

ANNUAL REPORT

Leigh Catchment Group



2011/2012

Wattle Flat/Pootilla Landcare
Napoleons/Enfield Landcare
Ross Creek Landcare
Upper Williamson's Creek Landcare
Garibaldi Environment Group
Grenville Landcare
Bamganie/Meredith Landcare
Leigh Districts Landcare



Chairperson's Report : July 2011- June 2012

While 2011-12 brought many challenges and lots of work, there are many highlights to celebrate. Firstly, I thank all board members for their ongoing support. It has been a true team effort with many so willingly taking on roles and attending events and meetings so that the workload is spread. A special thank you to members of the executive for the work they have done to ensure the effective operation of the group. While different roles bring with them various responsibilities, Peter Cameron's work as treasurer is constant and has been crucial to the efficient financial operation of the network, especially as new project funds are sourced. Peter's time, effort and developing expertise with funding "buckets" are most appreciated.

A key result in 2012 to ensure the ongoing future of the LCG during the next three years to June 30th 2015, was the successful application for funding through the Victorian Local Landcare Facilitator Initiative (VLLFI) for coordinator funding. While it did take many meetings, discussions and lobbying, along with the support of the CCMA, the result has given LCG the opportunity to not only continue its extremely valuable work in natural resource management in this catchment but also a time extension to implement strategies to become more self-sufficient into the future.

It has also provided for the first time, a tenure of employment for our coordinator position, which is longer than 12 months; a major step forward. A key challenge for every landcare network now is to be in a position to have a similar tenure options in 2015.

The sub-committee model of organization has again proved to be effective, enabling essential discussions on vital elements of business so that informed recommendations are presented to the board. This process has streamlined board meetings, making for continued efficient and effective operation.

Important highlights for year have included:

- The VLLFI coordinator funding for three days a week until June 30th 2015 enabling LCG to put in place a coordinator contract until this date.
- Funding of the Communities for Nature project which is being led by both Upper Williamson's Creek and Napoleons-Enfield Landcare Groups during the next four years.
- Successful funding allocation via the CCMA for a further two River Health Projects which are resulting in significant on-ground works.
- Smaller projects including gorse control, ongoing school education programs, the Landcare Grant Project & 25th Anniversary Grant at Mac's.Rd. have been important in maintaining a diversity of works across the catchment.
- Joint discussions between the LCG and the Buninyong & District Community Bank continued with a view to future partnerships, both in the form of financial support and conducting joint events. Building a positive and effective partnership with the bank is seen as a very important strategy for our ongoing success.
- Involvement in the Smart Living Centre in Ballarat with Jenny Ryle being a member of its steering committee.
- The Expressions Of Interests process for on-ground works to enable landowners and landcare groups to apply to the LCG for specific project funds has provided a readily available pool of projects for immediate matching to funding opportunities as they arise. This process will be continually promoted and implemented within the catchment and an annual number funded from within LCG funds when possible.
- The Landcare Awards in the latter part of 2011 resulted in success for a number of LCG landholders and landcare groups.
- The development and adoption of a Sexual Harassment Policy.

The ongoing employment of Jenny Ryle for the next three years as coordinator has also been a positive for the group to maintain continuity of operation. Jenny's coordination work across all the school programs, River Health Projects, funding applications, community events and liaison with the CCMA and other organizations has been crucial to our group success.

The challenges for LCG into the future still relate to accessing funding through a range of sources.

- Planning for the best scenarios re both coordinator funding and on-ground projects from July 2015

onwards must remain a key longer term goal for our network.

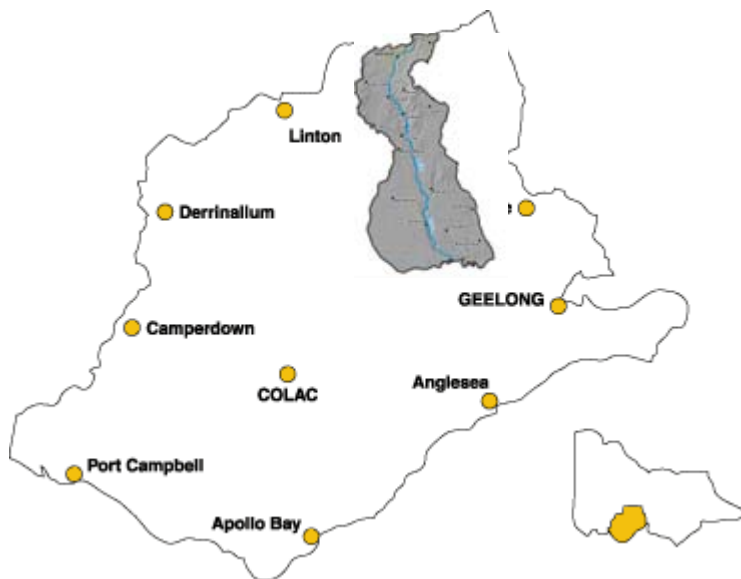
- More immediately the development of the LCG Strategic Action Plan for the 2013-2017 becomes a focus for the board and all landcare groups during the next 12 months.
- Involvement of members in training programs to upskill and gain knowledge to assist with more efficient and effective management both at network and group level.
- Guidelines for succession planning for the board's executive positions will need to be developed for smooth and efficient transition – brief documented role statements for each position may assist this process.

The contributions of all board members have once again ensured the ongoing success of the LCG. Thank you to all Board members as well as landcare group members who have continually and generously given their volunteer time.

David Sullivan – Chairperson.



Part of the Corangamite Landcare region



Riparian plantings along Buninyong Creek, now known as Union Jack Creek

The Leigh Catchment Group

Working together to achieve sustainable ecosystems, agriculture and communities.

The Leigh Catchment Group (LCG) is a network of Landcare groups formed in 1997 following recognition by the groups of the Catchment that a combined and coordinated approach to management of the catchment would result in improved works and lead to an increase in funding for larger scale Natural Resource Management projects. The groups on the front cover are LCG members:

The Leigh Catchment Board consists of nine elected Landcare Members and the Landcare Coordinator.

The Landcare Coordinator's role is to manage projects and activities undertaken through the LCG and provide support to the Landcare Group members. This is one person on a 0.8 time fraction.

The LCG is supported by the Department of Sustainability and Environment (Vic), Department of Primary Industries (Vic), Corangamite Catchment Management Authority, Greening Australia, Trust for Nature, City of Ballarat, Golden Plains Shire, Moorabool Shire Council, University of Ballarat, Ballarat Environment Network, community groups and many individuals.

The original Leigh Catchment Plan was produced in August 1999 and updated in 2008/9 to produce the Leigh Catchment Action Plan 2008-2013.

The Leigh Catchment

The Leigh Catchment covers an area of 1580 square kilometres including the Yarrowee River which becomes the Leigh River at its confluence with Williamson's Creek. The Leigh River flows into the Barwon River at Inverleigh. The Leigh Catchment contains a diverse range of topographic features from gently undulating hills, wide valleys and river flats, to steep escarpments and rocky gorges. The catchment supports areas of significant remnant native vegetation including forests, woodlands, grasslands and wetlands occurring on private and public land. The Leigh River supports intact corridors of riparian vegetation with important fauna habitat values. Agriculture is the predominant land use in the catchment. The urban and semi urban areas of Ballarat are also a significant component of the catchment.

The Leigh Catchment Action Plan establishes a long term direction and identifies priority actions for the protection and enhancement of natural resources within the Leigh Catchment Group area.

The Plan :

- Incorporates strategies, priorities and direction from current local, regional, state and national plans and frameworks.
- Identifies and describes natural resource values within the LCG area.
- Identifies and describes threats to natural resources within the LCG area.
- Describes previous NRM activities within the LCG area.
- Identifies a set of actions to protect and enhance Natural Resource Management values within the LCG area.
- Identifies processes and partners for implementation of NRM actions.
- Describes a monitoring and evaluation process to enable assessment and reporting of NRM projects.
- Identifies community engagement and capacity building strategies to help deliver and achieve Catchment Action Plan outcomes.

Board members 2011 / 2012

David Sullivan	Chairman
Rob Milne	Vice Chair
Peter Cameron	Treasurer
Andrea Mason	Secretary
Brian Parker	Board member
Kate O'Bryan	Board member
Lousia Jane Cunningham	Board member
Gabrielle Murphy	Board member
Jenny Ryle	Board member(non voting)



Landcare group members/ representatives are invited to attend all open Board meetings. There are currently two Board sub groups for future planning and onground works.

In 2011, Board meetings were held in September, October (AGM), February 2012, March and May, with sub committee meeting as needed in between.

Regional Landcare Awards



Leigh Catchment Group put in three nominations into the Corangamite biennial Landcare awards and came up with three winners.


Upper Williamsons' Creek Landcare Group won Best Community Group, Napoleons/Enfield Landcare Group were Highly Commended and Roland Nam from UWLG won Best Individual Landcarer.

Above: Winners and supporters at the Awards dinner in Geelong July 2011 with guest speaker weather presenter, Rob Gell

Landcare Business Expo at Narmbool



Landcare Business Expo for Farmers





Sponsored by Buninyong & District Community Bank*

Friday 26th August - 8am Registration - 1.30pm
@ Narmbool Garden Room, Elaine

From Waste Wood to Biochar and Energy + other great topics!

Leigh Catchment Group, together with Buninyong & District Community Bank, announce a stimulating morning with experts, available to help your farming business. Hear about new ideas and exciting initiatives to cope with farming in the future.

<p>With Guest Speakers</p> <p>Dr Adrian Morphett: Principal Environmental Engineer Earth Systems Environment-Water-Sustainability <i>"From waste wood to biochar and energy"</i></p> <p>Damien Butler: Principal, Butler Chartered Accountants <i>"Profit improvement strategies" / "Accounting & Business Information systems" / "Tax Strategies"</i></p> <p>Luke Dunne: Principal, Heinz & Partners (Lawyers) <i>"Asset protection" / "Business Entities" / "General Transition"</i></p> <p>Mike Stephens: Principal, M&A Agricultural Advisors <i>"Business Growth Strategies" / "Livestock Production" / "Cost of Production"</i></p>	<p>RSVP for catering (morning tea and light lunch. Please indicate any dietary requirements) by Friday Aug 19th Ph: 5341 2364 Email: leighg@ncblg.net.au <i>places limited so book early</i></p> <p>Meet Stuart McKee, Manager of the Buninyong & District Community Bank*. Learn about Bendigo Bank products, & how he and his staff can help with your banking needs.</p>
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Working in partnership with the Buninyong and District Community Bank, Leigh Catchment Group held a morning session for local farmers and larger landholders at the lovely setting of Narmbool homestead. The key speaker, Dr Adrian Morphett spoke about the benefits of biochar to farming practises. Further speakers included Damien Butler on farm accounting, Luke Dunne on farm legal issues and agricultural consultant speakers: Nathan Scott and Mike Stephens.

This was our first collaboration with the community bank, looking at ways to build a working relationship for the future.

Looking after Our Creeks - Leading by example



Union Jack creek lies below crown land off Macs Road. Mount Buninyong covered in cloud is hidden at the top of the picture. This land was covered in gorse until a few years ago but is now a grassy sward.

Union Jack Creek also known as Buninyong creek, where it flows beside Crown land just beyond the Golf Course, has suffered from over deepening during the gold era leaving high dry banks riddled with rabbit warrens and covered by gorse and other weeds.

Woody weed removal was carried out by the Department of Environment and Sustainability under their Good Neighbours Scheme in 2009 and further work has been carried out since then to keep weeds under control.

Community volunteers and students from Ballarat Christian College have planted 1700 indigenous plants that are likely to grow under these difficult conditions existing along the top of the banks.

This site was part of the trips organised from the Landcare Expo in Buninyong in December 2010 to raise the issues and potential solutions.

In 2011, local residents using a fifty per cent contribution towards gorse removal through a grant from the Victorian Gorse Task Force. The resulting change to the landscape is impressive.

In November 2011 and May 2012, local TAFE students used the site for their Conservation and Land management studies.

The ongoing plan for restoration is to undertake further weed removal and revegetation on the difficult steep slopes of the creek itself. In addition, there will be further planting of over and understory plants with some native grasses. This should allow native birds and invertebrates to recolonise this area and it will become a pleasant area for recreational walking as well as improving the quality of the water flowing downstream into the Yarrowee, just below Napoleons



Local community members on National Tree Day 2011 contributed to the total of 1700 trees shrubs and grasses planted on the western bank of the Union Jack Creek as it flows beyond the Buninyong Golf course, across Crown land and towards the Yarrowee at Napoleons.

Working with Local Schools

Damascus College students (see right) came out again in May. They helped out by removing stakes and rabbit guards from emerging new trees, an important maintenance job, often neglected. Last November, the students came out and helped at Glassons Road maintaining the plantings there. They enjoyed being down by the river on a beautiful Spring day. See front cover.

Scotsburn PS school students (below) went seed collecting last February along a nearby Significant Roadside Vegetation track with their paper collecting bags. They were looking for seeds from specific trees, shrubs and grasses to collect for growing back at their school.



In August, **Ballarat Christian College** planted 300 trees shrubs and grasses on the bank of the Union Jack at Macs Road, Buninyong. They finished off the job started by the community on National Tree Day 2011



Golden Plains Shire Landcare grant 2010/2011

A Golden Plains shire grant last year helped to provide a twenty metre wide biodiverse corridor on private property beside the Inverleigh - Shelford road. This will increase the linkages for wildlife across this region, helping wildlife in times of drought or flood. The Leigh River can just be seen marked by a line of trees in the distance flowing across the flood plain.

Landcare Coordinator's Monitoring and Evaluation Report Summary 2011/12

Community Engagement

- Friends of Royal Park -Launch of solar panels
- Buninyong Good Life Festival
- Rural Lifestyle show at Ballarat showgrounds
- Information point and permanent evolving display at Smart Living Centre
- Landcare Business Expo for framers joint with Buninyong Community Bank
- National Tree Day - 5 landcare groups held community plantings, 3 group/school plantings

Environmental education

- 12 sessions with school students from three secondary and three primary schools

Promotion and Awareness

- 3 articles in newspapers
- 8 enews mailouts

Planning

- Union Jack creek survey walk with local agency/government partners
- 4 Corangamite region Coordinator meetings
- Ballarat Environment Network run Biodiversity and Water workshops
- Carbon Farming Road show
- Victorian Local landcare Facilitator training

Business Plan



The Leigh Catchment Group Business Plan is available on the Victorian Landcare Gateway website summarising the vision and aims of the organisation, the plan detailed the key priorities for 2011 - 2013.

As illustrated above these are (in no order):

- Creation of wildlife corridors
- River and creek protection
- Supporting Local Landcare Groups
- Working with Schools

These focus areas are extra to the central work of providing advice, assistance, training and funding where available to any individual, organisation, business or government department who want to improve the biodiversity conservation of the land they manage, own or support.

In Kind Support

- Ballarat Environment Network (BEN) supports local groups to manage Crown Land through BEN Biodiversity Reserves. BEN has actively worked with LCG on supporting the Smart Living Centre development of biodiversity resources for the general public. Leigh Catchment Group has maintained contact with Parks Victoria and Seedbank Victoria at Creswick on a number of matters.
- The **City of Ballarat** Lakes and Waterways Crew have assisted by continuing the maintenance of the walking tracks and vegetation along the Yarrowee Trail.
- **DPI, DSE, GAV, and TFN** have allowed the LCG access to their technical expertise. With their assistance, landholders within our catchment have been able to access advice and support for individual projects and be a part of an education program of field days and talks addressing issues in our catchment. This information is distributed through the LCG enews.
- The **CCMA** have continued to provide invaluable support through the Regional Landcare Coordinator and team members from other departments such as River Health.

DPI Dept of Primary Industries **DSE** Dept of Sustainability and Environment
CCMA Corangamite Catchment Management Authority **TFN** Trust For Nature
GAV Greening Australia Victoria **BEN** Ballarat Environment Network



Smart Living Ballarat...



The Smart Living Centre opened in Lydiard Street in May. Leigh Catchment Group have been an active supporter of this Regional Sustainability Alliance partnership project from the beginning and were pleased to be involved in the displays and website development of the biodiversity section 'Your Environment'. Training of volunteers to access information for first time and would be landcarers will be ongoing.



Yarrowee \$1 Million Dollar Project



Above: Yarrowee at Napoleons damaged by heavy floods early in 2011.

Pressure from Napoleons Landcare Group to the City of Ballarat concerning litter coming down with flood waters, led to questions at Council meetings. Much of the litter brought down has now been washed further downstream and out to sea damaging coastal environments. The Liberal party, who were in opposition at the time, promised to provide funding for river restoration. So far, a scoping document has been produced by the CCMA for this funding, when it is released in 2013. LCG and BEN are pressing for community discussion by stakeholders along the river on potential priority spending.

Victorian Gorse Task Force

Landholders around the Union Jack Creek project at Macs Road were able to have a 50% contribution to controlling gorse on their land, thanks to the VGTF

Above: Upstream of the project, gorse was sprayed along this steep and hidden section. This needed to be done carefully around the native shrubs already present.

Wetland Protection



A grant from the CCMA in 2011 was used to protect this wetland from livestock on the volcanic plain.

Onground Activities 2011/2012

Name of Funding	No of projects	\$ Value
VLLFI*	1	12,790
River Health (Year 3)	2	13,962
Corangamite Landcare 2011/12	3	10,000
25th anniversary grant	1	4614
Golden Plains 2011/12	1	5,000
Total		\$46,366

* Victorian Local Landcare Facilitators Initiative (Department of Sustainability and Environment)

Most of the on grounds work this year concerned the ongoing river health projects. These projects often have a weed control element prior to fencing and revegetation and therefore cover several years. The landholder for the property to the right has put in 2,500 plants along the river's edge which will help to control the effects of flooding down the Yarrowee.



Below: Further down the gorge section, similar work will protect the biodiverse vegetation from livestock and helps keep the weeds under control.



Winter work by the Landcare Groups July /August 2011

Below: Plantings require regular work parties to come back and check all is going well. This site at Glassons Road, next to the Yarrowee is particularly challenging as it catches the wind, but regular attention by the **Napoleons/Enfield Landcare Group** is paying dividends to the survival rate of these plantings.



Right: Upper Williamsons' Creek Landcare Group conducted a successful rabbit control programme on private land all around the Mount Bunnion in 2010. This weedy track up to Mount then caught their eye. Owned by the City of Ballarat, it is a popular walking, cycling and running route but overrun with rabbit warrens and infested with numerous weeds. A year later the rabbits are largely removed and 250 new trees planted. To be continued.....



Above: National Tree Day 2011. **Garibaldi Environment Group** pose after a good morning's planting along the South Durham Walking Trail. **Ross Creek Landcare group** also continued work at their local reserve.



Wattle Flat/ Pootilla Landcare Group started a planting program on the banks of the Yarrowee above Ballarat CBD at Brown Hill. (See right and left) A huge turnout of local families meant hundreds of trees in the ground.



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**LEIGH CATCHMENT GROUP
ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT**

**STATEMENT OF INCOME & EXPENDITURE
YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2012**

	Note		
RECEIPTS			
Grants	2	56,641	
Interest		6,954	
Other	3	404	
GST Collected & Refunded		<u>14,599</u>	78,598
EXPENDITURE			
Administration	4	61,303	
Projects	5	102,945	
Other	6	3,256	
GST Paid & Repaid		<u>23,243</u>	<u>190,747</u>
CASH SURPLUS (DEFICIT) FOR YEAR			(112,149)
Add			
Cash at Bank – 1 July 2011			216,989
CASH AT BANK 30 JUNE 2012			<u>104,840</u>

**BALANCE SHEET
30 JUNE 2012**

	Note		
ASSETS			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash at Bank	7	104,840	
Debtors	8	5,481	
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Equipment	9	<u>-</u>	
TOTAL ASSETS			<u>110,321</u>
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Creditors		-	
Projects	10	<u>64,386</u>	
TOTAL LIABILITIES			<u>64,386</u>
LEIGH CATCHMENT GROUP FUNDS			<u>45,935</u>

**NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2012**

Note 1 – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The Statement of Receipts and Expenditure is prepared on a cash basis and the surplus (deficit) shown has not been adjusted to reflect amounts due or amount owing by the Group as shown in the Balance Sheet included as part of the Financial Statements. The values stated in the Balance Sheet are based on historical costs and do not take into account changing money values or, except where specifically stated, current market valuations of non-current assets.

Note 2 – GRANTS

Landscape Zone Assessment Plans	5,000	
C.C.M.A Board Project	6,250	
2 nd GEN Landcare 2010/11	5,725	
25 th Anniversary Grant	3,460	
Corang. L/C Grant 2011/12	7,500	
River Health 2012/13	15,078	
V.L.F.F.I. 2012	11,627	
V.L.F.F.I. Foundation Grant	2,000	<u>56,641</u>

Note 3 – OTHER INCOME

Sundry sales & Rebates	404	<u>404</u>
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Note 4 – ADMINISTRATION

Office & Bank Expenses	3,376	
Office Rent	4,180	
Project Officer	49,082	
Travel Expenses	4,665	<u>61,303</u>

Note 5 – PROJECTS

Vict. Gorse Task Force	1,900	
2 nd GEN Landcare 2010/11	12,972	
C.C.M.A. Board Project	22,830	
Golden Plains Shire 2010/11	4,500	
River Health 2010/11	60,545	
25 th Anniversary Grant	198	<u>102,945</u>

Note 6 – OTHER EXPENSES

Website expenses	345	
Purchase Desktop Computer	1,288	
F.T.L.A. Affiliation	215	
Narmbool Expo	422	
Vict. Landcare Council Affn.	200	
Sundry business purchases	786	<u>3,256</u>

LEIGH CATCHMENT GROUP

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2012

Note 7 – CASH AT BANK

Cheque Account	2,202	
Cash Management Account	52,638	
Term Deposit	50,000	<u>104,840</u>

Note 8 – DEBTORS

Projects dated 2011/12 or earlier		
C.C.M.A. River Health 2011/12	1,117	
Corangamite Landcare Grant 2011/12	2,500	
25 th Anniversary Grant	1,154	
A.T.O. – Net GST	710	<u>5,481</u>

Note 9 – EQUIPMENT

The value of equipment is treated as an historical cost and not brought to account. This includes one trailer, registered (to FTLA) and in fair condition; and all office furniture & equipment, including computers, printers & tools. During the year one trailer was donated to Napoleons Landcare Group; and a new desktop computer was purchased. There were no other significant acquisitions during the year.

Note 10 – LIABILITIES - PROJECTS

The following amounts are committed to on-ground-works by project participants for projects for which funding has commenced.

River Health 2010/11	40,269	
River Health 2011/12	12,845	
Corangamite Landcare 2011/12	5,992	
25 th Anniversary Grant	3,262	
V.L.F.F.I. Foundation Grant	2,000	<u>64,368</u>

This report was produced by the Leigh Catchment Group.
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**For a full colour version of this annual report please go to:
<http://corangamitelandcarevic.net.au/leigh-catchment/publications>**

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