



THE OCEANS, AIR, AND FOREST. THE RIVERS, PASTURELAND, AND FORESHORE. FOOD, FIBRE, AND IMMERSION. CONNECTION, COMMUNITY, AND THE COURSE WE SET FOR OURSELVES.



### SOLN aims to do three things...

- Create spaces of and for community.
- Strengthen community connections, knowledge, and possibility.
- Enable caring for the landscapes and seascapes that sustain us.



Winter is meant for hibernation, yet rust never sleeps...

So it is for SOLN. Did you know that we have

- over thirty funded projects currently underway
- seven active grant applications under review
- six part-time facilitators on board
- revamped our calendar of events and activities.
- refined our finances and moved our accounting in-house.

**Lots going on, often behind the scenes!**

**Enjoy the updates that follow within these pages.**



## SMALL BLOCKS BIG DREAMS: BUSH BLOCK WORKSHOP SERIES

This program is designed for any interested small landholders from across the Corangamite region with remnant vegetation ‘bush blocks’ who wish to improve biodiversity, amenity and enhance natural habitat for native species. These **small bush blocks may range in size from 2 acres to 250 acres**. See ‘Events’ page 23 for details

## SOLN COMMUNITY

*SOLN was delighted to host year 10 work experience students, Jack Dunstone and Jasper Newton from Apollo Bay P-12 College.*

### *Work Experience: Jack and Jasper*

On the 31<sup>st</sup> of July to the 4<sup>th</sup> of August, I and my school colleague, Jasper Newton, decided to pursue school-based work experience with SOLN.



Puerulus monitoring AB Harbour

Before choosing, I had a quick browse on the SOLN website and saw many activities that intrigued me as I have an interest in biology. When Oliver emailed me a list of what we would be doing that week, ‘Shrub Club’ on

Wednesday and ‘Puerulus monitoring’ on Tuesday spoke to me the most.

Shrub club was amazing as I got to see another side of the Apollo Bay community. I got to learn a lot about different planting techniques such as taking cuttings, pricking out and even planting various grasses and mosses around the Support Centre.



Planting at Cape Patton





Other activities that we did that week were, fungi foraging, bird watching, a plant walk, snail searching and a planting day at Cape Patton.



***Stereum ostrea* or Golden Curtain Crust**  
– found/recorded by work experience student.



**Jack and Jasper observing fungi during fungi foray at Elliot Rd., Marengo**

Overall my experience with the Southern Otway Landcare Network was incredible and I learned a lot about the biology of plants and animals. *Jack Dunstone*



Installing tree guards at Cape Patton

For a week Jack Dunstone and I helped out at Southern Otway Landcare Network for a school-based work experience camp, learning and partaking in every part of what Landcare has to offer. This included bird watching, fungus foraging, puerulus catching and hanging out at Shrub club. Shrub club in particular was a great day because we got to meet a lot of like-minded helpers in the community and both Jack and I learned so much about native plants.



We also enjoyed catching and counting puerulus at the harbour because apparently, they had never counted so many! We recorded a whopping 60 puerulus, doubling the previous record. Overall

Landcare was an amazing experience and it felt great to help out in the community. Thank you Landcare for the amazing week!  
*Jasper Newton*

*Expressions of interest for Year 10 Work Experience open March 1st and close May 1st every year. Please get in contact if you know a young person who might like to find out more about working in the natural resources space*



## COMMUNITY GROUPS

### Shrub Club Community Nursery (SCCN)

#### Butterfly garden



Orchard Swallowtail Paul Balfe/Flickr

There was a good number of people – from toddlers through to retired folk from Apollo

Bay on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> June to establish a Butterfly Host Garden at the Apollo Bay Community Hall (ex Senior Citizens Centre). Weather was typical for June... cold with rain and sunshine, but that did not dampen the enthusiasm and spirit of team leaders and volunteers!

Georgie Custance and Molly Fisher, (our butterfly Queens) from the Threatened Species Conservancy, initiated the project in partnership with SOLN after gaining funding from Coastcare Victoria.



A 'Host' garden provides specific endemic plants for local species of butterflies to lay eggs and provide food for emerging caterpillars. Some butterflies are very fussy and only lay eggs on specific plant species! It is also part of improving biodiversity and

local communities' awareness of this importance. Lots of native butterflies indicates a healthy environment!



Garden beds and paths were mapped out; cardboard laid down on existing lawn in lieu of herbicide while a few exotic plant species were removed. Large white pebbles were wheel-barrowed onto paths while mulch (from GORCAPA) was placed on garden beds. A lot of hands made light work!!

Then the fun part, actually planting, began. Thick cardboard proved problematic at first but nothing a small hand mattock couldn't solve. Lots of native grasses, Indigofera, xanthorrhoea, dusty millers to name just a few...waiting for our lovely Forest Boronia (*Boronia muelleri*) to form more roots at the

Shrub Club Community Nursery before it too can be planted... Boronia is host plant to the lovely Orchard Swallowtail Butterfly (*Papilio Aegeus*)



The Butterfly Garden will have botanical names of all host plants and their prospective butterfly species hoping to inspire local gardeners to plant more host plants. All host plants will be available from the Shrub Club Community Nursery. Nature





strips may be a good area to start planting host butterfly plants!



We are so fortunate to have knowledgeable leaders working for environmental based organisations in our town that together with volunteers we are able to contribute to the environment. We all enjoyed a delicious lunch together after such a productive morning. Thanks everyone! *Pam Dodsworth*

### *Junior Landcare workshop at Apollo Bay P-12 College*

In early winter a crack team of volunteers and staff (Kim Stevenson, Louisa Bartels and myself) headed into the Apollo Bay school to run a workshop on biodiversity, habitat creation and plant propagation with a group of budding young landcarers. These Year 3 and 4's will be creating a wildlife garden at the school, in the coming months, thanks to a Woolworths Junior Landcare grant secured by SOLN and the school. We sat down with the kids and talked about the concept of biodiversity, how healthy environments rely on lifeforms of all shapes and sizes living and

working together, and the important role of plants in creating habitat.

After some excellent (and often left of field) questions and comments from the young ones, we headed out into the school yard (microscopes and sample tubes in hand) to see what wildlife we could find already existing at the school. Knowing the place like



the back of their hand, the kids promptly showed us the hiding places of worms, spiders, fungi and all manner of interesting things, and were pleased to know their garden would help attract even more of these interesting beings! We finished the session with some plant propagation, helping our enthusiastic cohort in striking cuttings and potting up seedlings, which will soon go in the ground and form their new garden. It was a fun morning, with perhaps a bit of managed chaos, to say the least! *Seamus Fillmore*



## Planting Days

### *Old Tuxion Road*

How nice *not to hear* the roar of chainsaws at a working bee on this property!

Yes, we've finished the thinning of trees that had previously been planted in excess in the early days of Landcare when less was known about the local ecological vegetation classes. The felled trees are contributing valuable habitat for small creatures, as well as providing a handy resting point for the planting equipment (see picture) used by the happy band of volunteers that turned up on a bright and sunny winter's day to finish off the revegetation project.



A wide variety of seedlings suitable for the area had been propagated at the support centre, and hundreds of them were planted on the day. They are now happily thriving in their forever home!

This project was kindly funded by the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority through its Wild Otways Initiative and, despite the constraints imposed by pandemic lockdowns, has been a clear success already.

Even before this planting day some natural regeneration had been observed, showing that reducing the tree density has allowed mid- and understorey vegetation to start to develop.

In future, we hope to be able to monitor biodiversity on this site and look at ways to repeat this process on other properties in the region. Let us know if you're interested!

### *Exploring Environmental Stewardship: Year 12 Outdoor Education Class partners with Landcare at Cape Patton*



In a dynamic blend of education and community engagement, the Year 12 outdoor education class from Catholic Regional College Sydenham embarked on a transformative journey in collaboration with Landcare. Delving into the heart of the Otways to learn about land rejuvenation, native ecosystems, and the vital role of environmental stewardship, this immersive experience not only enriched the students' understanding of the local environment but also fostered a sense of responsibility





towards the community they inhabited on camps.

Students were provided with a unique opportunity to actively contribute to the rejuvenation of privately owned land. Through hands-on activities such as tree planting, soil restoration, and habitat enhancement, they gained insights into the practical aspects of sustainable land management.



Guided by the expertise of Landcare, they learned about the importance of local native species in maintaining the health and stability of the local ecosystem. The students discovered that these native species are intricately woven into the fabric of their environment, serving as guardians against the encroachment of invasive species and supporting the intricate web of life in the area. Through the interactive workshop and discussions with the volunteers and staff of Landcare, our students had the opportunity to explore the ripple effects caused by non-native plants and animals. Understanding the implications of these species served as a stark reminder of the delicate balance that

must be maintained to ensure the long-term health of the environment.

We would like to express a heartfelt thank you to Landcare for their invaluable contribution. Their guidance, expertise, and dedication were instrumental in shaping this transformative experience for the Year 12 students. The time and knowledge shared by Landcare created a lasting impact on the students, setting them on a path of environmental awareness and a positive difference in their world. *Peter Wilson and Laura Marsden*

## Plant Walks

### June

Have you ever been on a plant walk? Landcare run plant walks weekly in the warmer months and monthly in the colder months. They are a mixture of learning, exploring different vegetation communities, and collecting material for propagation, all in a friendly environment.



In June we explored Red Hill Track, off Blanket Bay Road at Cape Otway. We looked at different sedges, collected seeds to plant, cut bushes for cuttings, did a 10 minute snail search and noted winter changes in the vegetation.



As well as being fun I always learn something new. Now I know the difference between Sword Sedge and Saw Sedge. One small piece of the jigsaw.



Keep an eye on your emails for information about plant walks.

*Chris Prewer (who knew very little about local plants eighteen months ago)*



### *July and August*

The plant walk in July was the third time this year we trekked out to Old Ocean Road. We were in search of plants like the Forest Boronia (*Boronia muelleri*) which are easily accessible here and not generally found around Apollo Bay. (NB: A quite palatable tea was enjoyed at one of our Shrub Club lunches, made from Boronia leaves and flowers left over after cuttings were taken)

August's plant walk took us to the Aire River Settlement Rd with the aim of collecting seed or small seedlings of *Nothofagus cunninghamii* (common name, Myrtle Beech). But as usual what you get is so much more, that is, a slow and steady education in local plants and environments whilst walking through Victoria's most serene and beautiful landscapes.

Because Myrtle Beech requires moist conditions and grows well in wet gullies and sheltered slopes we headed to the ford across the Aire river, near the Aire Crossing Campsite. Within the first 5 minutes Olly Ian was able to identify, Clem marvelled at the slender tree ferns (*Alsophila cunninghamii*), which only grow in very damp forest, usually in stream gullies and riverbanks, and Seamus showed us an unusual branching fern, *Sticherus lobatus*, common name spreading fan fern, growing along the road banks.



The plant population changed quite noticeably the further up we walked from the river.

We saw many bootlace bushes (*Pimelia axiflora*) and learned that they are dioecious...that is, male and female flowers grow on separate plants; you need both for flowers to achieve fertilisation and seed formation. Looking closely at the tiny flowers one can see that the female flowers





have a single pointy bit (stigma) whilst the male flowers have two pointy bits (anthers).



Further up the hill Hazel Pomaderris (*Pomaderris aspera*) dominated the roadside, and twisting up through some plants we found the bright purple seed pods of the Purple Apple Berry (*Billardiera macrantha*). This is related to another indigenous climber, the Common Apple berry (*Billardiera scandens*), which also has a tubular white flower, flared at the bottom, but has a plump green seed pod. Both are also related to the environmental weed, the Bluebell Creeper (*Billardiera fusiformis*) that has a pretty purple bell-shaped flower and skinnier dark purple seed pods...So if you're looking to plant a climber, go for the first two and avoid the last, please!

Coming back down the hill Helen (applying knowledge gained in the June plant walk?) was trying to work out if the big strappy leafed plant was a sword sedge or a saw sedge. In fact, both plants were there: the sword sedge (*Lepidosperma gladiatum*) was in flower with smooth strappy leaves whereas the saw sedge (*Gahnia spp*) leaves

were quite rough with sharp edges that threatened a paper-cut type injury if one wasn't careful!

Whilst we did find one *Nothofagus* seedling, and collected it along with some nearby soil, Ian also gathered a few buckets of leaf litter with the view that it would likely contain some Myrtle Beech seed that we could propagate. Another thing we are learning is the importance of collecting from areas that are similar (e.g.: soil and species) to the area you will be revegetating. Plants of local 'provenance' tend to grow stronger, hence our regular plant walks to collect local plant material.

So, a good day out all round! Our next plant walk is scheduled for **5 September**, come along if you enjoy a quiet bush walk casually sprinkled with a smattering of local plant knowledge! *Kim Stevenson*

*Please note Landcare is licensed to collect from this area. Collecting material in State or National Forest requires a permit and, if collecting on private land, permission from the owner/ land manager is required.*

## Support Centre

### *Kitchen Improvements*

Landcare regulars may have noticed the kitchen improvements in the past months. Just over a year ago we were washing up outside in the rain! Now we have new benches, induction cooktops, bathroom





sink, HOT WATER, wonderful serving table (thanks Kim and Kel) and a view of the nursery through the window.

A more welcoming kitchen supports the tireless efforts of those who toil for the Landcare community. It will provide comfort and foster companionship to those seeking a sit down, chat, cuppa or bite.

Likewise recognising the self-appointed kitchen maestros with a working environment, affirms that their efforts are valued.

The ability to prepare the lunchtime bounty provided by members may well be the driving force behind membership being so robust and committed. Plants are nice but that veggie curry was to die for.

Like Landcare more broadly the kitchen is a little community that survives through nourishment.

Our road to Michelin stars is not over yet, so keep an eye out for David's new mural, indigenous paint theme, comfy couches, health station and library to complete the ensemble. *Nigel Senior*

### *Nursery Improvements*

Despite the cold weather things have been humming along down at Shrub Club - every Wednesday morning we've been lighting up the fire, getting our hands dirty for a few hours then sitting down for some magnificent lunches.

We've recently undergone a *major* infrastructure development-the near-completion of 'Clarke's Crossing', a wonderful log bridge designed and built by budding young engineer Ian Clarke.

The bridge gives us great access to the beautiful section of creek and forest below the nursery, meaning there will be more opportunities for pulling out blackberries (aka preparing a goat lunch), planting a rainforest understorey, and sharing some picnics around an open fire.



Other works in progress include the gradual beautifying of the kitchen shed (see above), the updating of our benches and irrigation, and the planning of a new potting mix bay.

A day of planting behind the propagation shed has also put in the foundations for the 'Shrub Club exhibition wetlands' through our swampy drainage line - over the next few years this area should develop into a healthy and diverse little patch of swamp!

*Seamus Fillmore*







## Otway Ocean Care (OOC)

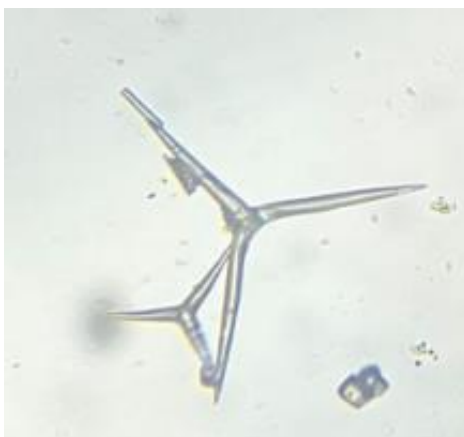
### Sponge Workshop



In early July I had the opportunity to travel down to Apollo Bay Senior Citizens Centre to attend Otway Ocean Care's Sponge Workshop with Guest Speaker, Lisa Goudie.

I grew up with a family who loved to dive and snorkel, yet this workshop promptly reminded me that underneath the ocean surface, there is more for us to learn, be awed by, and protect than we could ever imagine.

In the workshop I learnt about the threats to Sponges, and some of the defences they use to protect themselves. I also learnt that up until about four weeks ago, Sponges were considered the **oldest animals** in the world. It is only with emerging research that we are learning Comb Jellies may in fact be older than 890 million year old sponge fossils. Either way, incredibly impressive and we still have a lot to learn (isn't that such a brilliant part about life here on planet earth?).



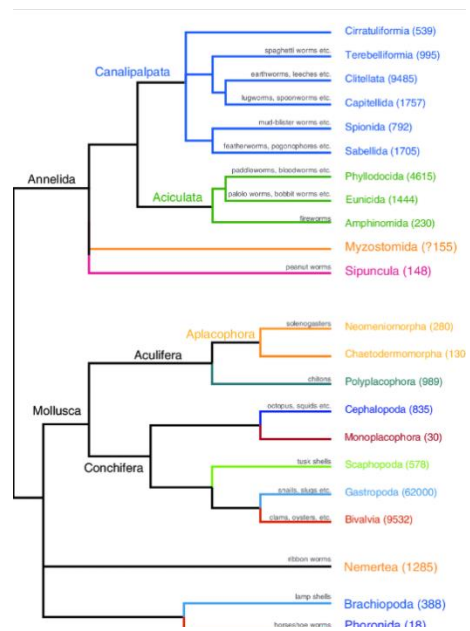
We investigated siliceous spicules further under a microscope and chatted through systems and structures of sponges. Another highlight was perusing through the fantastic

Otway Ocean Care Snorkel Guide produced by Darcy Nugent.

Thanks all who attended & Darcy from Otway Ocean Care for organising the fantastic event. *Shaya Kaartinen-Price*

### Marine Worms Workshop

Robin Wilson from Museum Victoria introduced himself as primarily a taxonomist and proceeded to thoughtfully educate us about the three main groups, or phyla, of marine worms, the Flatworms (Platyhelminthes), the Roundworms (Nematodes) and, Robin's main area of expertise, the Segmented Worms (Annelids).



Combined phylogeny of Mollusca and Annelida. The Mollusca tree is drawn from Smith et al. (2011), while the consensus phylogeny of Annelida and Sipuncula is based on Rouse and Pleijel (2001) and Struck et al. (2011)

A diagram used to map the evolutionary relationships between animals showed that worms appear at many locations in the map and are not necessarily each other's closest relatives. For example, annelids are more closely related to molluscs, than they are to flatworms or roundworms. The recent application of DNA analysis has seen the



reassignment of many organisms from one group to another and has provided unequivocal evidence to support or debunk long held designations of species.



But really, the best part was all the amazing photos, taken mostly by 'citizen scientists' (volunteers), for whom Robin expressed a great deal of admiration and appreciation. The level of detail in the photos allows scientists to document and make clear distinctions based on types and locations of very fine structures such as scales, filaments and chaetae (bristles).

Robin also made the point that studying and classifying marine worms is important work which can have commercial implications (worms boring into oyster's shells reduce the quality for food markets), as well as identify roles that marine worms play in the environment. Many marine worms provide food for marine life either as plankton in their larval stages, or later in adult form. And another feature of some worms is to remove certain chemicals, including some metals, from sea water, thus improving water quality. Some types of marine worms are used as bioindicators and reflect the health of an ecosystem.

Following the presentation, we were able to view a variety of marine worms collected the day before from AB harbour. Under the microscope they were both colourful and mesmerising as filaments slowly unfurled

and curled about. The best way to document the wide range of marine worms in our own area is to get our citizen scientists to start photographing and cataloguing them, and Robin is very keen to support interested parties in this endeavour.

It was definitely worth getting out at 10am on a Sunday in winter to find out about these marine organisms that we often take for granted!

### *Marine Workshop PLUS...Puerulus*

The weekend on the 3rd and 4th of June my best friend and I had the fantastic opportunity to volunteer and learn with Darcy from Otway Ocean Care and Dr Robin Wilson and several other lovely volunteers.



On the Saturday we headed down to Apollo bay and to the pier to help out with some Puerulus monitoring. We only found one Puerulus but found countless amounts of other unique ocean critters.

After our hands were dirty and phones filled with pictures we headed back for some hot chips and ocean themed conversations. It was my first-time volunteering for the monitoring and what an experience it was. You will definitely find me at future events. On the Sunday we had the pleasure of learning from Dr Robin Wilson. He spoke about several of the major marine worm groups and their differences. It was





extremely interesting, and his enthusiasm was infectious. We were even able to have a look through some textbooks, eat some cake and look at some samples under the microscope.

I cannot recommend Ocean Otway Care enough. The people, hands-on learning and unique experiences I've had with them so far have been awesome and invaluable. I hope to see familiar faces and new faces at their future events! *Christina Karagiorgis*

### *Puerulus Count and nudibranchs.*

As part of my marine bioart project, Seaweed Appreciation Society I was honoured to do a recent residency with Landcare in Apollo Bay.

One of the highlights was a citizen science project that I attended at the port with some locals, some work experience students. and a marine biologist by the name of Darcy Nugent.

We were there to monitor the levels of the Puerulus - the larval stage of the Southern Rock Lobster which is integral to the healthy economy of the local fishing Industry. The research is funded by Fisheries Victoria. Declines in the Rock Lobster numbers were reported around 2010 and the count informs sustainable fishing quotas.



The Puerulus Count happens once a month within a day of the full moon. We got lucky- the day that I

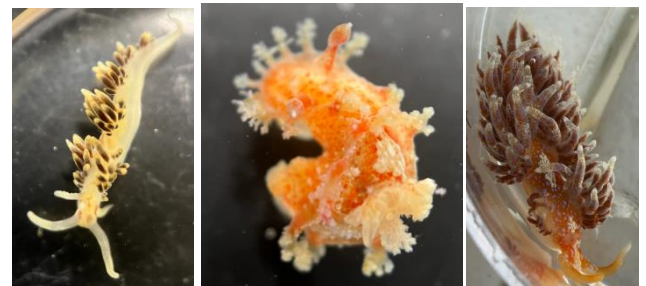
was there as we recorded over sixty rock lobsters in different larval stages. Previous counts have been much lower, with the most recent record being (28).

The bycatch of the Puerulus Count is also of interest to groups such as Coastcare and

Museums Victoria, and there were many other things to see on the day.

I was there because I love marine-focused citizen science, it helps reveal just some of the myriad things I still have to learn about marine creatures and their seaweed-y habitat.

But mostly I was there in the hope of seeing nudibranchs in real life. I have obsessed over images of their colourful forms and read up about them, but I hadn't yet seen any in the wild. It was exciting to find so many during this count and I realised how many I must have swum past and overlooked in the past, as they can be as small as a few millimetres long.



Darcy and I are keen to source a stereo microscope suitable for photomicrography. Darcy is looking to get great close-up images to add to the nudibranch census, i naturalist and Museum Victoria records. I am keen to explore the creative possibilities of scientific imaging.

Species monitoring projects such as the Puerulus Count are important, they allow us to gauge the health of marine creatures and their habitats, information that can ideally contribute to mitigating the impacts of climate change.



It was fantastic to be out on the pontoon in the winter sun, at a safe distance from a couple of fur seals warming themselves on the dock, connecting with the local community and seeing just some of the fascinating creatures that live amongst the rocks and the marine algae.

I can't wait to take this work further; teach myself photomicrography, read up more about Southern Rock Lobsters and spend more time in Apollo Bay.

Thank you to Coastcare Victoria for funding this residency. *Lichen Kelp*

*Lichen Kelp and the Seaweed Appreciation Society were brought to Apollo Bay by SOLN and Apollo Bay WORDfest together with Apollo Bay Arts Inc; her arts residency, accommodation and activities for the community were funded by Coastcare Victoria.*

### Otway Ocean Care Hoodies

Support OOC with a hoodie purchase: profits made from sales will go directly back into OOC to run more workshops and activities.

Text Georgie for details on 0488 508 91

### Otway Ocean Care Library

Ocean Care has put together a small library of reference books about all things ocean, as well as selected equipment such as underwater cameras and viewers for borrowing; conditions apply.

Contact Vicky for details 0417 127 401.

### Otway Ocean Care Snorkel Guides



“Another highlight was perusing through the fantastic Otway Ocean Care Snorkel Guide produced by Darcy Nugent”

*Shaya Kaartinen-Price.*

See Landcare staff or visit Wildlife Wonders to purchase.

## Otway Mushroom and Fungi Group (OMFG)

### Otway Mushroom Fungi Group



Photo by Colac Herald

The Otway Mushroom Fungi Group have conducted two fungi forays recently, the first to a track off Elliott Road and another to a private property, Allambee, on the Great Ocean Road.

Neil Tucker from Angair, (Anglesea, Aireys Inlet Society for the Protection of Flora and Fauna) who have collected over 6000 specimens of flora, fauna and fungi since it was established in 1969 helped us learn more about fungi, details to look out for when trying to identify it, and accompanied us on a rich series of observations of wild fungi under the warming rays of Winter sunshine. Despite it being widely considered the off-season for fungi, we've been treated to many eye-opening sightings.

We are currently scoping what would be involved to survey fungi in the Otways in a systematic way, as a citizen science project, and also to integrate it into our observations of the impact of SOLN's revegetation activities on the health of land and ecosystems. The group has also received two grants, from Coastcare and Colac Otway Shire, which will fund activities in 2024 to support more people engaging in learning about how fungi help make our world, till our soils, covert dead organic matter and





recycled it into nutrients that feed plants and animals.

*Participant Liz Gliszczynski says:*

The OMFG is a newly formed group under the auspices of SOLN. Thus far we have done two fungi forays in the local area seeking and trying to identify various types of fungi.

Neal Tucker from ANGAIR was a guest speaker last week. Approximately 4,500 fungal species have been found in the area from Anglesea to Lorne. It is estimated that our area – the Southern Otways – has well over 8,000 species. Finding and identifying them all sounds like the work of several lifetimes. Neal joined us on a foray on a private property in Marengo. We found fungi on rotting wood, in the ground, on living trees and a rather uncommon species on animal droppings. There are even fungi living on fungi.

If you wish to join us in our ventures check out our [Facebook page](#) for future events and forays. OMFG is just one other step in getting to know and understand the place in which we live, work and play.

Joy Whitton

### **\*Updated Southern Otways Fungi Guide\***



*With brighter, clearer images and new classifications and nomenclature by Alison Pouliot, the 2023 update to SOLN's 'Fungi Guide' is your best companion on your fungi explorations.*

*And it's now fully waterproof!*

See Landcare staff or visit

Wildlife Wonders to purchase.

### **Edible Gardens Group**

*Campfire Conversation: A seaweed symposium by Lichen Kelp & the Seaweed Appreciation Society*



On Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> August, we had an afternoon conversation at SOLN's Support Centre about all things seaweed-y, learning about the macroalgae found along our coastline and how it can be used in our diet. We shared damper threaded with local seaweed varieties, pots of mussels infused with seaweed, and Tony Webber's famous apple



pancakes flambéed with Calvados. This fabulous SOLN and *Edible Gardens Group* event was **made possible by Coastcare Victoria...**



*Participants Trev Salvado and Cindy Bohan share their experience:*



With the prospect of sitting around a fire in Piggery Lane to hear three passionate people share their knowledge and experience of SEAWEED, we arrived curious. With the fire to keep us warm, to watch and smell seaweed infused damper cook and to know mussels would be served, participants were enthralled.

From academic to creative, from novice to experienced, from curious to knowledgeable, the circle of participants engaged in 90 minutes of conversation curated by Lichen Kelp from the Seaweed Appreciation Society international (what a club title!). Zoe Brittain chatted about her ecological and anthropological research titled Indigenous Use of Seaweed in Temperate Australia and Alecia Bellgrove discussed edible seaweeds and nutrition, as well as the role seaweeds can play in the mitigation of climate change.

Fun facts:

- Nudibranchs digest toxins in seaweed, absorbing the toxin and using them as a protective factor to deter their predators.
- Seaweeds are a water filter; our oceans are dependent on them to clean the water for us and the life dependent on clean waters.
- Seaweeds are a nutritious food source, but care needs to be taken

where it is sourced for food. Because of their water filtering attributes, they can store the toxins which can be harmful if ingested.



## Otway Bird Observers (OBO)

### *Otway Bird Observers (OBO) Update*



Common sandpiper, *Actitis hypoleucos*: Turnbull, Ray, Atlas of Living Australia 2023

OBO, the newest group on the SOLN block have something to crow about! Our very first grant application is a successful recipient of a 2023 Coastcare Victoria Community Grant. This means we'll be hosting a special two-day shorebird and sea bird identification workshop in the very near future. This training will mean we can develop our eagle eye skills and "Tern" our hand to helping with long-term monitoring and conservation projects. Because let's be





honest, it can be hard to tell your Sanderlings, from your Sandpipers.

Keep an eye on your email for future updates and a date announcement.

If you'd like to learn more please join our mailing list: [clem.landcare@soln.org](mailto:clem.landcare@soln.org) or our Facebook group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/otwaybirdobservers>

With thanks to the **Victorian Government and Coastcare Victoria**. *Clem Whetherall*



Sanderling, *Calidris alba*: Murray, Steve , Atlas of Living Australia 2023

## LANDCARE GROUPS

### Apollo Bay (AB LG)

#### *Fighting weeds and Fundraising*

ABLG have a strong history of advocating for the environment, most notably successfully opposing logging in the Otways years ago and promoting the eradication of the insidious and persistent environmental weed, *Senecio jacobaea*, or Ragwort (Please remove any you might see!)

As some members retire and others step up, ABLG is pleased to have received funding from Coastcare Victoria for further weed control and revegetation works at Wild Dog Creek and Skenes Creek. In the spring we'll be doing a weed control working bee at Wild Dog Creek estuary and another at Skenes Creek estuary, both of which will be

followed up with weed control by a professional chemical contractor. In the autumn we will then replace the plants we've removed with local natives and will have a working bee at each location to do these plantings.

#### ***If you live in or around Apollo Bay, your local Landcare group needs you!***

An influx of new residents in the area may not be aware of their local Landcare group and the work it does to improve not only privately owned land and large landowner properties, but also land in the public domain from which we all benefit. If you're reading this, this probably does not apply to you, but you can help spread the word not only how important the environmental work is, but also how easy it is to make a difference when many people join together to get the job done. It's fun, too! Watch this space (website, facebook, Instagram) for announcements of upcoming working bees, then grab a friend or neighbour and get involved. It's a pleasant day out and lunch is provided!



Ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*)

Photo: Mark Imhof

#### *Landcare Victoria donations*

Do you want to contribute to Landcare but don't have the time or ability to get to Shrub Club or a working bee? An alternative, for those who can, is to make a tax-deductible donation of money. Landcare Victoria have set up a neat and simple way to do this – either go to

<https://www.landcarevictoria.org.au/LVI/Donate/Make%20a%20donation.aspx>

or simply Google "Landcare Victoria donations". Halfway down the page, just below the donation amount, you can choose

where you would like your donation to go. Simple as that. Currently you can nominate either **the Southern Otway Landcare Network** (which employs the facilitators and runs the Support Centre) or the **Apollo Bay Landcare Group**; other groups in our network are looking at registering too, check with them if you like. Our thanks to Mark Gordon, treasurer of the Apollo Bay Landcare Group, for finding and figuring out the process!

## Lighthouse to Lavers (L2L LG)

### *Lighthouse to Lavers Landcare Group- August Meeting*



Twenty people came along to the Lighthouse to Lavers/Hordern Vale Glenaire Landcare Group Meeting on August 10, with a good mix of new and old faces, and people from Cape Otway to Yuulong attending.

Clem Wetherall and Joy Whitton, the group facilitators, introduced themselves, outlined what Landcare can offer and what their roles entail. John Harris talked about he and Sue's alpaca farm, the challenges faced, and the various forms of assistance they've received from Landcare. We did some group activities and people were buzzing with lots of talk about what is challenging on their land and many more ideas on what they'd need to learn more about. They also discussed together what action they liked to be involved in and what they could better

achieve if done collectively (see table below). Huge thanks to the organisers including Harry, Sandra and David for making it a successful night.

#### *From one participant:*

This Thursday our community was invited to a local group Landcare meeting at our CFA office in Lavers Hill.

Being relatively new to the area and having fairly scant knowledge of Landcare as an organisation, I thought it wise to take in the enthusiastic encouragement from other locals to check it out.

Aside from learning about how Landcare functions on various levels: grants, community support groups, working bees, etc., the gathering of locals was just as rewarding, if not more, in as far as getting to know how other folk are dealing with the same or similar challenges on and around their properties.

These invaluable connections were helped along with great enthusiasm and co-ordination by our two new facilitators, Joy and Clem and longer-term Landcare member / advocate John (Harry).

It was great to get to meet more locals and to feel a sense of common goals for the wellbeing of the land.

A big thank you to all who joined in and helped co-ordinate the activities and the catering of fine snacks provided.





NEED/LIKE TO KNOW	ACTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soil management for high rainfall areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group/bulk ordering for delivery of mulch compost/etc?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Black slugs!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple landholders collectively booking services/contractors</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education on First Nations 6 seasons and the implications for our area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared machinery – e.g., no-till direct seeder for pasture</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural pesticides for slugs bracken weed control share what works &amp; what doesn't</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share info about available resources for group to use – would like to know about ...</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to run stock all year round</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working bees e.g., blackberry</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planting seasonal vegies and fruit for our climate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vermin control /eradication – feral cats, pigs, deer, foxes</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to extend the growing season for vegies &amp; fruit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weed control – environmental weeds – cape weed ivy coastal wattle blackberries</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to reduce pH of soil</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deer control</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to reduce couch infestation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help to fence off gullies to protect ecosystem</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to get rid of feral furry animals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek funding for local composting – local location</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to identify weeds/shrubs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plant walks for our area – Lighthouse to Lavers (and beyond)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About local composting</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current forest conservation info sources</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What support (infrastructure) is there for rotational grazing?</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications in the community – a one stop newsletter for all opportunities Landcare CCMA Parks Fire Forest Victoria</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Viticulture – wine grapes</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Glow worms</li> </ul>	

### *Have you seen feral pigs or deer in the Otways?*

All pig and deer sightings (or damage) can be recorded on the **FeralScan**, an easy-to-use app that sends data to the agencies that monitor and control populations: <https://www.feralscan.org.au/>

### *Seeking humane deer control on your property?*

If you would like help controlling deer on your property, OR want to support deer control and purchase locally harvested free-range venison, we encourage you to visit [Dama Dama Free Range](#) or call Anthony Roe on 0412 403 221.

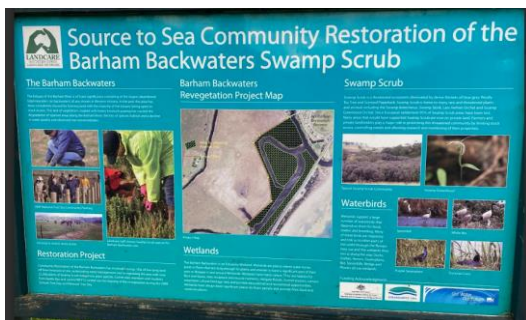


## Marengo Barham (MBLG)

### Revisiting Revegetation sites

Three members of the Marengo Barham Landcare Group inspected two previous revegetation sites along the Barham River ('The Barham Backwaters') that had been planted with the assistance of other SOLN groups and members of the public.

The first area was planted in 2009.



A commemorative board near the bridge spanning the Barham River (within the caravan park) has photos and an explanation of the significance of the estuary, its degradation by clearing and grazing by



livestock and the importance of the Swamp Scrub ecosystem. Unfortunately, the bridge is currently closed, probably due to its wonky condition, so we could only look from the opposite bank. The eucalypt plantings were clearly successful, but little else could be identified from that distance. We will revisit in a future expedition, by boat if necessary, to take a closer look.

The second area, upstream of Gambier Street, was planted last year. We are pleased to report that a good number of

plants have rooted well in their challenging environment, and their growth has progressed to above the height of the long grass that surrounds them.



The most successful are hop goodenia (*Goodenia ovata*), prickly Moses (*Acacia verticillata*), *Eucalyptus* species, tea tree (*Leptospermum*) species, *Ozothamnus* species, She-oak (*Allocasuarina*) species, kangaroo apple (*Solanum aviculare*), scented melaleuca (*Melaleuca squarrosa*) and *Juncus* species, a spiky grass like plant that enjoys a moist environment. Consideration is being given to enhancing these areas with a few more plants.

A couple of other areas will be checked soon so that we can plan our program for the next 12 months. We look forward to engaging with our members and the general public again.

## Wye to Wongarra (W2W LG)

### Wye to Wongarra Winter News

It's been cold out there, and our volunteers have been very glad of a winter hiatus. The admin doesn't stop though, and we acquitted three grants before the end of the financial year:

- Colac Otway Shire Making Room: Fungi to Forest \$1,834.00 (Land Manager Parks Victoria, and private property)
- Wild Otways Trees for Tawnys (administered by CCMA for the Australian Government \$7,546 -Land Manager Colac Otway Shire)





- Victorian Coastcare : Sea Spurge Removal at Kennett River \$11,671 (Land Manager GORCAPA)

We held some working bees at Kennett River-continuing Sea spurge removal and



Sea Spurge (*Euphorbia paralias*)

over 2000 plants in place The Kennett project has enormous community buy in and big attendance at working bees.

The June long weekend saw two well attended and informative member fungi walks led by **Sapphire McMullan-Fisher** of **Fun Fungi Ecology**.



Stinky Squid Fungus

In July we learnt that our Colac Otway Shire Community Grant application has been successful **“Snake Sense: Myths and Hisses”** This community education activity will be open to the public from the length of the Otway Coast. (Details to be posted on Instagram: w2wlandcaregroup)

## FROM SOLN’S FACILITATOR HOT DESK

**Andrea de Kauwe**

### *Ecosystem: connections and protections*

It was so wonderful to escape for most of the winter with my little family and our camping trailer and travel from Cairns to Cape York, visiting the extraordinary Wet Tropics Rainforest World Heritage Area, the reef and also taking a boat from Australia's northernmost tip to the Torres Strait to experience Zenadth Kes culture.



Breathtaking forest giants and the most incredible figs, palms and epiphytes; swimming beside green sea turtles and gliding past saltwater crocodiles with the Daintree's crocodile whisperer; waking to the reverberating chorus of rainforest birds (or the night screams of the bush stone curlew); wetland birds enjoying all the water flowing through Rinyirru NP and large flocks of red-tailed black cockatoos; the Quinkan rock art galleries through the sandstone



country between Laura and Cooktown; the most beautiful butterflies and moths and all



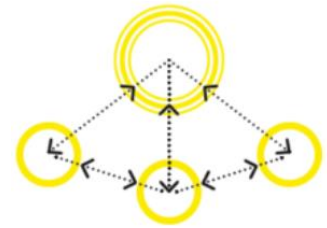
manner of flying invertebrates that I've ever seen. I've done lots of thinking about ecosystems and am really keen to find/incorporate ways of better sharing this world with other living things.

Back at SOLN (which has opened my eyes in the last year to how we approach good land and sea stewardship), I've been thrilled to organise a campfire conversation with community interested in macroalgae and edible seaweeds (featuring Dr Alecia Bellgrove and Zoe Brittan from Deakin University, and also Lichen Kelp of the Seaweed Appreciation Society international; funded by Coastcare Victoria); to begin planning for our Bush Blocks Workshop Series as part of the Corangamite CMA's Small Blocks Big Dreams program ([EOIs](#) now open for the workshop series); continue working to deliver our Apollo Marine Park project funded by Australian Marine Parks to educate the general public on the value of this marine park that lies off our coastline (Cape Otway); and to commence our Colac Otway Shire-funded Biodiversity Storeys pilot study with Kim Stevenson to assess SOLN's revegetation projects and gain some understanding (collect data) about how we're going with ecological restoration and the need to revisit sites to do infill planting with/without invasive pest management. The last project draws on Kim's and my science training, and- if funding and focus can be sustained into the longer term- promises some great relationships with research institutions on what the Otways reveal about restoration success and landscape pressures.

## Joy Whitton

### *Facilitating Learning*

First of all, I'd like to explain what I see as a 'facilitator': someone who facilitates others' learning without being the font of all knowledge.



Accompanying and shaping a learning process together

A good analogy is that when I worked for Monash in the central learning and teaching office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching, I worked with people from all faculties across the university – IT, science, business and economics, architecture, arts, engineering, medicine and nursing, education, etc. I couldn't teach them how to teach their subject, but I could help them to find out how to find out if what they thought they were doing was working, and how to improve their support of students. Likewise, people in the Landcare networks have many different goals on their land – revegetating, restoring indigenous species, growing food; and a variety of types of farms – alpacas, sheep, trees. No one can be an expert in all these things, but it is possible to bring in expertise and to offer workshops, and site visits and activities that people can learn from and adapt and apply in their own venture. And there are many concerns that people have in common, such as healthy soil, weed identification and management, feral animals, plant propagation, restoring waterways, land slippage, and biosecurity. So we do plan workshops, property visits and working bees. There are also grants available all the time to support property improvement and programs designed to equip people with knowledge and techniques and the pros and cons or different approaches to help them make





decisions about bringing about their vision for the land.

This year so far, I have received two grants, from Coastcare and Colac Otway Shire, to fund activities for the Otway Mushroom and Fungi Group, and assisted Clem with a grant for the Lighthouse to Lavers group.

### Darcy Nugent

Otway Ocean Care were successful with our Coastcare grant application and are now planning our upcoming project **‘Waste, Pollution and Coastal Monitoring’**. This will involve repeating our Seaweed, Fish and Seashell workshops for those who missed them; workshops on waste and pollution reduction; training sessions for citizen scientists to ID and monitor invasive pest species; and some group weeding events to target the pest seaweed, wakame



Wakame. PHOTOS: HILARY ROWLEY/SUPPLIED

### Seamus Fillmore

As usual there’s plenty to do, taking cuttings, potting up seedlings, washing pots and weeding, lots of weeding... and with spring

coming on early, we are gearing up for a big summer of plant walks, seed collection and growing thousands of local native plants.



New faces are always welcome, just come down to the support centre from 8:30am onwards on any Wednesday!

### EVENTS



### Small Blocks Big Dreams: Bush Block Workshop Series

***Are you the owner of a small bush block?***

***What does land stewardship look like to you?***

SOLN together with the *Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CCMA)* are bringing you the ***Small Blocks Big Dreams*** program this spring and summer, with a workshop series on **Bush or Lifestyle Blocks**.

The program will support small landholders to learn about environmental best management practices and create ‘land stewards’ who can provide guidance to other landholders within their local communities. It consists of a series of workshops and property tours to support participants in developing a land stewardship action plan for their property.



Landholders participating in the workshops will learn about a range of topics relating to natural resource management including soil health, biodiversity, pest plants and animals, healthy waterways, and cultural heritage. Upon completing this land stewardship program, participants will have received:

- Support to develop a land stewardship action plan for their own property.
- An aerial image of their property
- A site visit with expert land management knowledge
- Eligibility for land management incentive money based on their new action plan.
- Contacts for other potential support to assist with implementing their action plan.

The program is designed for any interested small landholders from across the Corangamite region with remnant vegetation 'bush blocks' who wish to improve biodiversity, amenity and enhance natural habitat for native species. These **small bush blocks may range in size from 2 acres to 250 acres.**

In addition, **participants in the program will be eligible to receive a \$2,000 grant** for works on their property to enhance environmental values/outcomes. Such works may include habitat establishment/tree planting; enhancement/protection of remnant vegetation; pest plant and/or pest animal control; waterway protection and enhancement; soil testing and interpretation of results; soil and grazing management; Cultural on Country property visit with Traditional Owners.

We're hosting a **fabulous introductory information event on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2023 with Paul West** (from *River Cottage Australia*) as a guest speaker. The session will commence at Wildlife Wonders, Apollo Bay with walk through their sanctuary to

understand how this spectacular property is undergoing ecological restoration post-agricultural use. We'll then move to the Apollo Bay Community Hall to hear more about the program from the CCMA, before Paul West talks about land restoration and stewardship, sharing his tips and stories. This fascinating event will take place from **3pm-8pm, with dinner provided around 6pm** and a chance to chat to others in the community about their blocks and vision for their land.

The event is **open to everyone** and is **FREE to attend**. **However, bookings are ESSENTIAL, and we're limited to 75 attendees, so get in fast!!!**

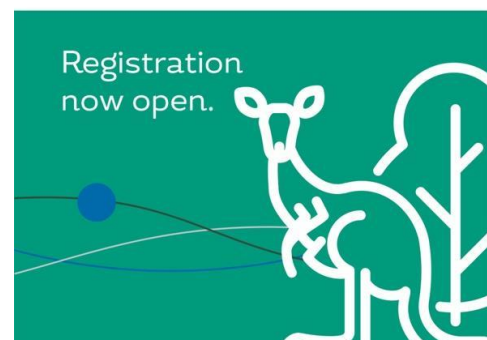
**To register your interest in the introductory event and/or the workshops, please click [here](#)**

**OR visit:** <https://ccma.vic.gov.au/small-blocks-big-dreams-workshop-eoi-form/>



**SMALL BLOCKS  
BIG DREAMS**

Healthy land, healthy living



(The Corangamite CMA has received funding through DELWP's *Our Catchments Our Communities* and has partnered with several groups and organisations to plan, design, and deliver this program. SOLN is leading the Bush Blocks series delivery, organising locations and speakers for the workshops, as well as coordination of property assessments).



## \* INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS:

[SOLN facebook](#)

[SOLN instagram](#)

[Otway Ocean Care facebook](#)

[Otway Mushroom and Fungi facebook](#)

[Otway Bird Observers facebook](#)

SOLN website: [www.soln.org](http://www.soln.org)

## EMAIL REGISTER

SOLN's main means of communication is now through our mailings lists. If you haven't yet done so, please click on the link below and you can elect to find out more about land caring, ocean caring, educational workshops, tree planting and more. [Fill out our survey here](#)

If you're reading a hard copy, then go onto our website [www.soln.org](http://www.soln.org) and go to newsletter to fill in the form.

Or contact us to discuss your interest.

Oliver Kerr  
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Get all the latest up to date information about Landcare events from our new online calendar.

## Working With Children

*Interactions between the young and the elders of our community are vital for shaping understanding, compassion and open-mindedness. SOLN places great importance on bringing different generations of the community together to share knowledge and ideas in a safe space for all.*

*When organising events specifically for children, our Landcare Victoria obligations require us to ensure that all people involved in the event (including volunteers) hold a Working with Children Check (WWCC). For volunteers, these checks are FREE and very easy to [apply](https://service.vic.gov.au/services/working-with-children) for, it's an online process that takes about 15 minutes: <https://service.vic.gov.au/services/working-with-children>*

*And once you received your card, it applies for multiple volunteering opportunities (e.g. school activities, local festivals, etc.). If you'd like to help out with school planting days or other children's activities, please apply for a WWCC..*

***N.B:*** *There is no general requirement for people to hold a Working with Children check at events where children attend incidentally and are under the supervision of their parents/guardian. However, in all cases, SOLN works to ensure that events are conducted in a way that is safe for children. For more information, please refer to the Working with Children website: <http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/>*

**Thanks for reading & a big thank you to all our contributors!**



## 2023 CALENDAR

[ONLINE CALENDAR](#) - *SEE WHAT'S NEW IN THE SOLN WEBSITE MENU!*

*Please note online calendar, social media\* and email updates may provide more up to date information.*

Event	Date	Time/Location
Shrub Club	Every Wednesday	9.30am-12pm, followed by lunch @ SOLN Support Centre Piggery Lane
Native Bonsai Workshop	Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup> October	2-4.30pm @ SOLN Support Centre Piggery Lane
Native Bonsai Workshop	Saturday 14 <sup>th</sup> October	10-12.30pm @ SOLN Support Centre Piggery Lane
Puerulus monitoring	Sat. 30 <sup>th</sup> September Sun. 29 <sup>th</sup> October Tue. 28 <sup>h</sup> November Thu. 28 <sup>th</sup> December	11am Apollo Bay Harbour, last pontoon
Plant Walks/Seed Collections	Tuesdays 5 <sup>th</sup> September 3 <sup>rd</sup> October 7 <sup>th</sup> November 14 <sup>th</sup> November 21 <sup>st</sup> November 28 <sup>th</sup> November	2.30pm Landcare Office, Nelson St
Fungi Foray	Thursdays 21 September 19 October 16 November	Details on OMFG Facebook page
<b>SOLN AGM</b>	<b>Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> October</b>	<b>1-3pm</b> <b>@ SOLN Support Centre</b> <b>Piggery Lane</b>
Otway Ocean Care Seaweed Workshop	Saturday 28 <sup>th</sup> October	TBA AB Senior Citizens, 4 Whelan St
Puerulus Presentation	Friday 29 <sup>th</sup> September Victorian Fisheries Association	2pm- 4pm AB Senior Citizens, 4 Whelan St
Bush Blocks-Small Blocks Big Dreams Introductory Session	Saturday 21 <sup>st</sup> October <b><i>Dinner Provided</i></b>	3-8pm Wildlife Wonders, then Apollo Bay Community Hall
Wye to Wongarra Landcare Group	Details to be posted on Instagram: w2wlandcaregroup	TBA
Tree Planting	Saturday 23 <sup>rd</sup> September	Cape Patton 10am, followed by lunch
Wild Dog Creek Estuary Working Bee	Saturday 28 October	10am-1pm Wild Dog Creek Estuary
Skenes Creek Working Bee	Saturday 11 <sup>th</sup> November	10am-1pm Skenes Creek Estuary