



Wishing our members a fabulous New Year as summer arrives in the Southern Otways. Our Landcare facilitators and volunteers have been fostering best practice in plant propagation and sustainable land management as well as introducing a range of new opportunities for community engagement. Whether it be educational presentations and workshops in Apollo Bay and surrounds, or hands-on learning at the recently augmented Support Centre and Nursery, there's always something doing and friendly folks to do it with...not to mention the food!

2023: What's On at SOLN

Please note: social media and email updates may provide more up-to-date information.

EVENT	DATE	TIME/LOCATION
Puerulus monitoring	Sun 5 Feb Tues 7 Mar	10am @ AB Harbour
Ocean Care Workshops: Fish Other topics to include: Echinoderms, Sponges, Cnidarians, Sea Squirts, Molluscs Seaweed	Sat 4 Feb TBC: selected Saturdays, February-April	TBA @ Wildlife Wonders <i>More details shortly, keep an eye on your emails & SOLN's social media</i>
W2W Landcare Group Working Bee: Removing Sea Spurge, replanting with indigenous plants	Sat Feb 11 Sun Mar 12 Sun Apr 9	Kennett River Beach Contact us at w2wlandcaregroup@gmail.com
Otway Barham Landcare Group AGM	Sat 25 February	11.00am @ SOLN Support Centre Piggery Lane Light lunch provided, all welcome
Free dive training course	Tentatively 28th Feb Bookings essential, email Olly with your expressions of interest.	<i>More details shortly, keep an eye on your emails & SOLN's social media</i>
Bird monitoring course: Georgie Custance	Sundays 5, 12, 19 Feb 5, 19, 26 Mar 2, 16, 23, 30 April	9 am-12.30 pm @ Senior Citizens Centre, 4 Whelan Ave, Apollo Bay Cost: free Bookings essential
Plant Walks	Tuesdays 7, 14, 21, 28 Feb 7, 14, 21, 28 Mar 4, 11, 18 25 April	Sites-TBA week to week. Meet 2.30 pm @ SOLN offices on Nelson St, Apollo Bay
Dark Sky Talk	Fri 17 March	Tentatively 6pm, TBC
Alison Pouliot: 'Underground Lovers-Encounters with Fungi', book launch and talk	Thu 20 April <i>Bookings required: https://alisonpouliot.com/workshops-events</i>	6.00pm-7.30pm @ Senior Citizens Centre, 4 Whelan Ave, Apollo Bay Cost: FREE to attend Supper provided
Alison Pouliot: 'What's that mushroom?'	Fri 21 April <i>Bookings required: https://alisonpouliot.com/workshops-events</i>	10am-4pm @ Senior Citizens Centre, 4 Whelan Ave, Apollo Bay Cost: \$65 Lunch, hot drinks included
Alison Pouliot: Southern Otways Fungus Survey- Fungus Survey Training Day	Sat 22 April <i>Bookings required: https://alisonpouliot.com/workshops-events</i>	10am-4pm @ Senior Citizens Centre, 4 Whelan Ave. Apollo Bay Cost: \$40 Lunch, hot drinks included
Snail Trail with Georgie Custance	<i>coming soon</i>	<i>coming soon</i>



Community Groups

Shrub Club Community Nursery

Marengo Tree Plant

A recent tree planting at the Marengo beach carpark saw a lively team of local Landcare crew gather together on a beautiful sunny Saturday morning. It was a perfect site for a tree planting at the ever popular beach overlooking Hayley's Reef marine park. The crew of around 15 people led by the affable Oliver and Andrea from SOLN, with the addition of Scott from Great Ocean Road Coast And Parks Authority (GORCAPA), got to planting a range of native groundcover, and shrubs to the carpark roadside and the entry to the caravan park. A light mulching finished off the plants while a BBQ in the caravan park, thanks to new managers Sasha and Leigh, finished the day off nicely for the volunteers. It is the season for tree planting so watch out for your next local tree planting and come and meet your Apollo Bay, Marengo and Skene's Creek neighbours. *Suzette Jackson*

Tree felling day

On June's last Saturday on Old Tuxion road a group of volunteers met to thin the over populated hillside.

The varied group of lumberjacks, tools in hand, set a very pythonesque scene.

Planted by like minded landcare people in the 80's, in hindsight their enthusiasm needed to be tempered. Bless their cotton socks but there's learning for us all.

Lowering the tree density will ensure a sustainable and healthier habitat. Oh yeah and you get to wield chainsaws and see trees fall.

Safety as always was paramount as these trees are big, the forest is dense and steep and there is no room for accidents. Training was provided for newbies, who paired up with the experienced, led by the highly capable. Progress was tempered with caution, but we felled maybe 150 trees in the half day.

Morning tea and lunch were spectacular and there was at least one ring in (Tony) for just

that part of the day. Thankyou Margie for your skills and effort.

As a more recent member of the bay community, on my second such activity the personal experience was wonderful. People were warm, caring and welcoming. Conversation, a little wine and a cosy kitchen topped off a fun and useful day. I would recommend future sessions to all.

Did I mention the chainsaws? :) *Nigel Senior*



Southern Otway Beekeepers (SOBee) To bee or not to bee

SOBee has had a stop-start rhythm to our proposed monthly meetings over 2022. Many members live in the Otways part-time, so finding a day/date that suits more than a handful of people has been challenging. The third Sunday of the month was proposed to keep things routine and easy to remember, but this has been problematic for some locals who are supporting the region's hospitality and tourism industry, or others involved in the CFA. So, this year, I'm thinking of alternating between Sundays and Wednesdays, just to see if we can catch a few more people at our monthly meets... I'd love your feedback on this.

The sessions we've had have been really valuable to beginner beekeepers, looking at how to spin honey from frames with Dave



McDonald, building and repairing frames with Brian Shields, and hive set-up and methods with Nicola Philp. We've discussed the threat of the Varroa mite and also set-up a SOBee WhatsApp group for regular sharing of concerns or swarm notifications.

Anyone interested in knowing more about our meetings or beekeeping in the Southern Otways can send me (Andrea) an email and I'll add you to the group. Any current beekeepers in the region, especially beginners, are encouraged to join the WhatsApp group to connect with fellow beekeepers; it can be a great support system as you find your way and build confidence.

Lastly, because it is the season/s for swarming, please note the following details of our region's **Swarm Coordinator** if you notice a large gathering of bees (pouring over each other) not in a hive: **David Simmonds, 0418 328 710.**

Andrea de Kauwe

Otway Ocean Care Puerulus Count

When I go Puerulus counting I get to see a lot of animals like shrimp, sea slugs, crabs, and one time I was lucky enough to see an octopus! We pull up many baskets at the pier and they are often very slimy and silty. You do get a bit dirty and come home smelling a little fishy! But I love seeing all the marine life and I think it's a great experience. Sometimes you see a Puerulus too.

Angus Boyd, aged 9



SOLN Summer 2022/23 (published 1.2.2023)



OOO Activities 2023

With the Coastcare community grant money we received, OOO purchased a set of marine Museum Victoria field guides on Nudibranchs, Sponges and Crustaceans, as well a range of snorkeling gear and equipment from local store, Surf 'n' Fish. All is available for the public to borrow and will also be used in future OOO projects.

We're currently organizing a free dive training course for February, with Freedive Geelong, that will be subsidized with the grant money, which also enables tickets to be offered to the public at half price.

Beginning in February we will be running a series of 5 workshops on invertebrates (Echinoderms, Cnidarians, Sponges, Sea Squirts and Molluscs) at Wildlife Wonders featuring guest speakers from a range of organizations and institutions. In addition, some of our most popular 2022 workshops will be repeated for those who missed out.

Keep an eye on our Facebook page for updates.

The snorkel guides that our volunteers have put together are currently being looked over, and finishing touches are being added. The



guides will be ready for production by the end of January, and following that will be available at Wildlife Wonders. Sample card shown below:



January's puerulus monitoring event went well, as we had some new faces participate. The next full moon will be on the 5th-7th of Feb, and we hope to be joined by some marine specialists from The Field Naturalists Club of Victoria. Many weird and wonderful creatures we've come across have been photographed, uploaded to and identified on iNaturalist. You can check them all out on our project page – <https://inaturalist.ala.org.au/projects/otway-ocean-care>

Through creating awareness and appreciation of marine ecosystems with these community education and citizen science events, we aim to build a following of people that will volunteer and contribute to future conservation projects...the planning of which is our next objective. *Darcy Nugent*

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 0417127401

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 0488508911

Otway Mushroom and Fungi Group Fungi Workshops



I didn't know what to expect when I went to Alison Pouliot's Fungi Workshop. I saw wonders that looked alien, and yet also familiar.

Displayed for the group were samples of all sorts of fungi,

everything from Agarics, Jellys and Puffballs. So many varieties were shown despite the recent dry weather, some as hard as wood like the disc fungus *Ganoderma australe*, others slimy and transparent like the *Tremella funciformis*. Some would even consume invertebrates like *Cordyceps gunnii*. Alison taught us the importance of fungi to the natural environment and the relationship between fungi and the surrounding habitat, an observation that indicates which species of fungi can be present. The workshop included a guided walk around Elliot River with Alison; a



walk I got to experience in a whole new light, looking at things that I never normally observed. Landcare did an excellent job hosting the workshop and I would recommend these workshops for anyone looking to learn a bit more about fungi. 10/10 *Tom Woodhouse*

Note: the three upcoming Alison Pouliot dates in 2023 Calendar

National Herbarium of Victoria:

Fungi Workshops

A couple of us have been invited to attend a private fungi collection workshop at the National Herbarium of Victoria in February. There we will be guided through the various aspects of collecting fungi for lodging in a fungarium (a reference collection of fungi).

Following our attendance and being educated on aspects, including selecting quality material (ample, good condition, mature), how much to collect, what species to collect, permits, field notes, photography, drying, storing and collating information in spreadsheets, OMFG will be able to team up with Royal Botanic Gardens to run similar workshops in the Otways. This will allow amateur fungi enthusiasts to gain the necessary skills and knowledge for volunteering their assistance in future mycological research projects.

Landcare Groups

Apollo Bay (ABLG)



Milford Creek Planting, National Tree Day 2022

Securing the end of logging in the Otways and the establishment of the Otway National Park is a magnificent legacy that was achieved by forward thinking environmental pioneers in our area, including members of the ABLG. With the installation of our new Committee of Management we took the opportunity to not only acknowledge these victories but to look afresh at what we do. Part of this was clarifying our Vision, Purpose and Goals, and another was assessing the boundaries of our landcare group. As we now do more work in town it seemed somewhat incongruous that Apollo Bay itself was not included in the ABLG.

Some friendly negotiation with the Otway Barham Landcare Group has allowed us to re-align the geography of the group's catchment with its well established name, and at the same time leverage the energy of the number of new members of the group and the Committee. Our southern boundary now extends to (but does not include) the Barham River. We hope that this change will help us extend the reach of our activities and raise the profile of our work and environmental restoration generally throughout the town.

On-ground activities were constrained a bit by the very wet weather – you'd think the climate was changing, wouldn't you? – but we still managed to do several working bees on members' properties and also a more high-profile activity on National Tree Day (31 July) with 300 seedlings planted along Milford Creek that generated a lot of interest from volunteers and passers-by. *Colin Jevons*

EstuaryWatch: Wild Dog Creek and Skenes Creek Estuaries

EstuaryWatch is a citizen science project. The Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CCMA) started the program in 2006. Now, Melbourne Water, Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority and West



Gippsland Catchment Management Authority have EstuaryWatch programs. These programs are monitoring eighteen estuaries.

Local EstuaryWatch sites are at the Barham River, Wild Dog Creek and Skenes Creek. Kim and I are the current watchers of the Wild Dog Creek and Skenes Creek estuaries. Skenes Creek used to be monitored by Apollo Bay College, but they haven't been doing it for a while. Wild Dog has been watched for a long time. First by Carole Webley, Judi Forrester then took it on and now has passed it over to Kim and me.

We take a series of photos of each estuary from designated points which involves juggling the compass, the folder and the phone. We think we have got the compass bit sorted out now. And we fill out the forms, saying what the water levels and tides are doing and what is happening with the wind direction and state of the sea. That is the fun bit.



Australian Grayling



Skenes Creek Estuary, photo point 2



Wild Dog Creek Estuary, photo point 1-2

Data collected by EstuaryWatchers is used to fill the gap in the knowledge and understanding of estuaries. This data supports estuary management plans, research projects and the decision support tool for artificial estuary openings in Victoria, the Estuary Entrance Management Support System (think Lake Tyers).

The dull bit is entering the data into the EstuaryWatch data portal and loading the photos. I am getting better at it, reminding myself that it is the important part because all this data helps with knowing what is going on with our estuaries. That means the CCMA people can know - for example - to do things to look after the Australian Grayling, an endangered fish living in both creeks.

Helen Cocks

Hordern Vale and Glenaire (HVGALG)

Our group had a number of working bees and grants during the past year-

'Otway Wild' grant shared by Ros Denney and Kel Needham: Ros created "bio links" across her paddocks using seed that she gathered. There were a couple of working bees, one to gather seeds and another to process the seeds. Both were educational and followed by excellent lunches. Kel had a couple of working



bees on his farm. One was well attended by HVGA members and others from SOLN shrubbies. Another planting was done by 24 students from Apollo Bay high school. Kel and Kim are returning one of their paddocks to native vegetation.

Colin and Wendy Warren and their Cape Otway neighbours received a grant for special tree guards to protect young seedlings from koalas and other animals.

Members will receive information about future grants from the HVGA secretary and through Oliver Kerr.

HVGA also facilitated a school group to be involved in conjunction with Parks Vic and Landcare volunteers for weed control on Johanna Beach – Parks Vic geo-marked each plant, which was then removed and bagged and taken away for proper disposal.

Kel Needham.

Fishbone Fern Removal at Hordern Vale-Ballarat Clarendon College-Yuulong Camp

On Monday the 13th of June, fellow students of Ballarat Clarendon College's Yuulong Campus, participated in an outdoor education class where they got to go to the local Old Ocean Road where they met up with two members of the Victorian Landcare group and Parks.

The two members Oliver and Gary, taught all of the students the different weeds that have spread all over our national parks, disturbing the native plants of Australia and destroying the biodiversity of the forest.

Today we helped out by pulling out and getting rid of a new and introduced species of weed, the Fishbone Fern (*Nephrolepis cordifolia*). We were told that the Fishbone Fern was originally part of North Australia and Asia and was brought down to the Old Great Ocean Road. Which it was dumped on the side where it has been growing for an estimate of 10-20 years and in these years, it has expanded to over 200 square meters since.



Throughout the hours we spent helping, we as a whole cohort have learnt many things and on behalf on the Ballarat Clarendon College's Yuulong Campus, I must thank all of the Victorian Landcare group in helping the whole state in preserving the precious native forest that Australia has had for many generations.

Kevin Chen

Capeweed Removal at Johanna beach-Ballarat Clarendon College-Yuulong Camp

Last week, my school took us on an excursion to Johanna beach to remove weeds from the sand. I really enjoyed the experience. The plant we were removing was the Coast Capeweed and there are quite a few of them along Johanna Beach. Taking them out of the sand was so satisfying which made the experience even more fun. We would dig up and around the weed with gloves on to find where the root of it was. Once we found it, we would pull it out of the sand, making sure we got each little root and leaf. We carried out many garbage bags that we put the weeds in to get rid of them. The crew that showed and helped us around the weeds were very kind and enthusiastic about it



and I think they were really appreciative of our work. It felt really nice to keep the beach clean and safe and we all had so much fun doing it together. Overall, I really enjoyed this experience and would love to do it again.

Neha Reddy



Otway Barham (OBLG)

It has been encouraging to find that during our revegetation days in public areas along the Barham River and Marengo foreshore that locals and visitors of all ages passing by have stopped to ask us what we are doing and then help us plant the indigenous seedlings provided to us by the Shrub Club.

In addition, we have assisted locals remove environmental weeds from their own properties. Weeding of course is generally hard physical labour but working together with a lunch to look forward to makes it quite enjoyable.

Although SOLN is made of 4 geographical areas each with its own

responsibilities and volunteer officers there is a lot of crossover when it comes to weeding, planting and education. A big thank you to all members of other areas who have assisted us with our activities.



The Otway Barham Group will hold its AGM at 11am on Saturday 25th February 2023 at the SOLN Nursery. The AGM will be followed by a light lunch. All are welcome.

Wye to Wongarra (W2WLG)

Wye to Wongarra Landcare is a grass roots (!) group strongly linked to our local community. Our Wild Otways Grant 'Wye Gully Trees for Tawnys' project has seen 1200 plants go in, with the last in December. We are proud to report our first sightings of Tawny babies. Here we are at work





We are busy removing Sea Spurge and replanting the dunes and banks on Kennett River Beach as part of our ongoing Coastcare grant, with 31 community members at our last planting. **Dates for working bees are 10am on Sat Feb 11 (that's 2 weeks away), Sunday March 12 (Labour Day long weekend), and Sun 9th April (Easter).** Replanting with indigenous vegetation once we get rid of this lot.



Our Colac Otway Shire Community Grant delivered a tremendous plant and weed identification walk led by Luke Hynes at Grey River in October, with a follow up weed workshop and lunch at a private property in Wongarra in a few weeks. The grant will also fund two fungi identification walks in June – free for our financial members.



We maintain a network of ‘Seal the Loop Bins’ along our coast – triggered by a seal entanglement at Wye River - and encourage anyone who spots fishing debris to drop it in any bin!

We are a really friendly group – member driven, social, fun-loving but serious about our precious environment. Contact us at w2wlandcaregroup@gmail.com. We love having more followers on our Instagram page too: [w2wlandcaregroup](https://www.instagram.com/w2wlandcaregroup). Don't forget to check out our video ‘Our Backyards are the Bush’ on YouTube.

Joanne Tyler

SOLN Updates

Support Centre

Need a place to host a community workshop? The SOLN Support Centre provides a fresh and welcoming space for community workshops and gatherings, complete with cosy wood stove for cold and BBQ for warmer days. Recent workshops have ranged from learning to spin wool to creating ceramics using the pinch pot method.



Loris, with support from Tony Webber, patiently instructed participants in using simple drop spindles (most entertaining!), and then spinning wheels, to create single and multi-ply yarn from raw sheep or alpaca wool.



Olly proved to be our very own Rumpelstiltskin, quickly taking to this charming skill with ease.

The Apollo Bay Pottery Club had a Pinch Pot workshop on 25 Jan. at the Support Centre. Experienced and beginners enjoyed creating a variety of pieces.

We've recently added a piano to our newly refurbished kitchen, so bring your budding or accomplished musicians to liven up your event. Contact SOLN if you would like to run an event at the Support Centre.

Events/Features

Science Week 2022

A most engaging and well-attended Science Week program was organised from 13-21 August with a presentation plus workshop format. Presenters included local and interstate experts enlightening us with fascinating insights into phenomena found in, *sometimes literally*, our own backyards.

Dinosaur trackways at the beach, insects under the mulch, freshwater crays making lumpy chimneys in the lawn, indigenous plants to propagate, eucalypts towering nearby and clouds passing overhead. All of these were subjects explored and explained to community and school groups during Science Week, part of an *Inspiring Australia* initiative and supported by the Australian Government.

SOLN hopes to celebrate Science Week again in 2023, in case you missed out last time.

Kim Stevenson





enjoyed the day and went home with something new they had learnt, observed or created. *Ella Boyd, age 10*



SOLN celebrates Children's Week

To celebrate Children's Week 2022 (17th to the 23rd October), SOLN hosted a special kids' day. It was on Saturday 22nd October and it was very informative and fun. One of the best things about it was young children could get a lot from it and so could 11-year-olds! We learnt about photosynthesis as we coloured and labelled a flower; we did a walk in nature and some singing and dancing; there was also a short play and face-painting by Lyndi Whalen.

All the children also got their hands dirty as they potted some native seedlings to take home at the end of the day. You got to choose what would work best for your garden, ranging from small shrubs to blackwoods and eucalypts. To finish the day, a band came and played some music as we crafted bees and butterflies out of colourful felt, string, gum nuts and seeds. I really think all the kids

Christmas is not only about making Merry and Celebrating...

...which we did with style at the 2022 SOLN Christmas party. With good food, (thank you Kym and Kel Needham) desserts, (thank you to the Queens of the Dessert: Wendy, Liz, Kate and Kim) wine, conversation, and a wonderful array of Kris Kringle gifts (thanks to the 50 odd people that turned up)!! All KK gifts were something made, grown, or repurposed.

'Many hands made lights work'. My thanks to Ian Clarke for his dexterous climbing that got the black backdrops hung and all fairy lights trailed over the ceiling and around Olly's Christmas tree.

Additional lighting by Kevin, fire by Ken and all those that contributed in many small ways making this a special community event for the third year in a row.



To top it all off the delightful engaging and beautiful guitar of Phil Langdon and the playfully sublime voice of Rea Hyatt. Not too loud, not too soft. Just Right!

The main and underlying purpose of the SOLN Christmas party was not to make merry or, in essence, any of the above, but to say thank you to all our members, who volunteer throughout the year in whatever way and to our staff Olly, and Andrea for all the times they go that extra distance for the benefit of all the Landcare community.

Thank you, and see you next December to celebrate what we care about, the work we do, the difference we make, and the community we are.

David Simmonds, Lead Elf of the Christmas Team

Otway bird monitoring course in full flight

If a bird sings in the forest and no one is around to hear it..., how do we know if it ever existed at that location or if its population is in decline?

In October 2021 more than 20 bird noticers, nerds, ecologists and the newly avian curious signed up for the inaugural Otway Bird Monitoring Course. Presented by the Nature Glenelg Trust and the Threatened Species Conservancy, with support from the Parks Victoria Innovation Fund, the program was a

motivating call to action for local citizen scientists interested in learning how to survey birds by sight, sound, behaviour, and habitat use.

The 40-hour program was run at Wildlife Wonders, Marengo, over ten sessions and included local field trips paired with an hour or so of theory and two hours practising our Bird ID skills. As well as learning how to ID more than 300 birds, we were introduced to avian classification, anatomy, evolution, ecology and behaviour. We were also trained in how to use binoculars, how to use bird field guides and take field notes and how to conduct surveys using the Birdlife Australia Bird Data app and mapping apps.



Dr Greg Kerr, Senior Ecologist at the Nature Glenelg Trust delivered the course, and he was a passionate and generous teacher – highlighting to participants how important it is that we develop a better understanding of what is happening in the lives of our local birds, not just the species that are currently under threat. Australian birds have faced many pressures over the last 200 years with extensive habitat loss, feral predators and climate change devastating populations and forcing many species to compete for dwindling resources. The long-term data that is essential for understanding the health of our bird species isn't always available, so having teams of enthusiastic and experienced citizen scientists conducting regular field surveys will be critical for ensuring the survival of our



feathered neighbours, now and into the future.

Although we all started the program with a different level of confidence, when it came to the final session everyone felt like they had come leaps and bounds (or is that glides and soars?) in their ability to ID birds. As participant Jane Buckingham noted,

“At the beginning of the course, I felt I had a reasonably good knowledge base. At the end of the course, I felt I had a very full toolbox of information and guidance notes to take myself off into the field even more confidently.”

With the support of Ecologist Georgie Custance from the Threatened Species Council, plans are now in motion to set up a local Otway Bird Survey group in preparation for running standardised seasonal bird surveys across the Otway region. *Clem Wetherall*

Feral Pigs and Deer don't belong in our Wild Otways

Feral animals are a massive problem in Australia, typically having few natural predators or fatal diseases, and often high reproductive rates. They prey on native species, compete with them for food and shelter, spread disease, and destroy habitat. Two big problem species in the Otways are feral pigs and deer.



Feral pig in Otways forest, snapped on the CEC's HogEye cameras

The last 5 years have seen a marked increase in feral pig activity in the Otways. Due

to their high reproductive rate and selective feeding, trampling, and rooting for underground parts of plants and invertebrates, pigs are causing enormous damage to Otway ecosystems and pastures. A sow can have 20 piglets in a year, so if there are 10 sows in a group, that's 200 additional pigs being added to a population per year! These mobs can destroy a paddock overnight and have devastating effects on water courses and swamps.

Controlling feral pigs and deer requires whole community knowledge and involvement. Landcare groups throughout the Otways are working with the Conservation Ecology Centre (CEC) to raise awareness of the issue and connect landowners with professional help. SOLN and the CEC are very keen to hear from anyone who's noticed pig or deer activity on their properties or adjoining land. CEC monitoring has shown that feral pigs are drawn to open paddocks next to a forested area, which they use for cover. They love to eat pasture and tend to visit farmers' pastures over the winter months when the ground is soft.

Community involvement is vital to control, and now so easy with a recording tool that can be used on your smartphones: [FeralScan](#). It's an Australian-designed app and allows the CEC research team to monitor the movement of the pests and determine areas to focus control efforts.

On Saturday 14th January, we had a fabulous information session at Lavers Hill about the pig and deer problem. It was an extremely warm day, but over 55 people gathered at *The Perch* to listen to **Peter Jacobs**, Victorian Deer Project Officer of the *Invasive Species Council*, who gave us a state-wide perspective on feral deer. Peter joined us virtually, so you can find his presentation [here](#) if you missed out.

We then had **Tim Wilson**, Manager of the *Feral Pig & Deer program* at the *Conservation Ecology Centre*, talk to us about the feral pigs



in the Otways and their program to monitor and eradicate them.



Tim Wilson, Manager of the Feral Pig & Deer program at CEC

After the presentations, *The Perch* put on a delicious lunch for all attendees featuring venison captured in the Otways. The venison was supplied by *Dama Dama Free-Range*, a local harvesting business that wants to work with landowners to convert the pests into a food source for us. For anyone who eats meat, you might like to consider supporting this humane and efficient business. The more orders that Anthony Roe receives for his products, the more harvesters he can employ to control these animals that have become established in the landscape.

A big thank you to David Simmonds and Kel Needham from *HVGA Landcare* for their assistance organising the event. We'll hopefully host another event in 6-12 months to follow up on the CEC's work and how control is going in the region.

If you'd like to know about feral pig and deer control before then, or harvesting animals on your property, please don't hesitate to contact myself, Tim Wilson from the CEC, or Anthony Roe from *Dama Dama*. You can also subscribe to [CEC News](#) for more frequent updates.

"Feral pigs were having a detrimental and very costly impact on my pasture, as well as impacting native habitat on and around my property. The focus on trapping the whole mob was a game-changer for me as a landholder. The hard work of the CEC team has led to over 100 pigs being

removed from the vicinity in the past year, with only one transient boar showing up in the latest monitoring."

–M. D., private landholder in the Otways

If anyone requires monitoring cameras to determine who's causing damage on their property, please get in touch and we should be able to organise something for you.

Andrea de Kauwe

Feral Scan

All pig and deer sightings can be recorded on the feral scan app which goes to CEC to help monitor and control populations <https://www.feralscan.org.au/>

Deer Control

If you would like help controlling deer on your property, or want to support deer control and purchase local venison, you are encouraged to visit <https://damadamafreerange.com.au/> or call Anthony on 0412 403 221.

Grants and applications

THANK YOU to Hutch Hussein (& the ALP) and Bendigo Bank!

SOLN was very excited to receive a pledge of \$50K from the incoming Labour government to support our biodiversity projects. Below is an excerpt from Hutch Hussein's media release:

"INVESTING IN SOUTHERN OTWAY LANDCARE NETWORK

A re-elected Andrews Labor Government will back Southern Otway Landcare Network to keep protecting the biodiversity and the promotion of sustainable land management across our Otways.

We'll provide a \$50,000 grant to help them continue their much-needed work, looking after our environment and helping Victorians learn more about biodiversity and protecting our native plants, insects and wildlife."



SOLN members and Olly with Hutch Hussein

And THANK YOU to Phil, Bronwyn and the Apollo Bay branch of Bendigo Bank for supporting our funding application for new nursery benches at SOLN's Support Centre.



Andrea and SOLN members receiving \$3000 cheque from Bendigo Bank for new benches at the nursery.

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 and go to newsletter to fill in the form.).

Or contact Oliver or Andrea to register your interest.

*Thanks for reading & a big thank you to all our contributors, and especially **Kim Stevenson**, who is our new editor of our newsletter.*

Contacts and Social Media

SOLN Facilitators

Oliver Kerr

Landcare Facilitator

m: 0412 313 216

e: oliver.landcare@soln.org

Andrea de Kauwe

Landcare Facilitator

m: 0448 555 060

e: andrea.landcare@soln.org

Website and Social Media links:

[SOLN website](#)

[SOLN Facebook page](#)

[Otway Ocean Care Facebook page](#)

[Otway Mushroom and Fungi Group Facebook page](#)