown.

Much of the microfine Merino wool that has achieved extraordinary prices on international markets is grown on native pastures like KG

Harvesting Kangaroo Grass

KG is ready to harvest in late December when the seed is dark brown and its dark brown awn (tail) remains firmly attached when given a gentle tug.

Collecting KG in large quantities is conveniently done with a purpose built harvester like the Bandicoot Native Grass Seed Harvester.



The Bandicoot can be towed behind a ute or a quad bike (see above). It has rotating brushes that remove the florets and shoot them into a trailer or a wool-bale. This machine has a height adjustment for harvesting different species of native grasses.

An alternative technique is to use a combination of a sickle-bar mower or brush cutter and a portable industrial vacuum cleaner

As we approach the fire season another important benefit of well managed KG is its

low flammability. Because it's a summer active grass and turns green after summer rains, a paddock of KG to the north or west of your home can provide significant defence against an advancing fire.

To read more about Kangaroo Grass, how to propagate and keep it healthy read Stephen's latest blog -

<https://www.recreatingthecountry.com.au/blog>

Stephen Murphy



A "sea" of Kangaroo Grass

Planting for Koalas- Koala Clancy Project

In Sep 20 in response to a call from the Koala Clancy Foundation (KCF) for more trees to be planted to increase koala habitat, Barrabool Hills Landcare members, Mark & Heike Dunn sent off an expression of interest, even though their property was outside of the targeted area. Their property has an original growth corridor along the bank of the Barwon River which in the past has had a transient koala population along the river & billabong and Heike and Mark were keen to provide additional habitat to encourage the return of koalas into the area.

After a number of phone calls a site visit by Koala Clancy Foundation President Janine Duffy and Community Engagement Coordinator Maria Borges was conducted late Oct 2020.

Janine was invited to the BHLG Christmas function which was held at Mark and Heike's property and she announced the project and gave a presentation on it's objectives to plant native trees and shrubs for the long-term benefit of koalas and other wildlife and it will contribute to a wider wildlife habitat that

could ensure the survival of wild koalas in the Western Plains region.

The planting proposal divided the area into one main planting zone and two subzones, with the two subzones to have a higher density of plants/ha than the rest of the whole area, mainly because of their lower elevation with an estimated total of 2600 native (indigenous) trees & shrubs plants to be planted.

Preparatory spot spraying was conducted in May with an anticipated planting start date scheduled for 2 Jun 21. However, not unexpectedly Covid-19 restrictions played havoc with the best laid plans of mice and men and delayed a number of planned planting days until it was finally finished on 29 Jun 21 by students from Deakin Uni Burwood campus.

During the first few weeks staff and volunteers worked in arduous wintery wet conditions but it was all worth it – three months on and all plants are thriving!

Heike Dunn

**Full Moon Festival rescheduled to Sunday
17th October**



Now you see it now you don't – Dung Beetles, the ultimate exponents of the circular economy!!

Have you ever wondered what happens to all the dung left behind by your sheep, cattle, horses or in fact the native animals roaming the countryside?

Well there is an army of little critters in the soil that not only remove it from the surface but also help to reincorporate the nutrients back into the soil.

The Dung Beetle is one of these species... what better example of reduce, reuse and recycle!

Do you have dung beetles on your land? Would you like to know more about which species are present, whether they are fit for purpose for your farm?

The Barrabool Landcare Group, in conjunction with Southern Farming Systems (SFS), is

planning to hold a field day at Inverleigh in early November to talk about dung beetles and how to identify them, and discuss the results of field trials that SFS has been conducting.

Final registrations will be open closer to the date once we have a clearer idea of covid restrictions. The event will be free and catered for with financial support from the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority and Australian Government through the Regional Land Partnership Large Farms Project.

If you would like to save a place please contact Kaye Rodden 0438317499



Image: Dung Beetles at work on a sheep pat in spring.

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 planters
- 2 Hamilton Tree planters
- 1 60 litre motorbike mounted spray unit
- 1 Rabbit Smoker

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

Contact Trevor Jones on 0407009855 .

What Bird is that?

Ric Walter identified the bird in the August BHLG newsletter correctly, well done Ric. The bird was a White-naped honeyeater (*Melithreptus lunatus*). Contradictory to their honeyeater name White-naped honeyeater mostly eat small invertebrates from bark and foliage. White-naped honeyeaters are quite noisy birds when feeding and have a characteristic shersh-shersh-shersh call, so if hear an unfamiliar bird call in the Hills it may be these little birds make a cacophony of sound.



This issues mystery bird was spotted eating invertebrates on a large tree, its bizarre Mohawk hairstyle, large beak, and strange colouration makes it look like three different birds stuck together. Do you know what this bird is? Email us with your 'what bird is this?' answer, the first person to answer correctly will have their name published in the next newsletter.

Timothy Harte

Vale Joan Anson

Joan Anson passed away after a long illness on 16th August at her home, Barwon Ridge, with Geoff, and her daughters Jenny and Katie and their families around her.

Joan has been a shining light in the Barrabool Hills Landcare community, and she will be sorely missed.

Her legacy lives on through our memories of wonderful food, hospitality and of course her passion for the environment and community. There will be an empty chair at our executive committee meetings which will be hard to fill.

Our sincerest condolences to Geoff and the family.



Image: Geoff and Joan Anson proudly receiving the "Clever & Creative Sustainable Business Award" at the Geelong Business Excellence Awards in 2019.

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Not a Member?

And perhaps you would like to join our vibrant Barrabool Hills Landcare community and help support our projects and events? Only \$15 annually per family.

Go to our website for all the details on how to join www.barraboolhillslandcare.org.au or email us at barraboolhillslandcare@gmail.com

A changing Landscape in the Barrabool Hills

Gullies and Escarpments Project 2013

Avon Park –north facing slope BEFORE



And.... AFTER 2020



Contributions to the newsletter are most welcome. Let your fellow community and members know what is happening in the Barrabool Hills.

Send articles and photos to barraboolhillslandcare@gmail.com, deadline for next issue is 15/11/21

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