



Brisbane Ranges Landcare Group

Newsletter



Chair: Robert Hall Treasurer: Chris Winfield Secretary:
0401-404-899 5369-4214

Visit our website for latest news: <http://brlg.org.au>

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Membership meeting BBQ – Take 2

The long-awaited recommencement of meetings kicks off with an informal BBQ for members next Thursday 15th April, after the unfortunate cancellation of the first meeting in February from Covid Restrictions.

The President will update the Group on some topics of interest, but the main priority is to get us back on track after a year off, particularly welcoming ideas and suggestions from our members as to what you want from your Landcare Group.

BRLG again welcomes all existing members, and new residents to the community to attend. If you know of any community members that may be interested seeing what Landcare is all about, let them know about our BBQ. We're looking forward to seeing you all on the night.

Meat is provided. Please bring a salad or dessert to share.

BRLG Members BBQ

Date: Thursday 15th April

Time: 6:30 pm

Venue: Balliang Community Hall

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Brisbane Ranges Landcare Group Boundary

It may have been some time as a group since we re-visited the boundaries of our Brisbane Ranges Landcare Group. Watch this space in future newsletters as BRLG Committee investigates where our boundary starts and finishes. The below map displays an example of the boundaries based on Victorian Landcare Maps showing separate BRLG areas in Port Phillip and Westernport CMA and Corangamite CMA as well as local council areas. It would appear however that there are no hard and fast boundaries for each of the networks and most networks continue to maintain good relationships, working together to support our environment and our members.



Agriculture in focus

Although Landcare is often associated as an organisation that focuses primarily on native flora and fauna, Brisbane Ranges Landcare Group recognises the symbiosis between our natural environment and our local farming community. As shown on the BRLG boundary map, a large proportion of the boundary includes farmed land and BRLG want to get to know our farming community members a bit more to identify ways that Landcare can support them.

The Victorian Farmers Federation is a key partner for Landcare, being involved in its establishment and providing valuable support for many years. Along with Landcare Victoria, Brisbane Ranges Landcare Group looks forward to developing closer ties with our local farmers and continue to keep an eye open for funding grants to support our local farmers...

Keep a look out for our next newsletter which will focus on the history of our farming community, in recognition of their contributions to our land, and future funding opportunities offering support to our local farmers.

Erosion Hotspot Project

Currently, the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority are running a number of Agricultural and Environmental Work Crews, expected to run until the end of April. As these programs draw to an end, remaining funding was identified within the materials budget so ideas for the use of this funding was pursued. This opportunity was timely given the Executive Committee has discussed the erosion along Staughton Vale Road as a prospective future project. Our President was able to secure a portion of the remaining funding and discussions commenced with landholders where erosion was of significant concern. Three properties elected to participate in the project.

Soil erosion specialist, Richard Hartland otherwise known as Zeke, whom has spoken at our Landcare meetings in the past, visited each of the properties, providing advice towards a plan to best tackle the erosion. The project idea formulated to include modification of the erosion and work crews spreading a mixture of fast growing cover crop for soil stabilisation and native seeds for longer term coverage. In more deeply eroded gullies, coir mesh matting will be used. This will be pinned down with metal pins. Donated straw mulch (thank you to a Bufton family friend) will be spread as far as it will go to aid with moisture loss. The costs of grass seed, matting, pins and labour to install will be covered by the CMA.



Where there is bad erosion, particularly tunnel erosion, modification with machinery is required. The catch was that the available funding could not be used for contractors so participating landowners have agreed to fund the earthmoving portion.

The suggested approach for the 3 properties with respect to erosion control is as follows:

Property 1. Seed to be spread and raked in across ripped areas by work crews. This was the preferred method for property 1 residents, to prevent potential injury to grazing animals from the use of the metal pins to secure the coir mesh. After discussions with a pasture seed specialist at Stephens Seeds, Robert was able to determine that a deep rooted variety of pasture grass such as [Uplands Cocksfoot](#) would provide grazing between autumn to late spring. Some straw bales may also be considered, to spread across the area, unless the grass quickly takes hold.

Species	Purpose
Upland cocksfoot	Cocksfoot is a deep rooted perennial grass suitable for grazing.

Property 2 and 3. Will take a different approach that will include native seed for shrubs:

Species	Purpose
Rye corn and may also add some Upland cocksfoot	Deep rooted soil stabilisation for the first 9 months then falling over to create mulch. Cocksfoot is a perennial grass.
Acacia acinacea (gold dust wattle)	Long lived suckering low shrub
Acacia rostriformis (bacchus marsh varish wattle)	Long lived suckering medium shrub
Dodonaea viscosa (hopbush)	Hardy shrub
Enchylaena tomentosa (ruby saltbush)	Hardy ground cover
Hardenbergia violacea (purple coral pea)	Hardy ground cover
Additional native shrub/tree seed to be included depending on availability.	

Properties 2 and 3, will utilise the coir mesh, placed in the gullies, and donated straw mulch spread beside them and across the escarpment as far as it will go. Local eucalypts could also be planted later using tubestock (more likely to be successful than with direct seeding).

This project is expected to conclude by the start of May. Look for the before and after photos in the new edition of the newsletter.



Cover cropping

Cover cropping is a beneficial farming practice which seeks to protect bare ground during otherwise fallow periods of the cropping cycle. It aims to provide continuous groundcover with cover crops protecting top soil from erosion, suppressing weeds, increasing water infiltration, slowing evaporation, improving soil carbon and soil nitrogen; as well as providing a valuable summer and autumn feed source for livestock in mixed farming systems. Mixed species cover crops can also provide benefits to beneficial insects and pollinators on farms.

Two webinars discussing cover cropping in South West Victoria have been held in recent months. Facilitated by Karen O'Keefe, Corangamite CMA's Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator, the recordings are now uploaded onto you tube and are ready to be watched.

<https://youtu.be/IIKGof5JGPU>

Webinar one features 4 project managers involved in running cover cropping trials. Webinar two features 2 experienced farmers discussing their cover cropping and grazing management experiences.

<https://youtu.be/qWs4Ti2bz9Y>

Trees available again through 15 Trees

BRLG have again been offered a significant number of trees and shrubs from Colleen at 15 Trees. Colleen has also asked our Group if we would have at least one site that could benefit from 30 older helpers with limited abilities. The BRLG Committee will undertake additional plantings to continue the enhancement of the Triangle, however other ideas are now being sought for other areas and properties. If you have any ideas or have some space for some native trees or shrubs on your own property, please share them at one of our meetings or with one of the Committee members.



Nestboxes for our owls and birds

Miles Geldard has been making habitat boxes for native wildlife for nearly 20 years. Living amongst the box ironbark forests in Castlemaine, Victoria, Miles has identified a high diversity of hollow dependent fauna, some of which are on the threatened species list. It's generally understood that species decline is primarily driven by habitat loss. Installation of a nest box immediately helps our native fauna by giving them somewhere to live.



For more information, the link to Miles' website is below.
<https://wildlifeneboxes.com.au/>



A Make-your-own Nestbox workshop has been considered a possible project idea for our Group. The workshop is expected to include a presentation by Miles and the construction of your nestbox. BRLG Committee will seek funding through community grants to cover the cost of the presentation and part of the cost of your nestbox.

Register your interest by talking with one of the members of the Committee.

Ausnet Services High Voltage Transmission Lines

The Western Victoria Transmission Network sounds good for our region, with promised job creation and unlocking renewable energy, but is it too good to be true?

The project is being delivered by Ausnet Services, and it's commercial division, Mondo. The Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) selected AusNet Services to deliver the project following a competitive tender process.

AusNet Services is the largest energy network business in Victoria, owning and operating three regulated networks - electrical distribution, gas distribution, and the state-wide electricity transmission network, including the Western Victoria Transmission Network.

For more information, visit Mondo's website

mondo.com.au (External link)

Or AusNet Services Website

ausnetservices.com.au (External link)

The Western Victoria Transmission Network website identifies Western Victoria as an important renewable energy-generation region. The website states that current energy network needs upgrading to share this renewable energy with all Victorians. The Western Victoria Transmission Network project will add a new link to the network making this possible. The construction includes a 190km transmission line starting in Bulgana in Victoria's west, connecting to Sydenham in Melbourne's North via a new terminal station to the north of Ballarat.



Western Victoria transmission network project

THE PROJECT
The Western Victoria Transmission Network Project is a new link that will unlock renewable energy in the region and create jobs and economic development opportunities

The project involves building a new approximately 190km electricity transmission line from Bulgana to Sydenham. Read more about the project online at www.westvictrp.com.au.

WE VALUE YOUR INPUT - JOIN US AT OUR COMMUNITY DROP-IN SESSIONS

We have narrowed down a broad Area of Interest to a number of corridor options for further investigation and consultation. We encourage your feedback on these options as we work towards identifying a single corridor and a final route.

Meet the team, learn about the project, and share your feedback with us. Drop in anytime between 2.00pm - 7.00pm at a location listed below.

All drop-in sessions will be facilitated in accordance with 'safest COVID-19' measures. Sessions may be changed or cancelled in line with Government advice.

NEWLYN Monday 16 March Newlyn Community Complex, Midland Hwy, Newlyn.	DAYLESFORD Thursday 18 March Daylesford Town Hall, 70 Vincent St, Daylesford	DARLEY Monday 23rd March Darley Park, Fanny & Daley St, Darley
BALLARAT Tuesday 16 March Miners Rest Community Hall, 2 Market St, Miners Rest	JOEL JOEL Monday 22nd March Joel Joel Hall, 214 Abel South Road, Joel Joel	WALBYRA Tuesday 30th March Woolbra PNC, 228 Sunnyside Hwy, Woolbra
GORDON Wednesday 17 March Gordon Recreation Centre, Main St, Gordon.	BALLING Tuesday 23rd March Balling First Soldiers Memorial Hall, 120 Bacchus Marsh (Seeling Road), Balling East	MELTON Wednesday 31st March Melton Community Hall, 238 High St, Melton
MYRNING Wednesday 24th March Myrning Hall, 6 Short St, Myrning		

For more information, visit westvictrp.com.au, call us on 03 9021 0674 or email info@westvictrp.com.au

In preparations for this, Western Victoria Transmission Network Identified Areas of Interest (Aoi) in early 2020 based on a range of technical investigations on the land between Bulgana and Sydenham. Following consideration of community consultation and feedback, Western Victoria Transmission Network have narrowed down the Aoi to corridors. Further investigations and community consultation will work towards identifying a single corridor and final route for the transmission lines.

Western Victoria Transmission Network state that the identified corridors will be subject to further consideration of specific environmental effects including biodiversity, and habitat, cultural heritage, landscape and visuals, land use, socioeconomic, community amenity, health and safety, roads and transport, catchment values and hydrology.

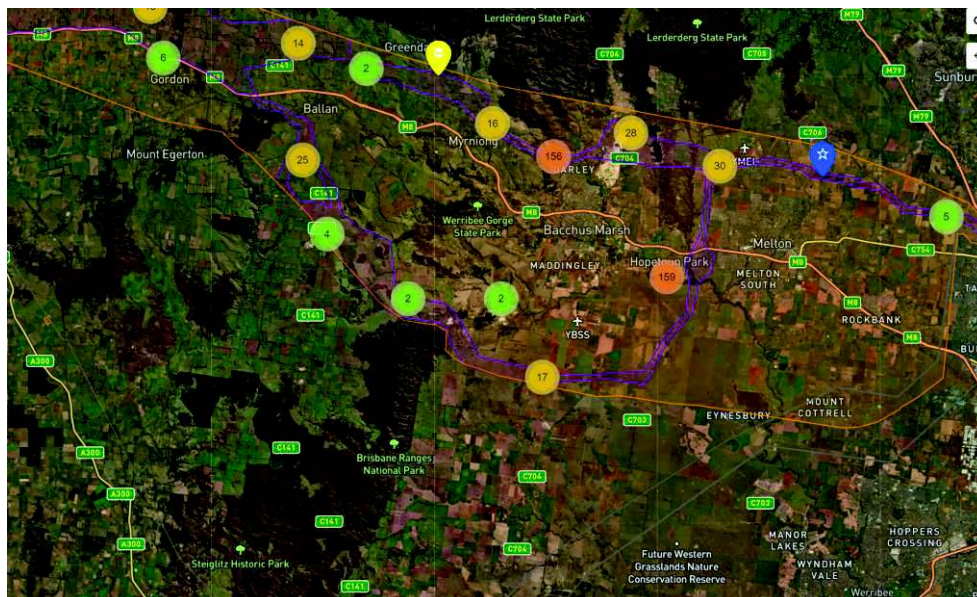
The below image is from their website displaying the corridor closest to our community, that is being considered. Within this corridor, as close as the space between Davis Road and Glenmore Road, community members have added pins highlighting possible impacts from the installation of the transmission lines. If you can consider any possible impacts to the environment, or our community, pins can still be added to the map with reasons indicating the type of impacts transmission lines will have in this area.

Legend

Purple shading – corridors for further investigation

Orange shading – original area of interest

Grey lines – existing transmission lines.



Western Victoria Transmission Network states they are committed to keeping the community informed of progress and more importantly getting the input of the community as they work to deliver the infrastructure. You can register for updates on this project and view the maps on the following link: <https://www.westvictnp.com.au/>

There is more information on their website. It would be well worthwhile navigating the website to see if and how this project may affect you. You can call Western Victoria Transmission Network on 03 9021 0674 or email info@westvictnp.com.au

Smallholder Farming Survey

Researchers from Charles Sturt University, the Graham Centre for Agricultural Innovation and Animal Health Australia are undertaking a study that aims to gain a better understanding of current smallholder farming networks in Australia. Smallholder farms may be productive and commercial on a small-scale and/or may be farms with livestock kept as a hobby to enjoy the farm lifestyle.

Researchers are seeking your input so that they can identify what you believe are valuable topics and activities to inform the design of additional smallholder farming networks. To achieve this, they are asking you to take part in this online survey which should take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

For further information on what the study involves and to begin the survey, please click on the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Smallhds>

Barking owl sighting in Staughton Vale!!!

With no sightings, or indication of their existence within the Brisbane Ranges during the Listening for Nature 2018-2019 project, using eco-acoustic technology (bioacoustics) to monitor bird populations in the Brisbane Ranges National Park it was thought that the Barking Owl no longer frequented the Brisbane Ranges. However, recently, a community member has been delighted to share their experience of a Barking Owl sighting. On a Saturday evening in February, after being drawn outside to uncover the location of a strange sounding barking dog, an owl was observed in a very nearby tree. Presumably a barking owl. It was seen on two more evenings after that.



Prior to this sighting, it was suspected that the decline in Barking owl numbers within the Brisbane Ranges may have been due to consuming baited rodents. While we ensure baits are put out of reach of children, pets and other animals, it may not always be at the forefront of our minds where rodents go after they have eaten baits.

The most commonly used rodent poisons are anticoagulant rodenticides (ARs). These act as blood thinners, so rats and mice can consume a lethal dose but not feel sick until later. Newer ARs, called second generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs), are powerful enough that a single feed can be lethal. But because of the time lag between taking a bait and feeling the effects, rodents can consume a more-than-lethal dose and still be wandering around.

Predators that naturally eat rodents, like owls and birds of prey, can then easily consume multiple poisoned rodents, in turn becoming poisoned themselves. SGARs don't break down quickly – some can stay in tissues and organs for months, even years. Unfortunately this just makes it easier for these bigger animals to get a lethal dose of toxins.

When we decide to use rodent baits around our homes and workplaces, our choices can have a serious impact on the native wildlife around us.

How to tell AR's from SGAR's?

Look for the "Active Constituents", on the label. The active constituents of AR's that are less harmful include Warfarin or Coumatetralyl. If the bait contains more harmful SGARs like Brodifacoum, Bromadiolone, Difenacoum, Difethialone, or Flocoumafen, leave it on the shelf. Globally SGARs have been responsible for declines in many carnivorous mammals and birds. Here in Australia it is not just Boobooks or other owls that are at risk. Other predatory and scavenging birds are also likely to be affected – from our eagles and falcons to our kookaburras, magpies, ravens, and currawongs. Native mammals like quolls and large reptiles like goannas and pythons are also likely to be affected.

Make your house and garden less friendly for rodents:

- tidy up garden waste (like brush piles),
- pick up any fallen fruit,
- ensure excess pet food isn't accessible,
- rodent-proof chook pens and aviaries,
- replace rat-friendly palms with owl-friendly natives, and
- seal potential roof/wall cavity access points that rodents might be using.

Encourage native predators:

- plant native trees, and
- install nest boxes for owls to breed in.

Reduce dependence on poison baits:

- consider other, non-poison pest control, like snap traps,
- only put out baits when you actually need to,
- read the labels on any poisons you buy and make the change to FGARs. Look for active constituents like Warfarin and Coumatetralyl, and
- leave SGARs on the shelf

Become an advocate for our birds:

Spread the word about bird-friendly rodent control. If professional pest controllers come to your home or workplace, find out what products they use, and encourage them to operate in ways that reduce their impact on our native wildlife, and ask your local hardware and grocery store to stock alternatives to SGARs.

More information can be found on these websites.

<https://birdlife.org.au/rodent-control>

<https://owlfriendly.org.au/our-nocturnal-birds/the-rodenticide-threat/>

In our Regular News.....

Weeds Website

Weeds Australia website is designed to connect you with knowledge to make informed decisions about managing invasive weeds within Australia. The site includes an extensive list of 398 weeds profiles to help you better identify, plan and manage your weed problem.

<https://weeds.org.au/>



BRLG Weed Sprayer

Available for use by BRLG members. Please contact Chris Winfield on 0429 484 644 to discuss your spraying needs.

Acknowledgement of country

We wish to acknowledge the Wadawurrung People, the traditional owners of these lands for their continuing culture and connection to Country. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present. We take inspiration from the legacy from the Wadawurrung people, who have produced food, while caring for the ecological systems that life depends upon, for tens of thousands of years.

Landcare Resources

I want to know about...	Here is a good place to start...
Aboriginal cultural heritage location mapping	https://www.vic.gov.au/aboriginalvictoria/heritage/heritage-tools-and-publications/heritage-tools.html then select "online map tool"
Biodiversity mapping and recording	http://maps.biodiversity.vic.gov.au/viewer/?viewer=NatureKit http://natureshare.org.au/ http://avh.chah.org.au/
Boxthorn	http://weeds.ala.org.au/WoNS/africanboxthorn/docs/African_boxthorn-national_best_practice_manual.pdf
Chilean needle grass	https://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive/weeds/publications/guidelines/wons/pubs/n-neesiana.pdf
Feral goat control	https://www.pestsmart.org.au/pest-animal-species/feral-goat/
Fox control	https://www.pestsmart.org.au/pest-animal-species/european-fox/
Gorse	https://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive/weeds/publications/guidelines/wons/pubs/u-europaeus.pdf
Landcare networks	Moorabool Landcare Network Geelong Landcare Network
Melbourne Water Stream Frontage Grants	https://www.melbournewater.com.au/community-and-education/apply-funding/stream-frontage-management-program
Rabbit management	http://www.mln.org.au/images/PDFS/rabbitactionguide.pdf https://www.pestsmart.org.au/pest-animal-species/european-rabbit/
Serrated tussock	https://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive/weeds/publications/guidelines/wons/pubs/n-trichotoma.pdf
Weeds - identification and control	http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/pests-diseases-and-weeds/weeds/a-z-of-weeds
Weed status in Victoria	http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/pests-diseases-and-weeds/weeds/invasive-plant-classifications http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/pests-diseases-and-weeds/protecting-victoria-from-pest-animals-and-weeds/legislation-policy-and-permits/declared-noxious-weeds-and-pest-animals-in-victoria

Last Laugh



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"YEAH, WE HAVE A SQUIRREL PROBLEM,
BUT IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK..."