



Southern Otway  
**Landcare**  
Network

# NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2024



Old Great Ocean Road...see Plant Drives, p 14



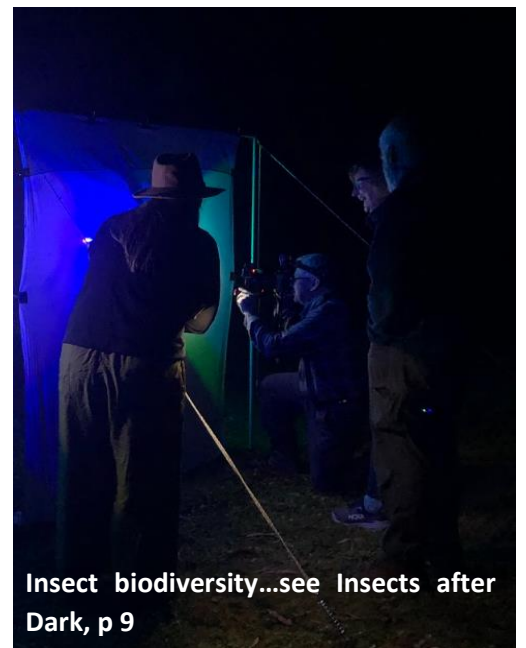
East of Castle Cove...see News from the Nursery, p 11



Glenaire landscape...see Plant Walks, p 13



Supporting land stewardship ...see Small Blocks Big Dreams, p 2



Insect biodiversity...see Insects after Dark, p 9





## SOLN COMMUNITY EVENTS



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

#### *Small Blocks Big Dreams Update*



Site visits in the Otways are rarely flat...

SOLN is currently midway through delivering the *Small Blocks Big Dreams – Bush Blocks* workshop series - a program conceived and funded by the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CCMA) which aims to deepen the land stewardship knowledge of lifestyle property owners, empowering them to take action to conserve, rehabilitate and enhance the ecological health of their property.

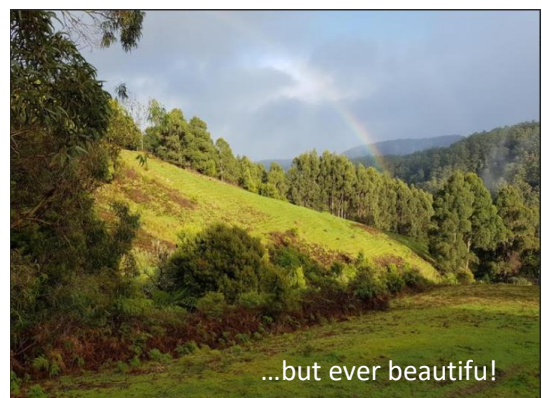
The 60 or so participants (the owners of 40 properties throughout the Otways and beyond) are taking part in four workshops touching on themes of biodiversity, fire, water, soil, biosecurity, and First Nation's perspectives on stewardship. Alongside these workshops they are creating an action plan for their property, receiving a site visit from SOLN staff and members of their local Landcare group, and if eligible, receiving a \$2k grant to begin enacting their plan.

We are currently two workshops into the series, with the site visits underway and another two workshops to come.

On Monday 19th February the Small Blocks Big Dreams site visits began within ABLG catchment. Two landholders from Wild Dog Rd guided local experts (including a couple of near neighbours) through their properties sharing their aspirations and concerns.

SBBD participant and Apollo Bay Landcare Group member Charlie O'Sullivan had this to say about the site visit to his place up Wild Dog Road...

*"I had a very productive Landcare visit where we discussed several options. The agreed option for the short term is to enhance the vegetation and ecological restoration along a seasonal creek and gully that transverses our property. There is an area which has become overgrown with blackberries and other weeds and is lacking a canopy to enhance a more diverse and attractive understory. It was recommended we fence off the creek area to allow for revegetation in the gully and limit damage by the sheep. In addition, a greater segmentation of the paddocks would allow greater rotation of the sheep and thus better pasture management. A similar approach has been successful in the past along other sections of the gully.*



...but ever beautiful!



*In addition, some additional planting would reduce ongoing landslip issues. Another plan being considered is the potential thinning of a corridor of gum trees previously planted in conjunction with Landcare. This would foster bigger trees with more lateral branches and a more beneficial environment. The prior project was successful in reducing landslip and a reduction of weeds in many sections, but some additional work is warranted. A further option is a potential planting of trees in another valley in order to limit significant bracken. The team was very informative, and I very much appreciated the input and expert mentoring provided."*

Thus far the program has been an excellent opportunity to connect landowners old and new to each other and to SOLN, and to build community connections between Landcarers around the Otways. We're very excited to continue building our knowledge throughout the next couple of workshops, and to see the landowners spending their grants to enhance and conserve their bushblocks. *Seamus Fillmore*



**SMALL BLOCKS  
BIG DREAMS**  
Corangamite CMA

*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.*

**More information about this and other programs the CCMA delivered this year can be found [here](#).**

## WALKS AND TALKS

### *Learning about local Indigenous history and plant use with local Aboriginal man Richard Collopy at Kennett River,*

If you've ever enjoyed a ramble with Richard Collopy, you will know that there is an eagerness and passion for you to not only understand his point of view, but also the Gadubanud landscape for which he is Traditional custodian.

Richard introduced himself by way of his connections, through his parents and Ancestors to the Otways: his father's side Gulidjan, the Crows, from Beeac and the Buntingdale Mission, and his mother's side Kirrae-Gadubanud, the Allans, from Tooram, now called Allansford.

Respect for Culture and for the environment underlined Richard's message and was interwoven with his dialogue as he gave us snippets of the significance and uses of plants that we encountered. The style was ad hoc, as a plant was noticed or a question asked, a bit of knowledge was shared.

One participant asked Richard whether the common reed, *Phragmites australis*, was a weed. Seen along the edge of



the river and spreading out on the other side, Richard responded that the common reed is important in providing habitat for waterbirds. Stems were used to add length



in making reed spears longer, added to blackwood sapling shafts, for instance.



Picking a Goodenia flower, Richard suggested that tasty tea infusions can be made from the flowers of *Goodenia ovata*, *Correas* and

*Banksias*, as well as the flowers of Tea tree (*Leptospermum* spp) and *Melaleuca*, plus mild infusions of leaves of a few varieties.

Next, Richard identified a native raspberry (*Rubus parvifolius*) as an ancient plant, not invasive like the blackberry and, obviously used for its berries!

Nearby was some native parsley/sea celery (*Apium prostratum*) and a soft bracken fern, (*Calochlaena dubia*), the leaves of both can be used in salads.

In fact, Tree ferns in the Otways are from two main groups, one group related to cycads (*Cyathea*), including the Rough Tree fern, and the other related to the Soft Tree Fern, *Dicksonia antarctica*. All are edible (to a degree?), in particular the tips, or 'fiddles' of young fronds, and the pith of the taller fronds, which are sometimes roasted.

Other berries we came across were the prickly currant bush (*Coprosma quadrifida*), a survival food for William Buckley easily accessed coastally and up through the wet forests.

Two other edible berries commonly enjoyed are those of the Coastal Bearded Heath (*Leucopogon parviflorus*) and the Boobialla (*Myoporum insulare*) and can range in taste from sweet to salty/bitter, containing minerals such as Vitamin C and folate.

We didn't see any, but both the fruit and leaves of Pigface/Karkalla (*Carpobrotus rossii*), which Richard called 'pooyuk', can be eaten, and the leaf sap used on the skin for burns or stings. Fruits are commonly taken by introduced snails and slugs.

Here, Richard made reference to Dreaming. This is in relation to flora and fauna that are key to land management. In the last 200 years, which is only very recent history, native plants and animals have been displaced and marginalised, often to small reference areas.

Generally speaking, Richard felt that most plants from southern parts of Australia were edible. Being closer to Gondwana type forest and having only soft footed animals around, the many and varied original species







in the Otways, Tasmania and Daintree, display the formative links to the great Jurassic period and essentially a continuum to today. In contrast, Northern Hemisphere lands have moved so far north they experience a kind of annual ultra-mini-freezing reminiscent of the regular mega world-wide ones most recently in earth time approx. 12,000 years ago. More often poisonous plants are found in northern Australia, or other continents as evolution of species continued.



However, while the Smooth Flax lily, *Dianella longifolia*, and its cousin *Dianella revoluta* are edible, the Tasmanian Flax lily, *Dianella tasmanica*, is slightly poisonous and may require drying. So, it is most important to know the difference! Flax lily roots were boiled for medicine, strappy leaves used for baskets and ripe purple fruits were eaten.

Other local plants that are inedible, include the coastal Seabox (*Alyxia buxifolia*), with a double red fruit that is toxic to humans, and Bush peas (*Pultenaea* sp) which have slightly poisonous spikes. Some plants, such as sticky dodder (*Cassytha* sp), are only edible after drying or cooking. The fruit of the

Banyalla (*Pittosporum bicolor*) is not known to be edible, and although the drupes of the Mock Olive (*Notelaea ligustrina*), are not toxic, they have a large seed and a strong bitter taste, and so are not considered a food source.

The very ripe, red fruit of the Kangaroo Apple (used on occasion for men and women) can be eaten, but unripe fruits were used in women's business.

Wattle seeds from Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*) and Silver Wattle (*Acacia dealbata*) are edible, and the flowering of Silver Wattle signalled



the beginning of Swan season (with egg collecting); Ducks and Shearwaters also have seasonal signs. The gum of wattles was used as an antiseptic for teeth and soap for removing dirt/oils.

Across Australia, wattles have high wildlife value as they attract and provide shelter and food for birds, insects, spiders and butterflies (caterpillars). Wattle seeds are



collected by ants and other insects to eat the sugar in the tail. Different seeds and fruits are harvested by them in the trees or the ground, aiding in plant cultivation when seeds are carried underground into their nests.

The fruiting of Dodder laurel (*Cassytha* sp), King Parrot food, also signals the start of a new season, late Spring, followed by Boobialla, then Native prickly Currant in quick succession, note however that along the coast this occurs at a different rate. Next,



the Cherry Ballart (whose fruit varies with location, the smaller and redder berries of the inland variety and larger, pinker berries of the coastal variety), followed by Salt Bush and then Bower Spinach Berries.

Dogwood (Cassinia) was another useful plant identified, whose sticky leaves were used in smoking ceremonies, and the wood is one variety used to make clap sticks.

Austral Mulberry, *Hedycarya angustifolia*, fruit is not edible, but the stem was useful as a firestick, it dries out quickly after cutting; grass trees were also commonly used for fire, and the dry pith of a Blanket leaf stem and others were useful tinder to carry fires. Dried grasstree stems create an aromatic smoke for ceremony.

As we arrived at an access to the river, Richard encouraged everyone to splash faces, arms, etc. This is not just refreshing; it is a way to interact with and appreciate the land and water. At this point Richard provided a reminder that moving stones, making cairns and such, disturbs both micro-ecosystems and Cultural heritage.

Responding to a question about middens, found all along the Otway Coast, Richard emphasised that these are quite sizeable, massive middens, evidence that the area was at one time the most populous area along the coast. Food was plentiful and varied for Aboriginal people.

A participant asked Richard about the local birds, and as he began to answer a King Parrot took up a position on a branch overhead, appearing to listen in. Not only was this delightful, but it was also fitting in Gadubanud, speaking about King Parrot people. Dwelling in Gadubanud Country people were generally Maar, Katabanut is the Lore of this area.

As he began, Richard explained that in naming the birds he would be moving from west to east, counterclockwise along the coast, according to how plants developed their fruit. As Spring turns to Summer and the Sun's angle gets higher, valleys and ridges previously shielded from the sun become illuminated. As plants came into fruit/flower places should be named, generally for females, for the different birds who used that food source. Richard explained that as a result the bird/insect names as well, are associated with various locations (Burrum is a leech or tick). Travellers would move from west to east, following food sources as well, and in dance Richard says he also moves in a counterclockwise direction.



Hence, the direction of travel, food sources/seasons and bird names are all intertwined. In a similar vein, revealing the relationship between bird names and their food source, Richard said the regional Aboriginal word for 'parrot' means 'grass', so when we say 'grass parrot', in another way of looking at language we're saying grass grass!

Our walk was concluded when a GORCAPA truck interrupted our outing, and we meandered back to the start, where we



thanked and farewelled Richard for a most enjoyable and informative walk.

*Kim Stevenson in collaboration with Richard and Peter Collopy and Richard White.*

## *Meet the Native Pollinators and Beneficial Insects of the Otways*

*Kennet River*



I love to encourage more birds, bugs and wildlife to my garden by planting trees shrubs and ground covers creating a micro forest to cool the heat. Keen to learn more, I attended a talk by John Walter on 'Native Pollinators and Beneficial Insects of the Otways at the Kennett River Surf Life Saving Club.

Well, the one-hour talk went slightly over as there was a lot to learn about bugs. I just didn't realise how many "bugs" are in our garden, both in the day and in the night. Attracting the bugs with plants that they love benefits the biodiversity of your garden. This talk has opened my eyes and now I'd love to learn more about nighttime bugs.

I learnt about downloading the app iNaturalist, which is a free-to-download mobile app used to record sightings of animals, plants, fungi & insects. It helps you identify the animals & plants around you while generating data for science and conservation.

After the talk we all walked to a garden in Kennet River where Olly, from Landcare, assisted John in scooping up insects near plants in a net. After close inspection both John and Olly worked out the identity of each bug collected, and then the insect was released.

This talk was about attracting good bugs to your back yard and keeping them there.

*Tracie Pangrazio*

### *Yuulong: Ridge to Cape Landcare Group*

Have you ever wondered what bug is that? Or how to attract native pollinators to your garden? Been confused about whether something is a bee, a fly, or a wasp? Or mused on why some insects are so attracted to light at night... and why are they flying into my face?

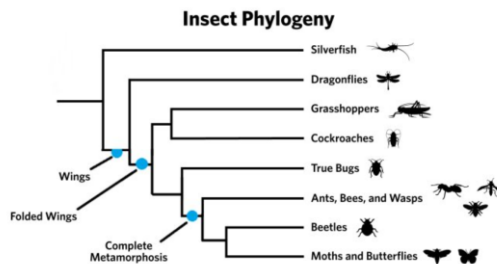
Curious members of the community congregated at the Yuulong Community Hall on Friday 9 February to participate in the second 'Understanding our Land – From Hordern Vale to Yuulong' workshop: 'Meet the Native Pollinators and Beneficial Insects of the Otways'. Our enthusiastic and knowledgeable guest speaker was John Walter, President of the Upper Campaspe Landcare Network, macro photographer, and accidental insect expert.







John spoke about the Pollinator Corridor Project his Landcare network ran, which aimed to increase the habitat and diversity of pollinators and pollination activities, by linking patches at suitable properties from gardens to the natural environment. The project ran across hundreds of properties and involved mass revegetation activities in conjunction with pollinator surveys. Then COVID hit, and the research students involved in the survey activities couldn't travel to do the surveys. So, John stepped in and did the surveys all on his own, with only some basic knowledge of native insects.



In just a few years John gained the insight to be able lead our raptured audience through many of the different insect families, explaining their relationship to specific plants and showing how the success rate of plant pollination can vary depending on whether the plants preferred pollinator partners are around to do the job. He also spoke about the importance of some flowering weeds to the survival of native



pollinators, in particular, cat's-ear, *Hypochaeris radicata*, is a species that many native pollinators use when their preferred vegetation isn't available.

So, if we are thinking about removing flowering weeds – especially in areas with little native vegetation - it's important to think about which insects might be relying on those plants, much in the way we might

consider how birds or mammals might be dependent on a weed for habitat and food. Instead of removing all of it at once, it's better to remove sections, replace with appropriate flowering Indigenous plants and habitat, and then repeat over a couple of seasons.

After the morning presentation, we travelled back towards Lavers Hill to visit a private garden on Melba Gully Road where John led us on a search for pollinators. Although it was a little overcast and cool for pollinators, there were still plenty to be found, and the beautiful garden captured everyone's imagination, just as much as the insects!

One of our participants, Rachel, said:

*"It was fascinating learning about the efficiency of native vs non-native insects as pollinators. And interesting to consider that even our choices about mundane things like when to mow can impact the availability of food sources. So much to think about!"*

Christine said:

*"I thoroughly enjoyed the native pollinator workshop by John. His slide presentation was very interesting and informative. Great to find out all the different insects that all play a part in keeping the plant cycle of life going and us as well. It was the bees' knees."*

If you'd like to learn more about native pollinators and insects, you can view the guide that was produced by the Upper Campaspe Landcare Network here:

[https://issuu.com/macedon\\_ranges\\_shire\\_council/docs/insects\\_of\\_central\\_victoria\\_final](https://issuu.com/macedon_ranges_shire_council/docs/insects_of_central_victoria_final)





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Many of the species and broader family groups are similar or the same as those found in the Otway Ranges.

Thanks to Landcare Victoria for their assistance in funding this workshop series and the Southern Otway Landcare Network for their help coordinating the event.

### *Insects after dark - Who are the night visitors?*

After the daytime workshop, John Walter had another event planned for us, an insect



light sheet night! John and I scoped out a suitable location near Yuulong earlier in the week, a flat space surrounded by forest so we could attract insects from 360° and that evening he set up sheets with a special UV

light, and then we waited for it to get dark so the magic could happen!

The insects started arriving just before 8pm with dragonflies, cicadas, mozzies and flies being some of the early arrivals, we were also joined by a few human guests. John explained that different insects will arrive at different times of the night, all the way through until dawn. I've often looked at those tiny black insects hovering around lights at home and thought nothing much of them (unless they have swarmed into the bedroom on a hot night!), but John's macro lens revealed a whole micro world of diversity, there were moths, flies, and beetles of all colours and descriptions from a vast range of families. The biodiversity was

incredible. John is starting to put up the photos from the night on iNaturalist (an amazing citizen science app I highly recommend you start using) and you can view the species he photographed around Yuulong as he starts to identify them by visiting <https://tinyurl.com/5x7ta8tu> or by scanning the QR code shown here.

Below is just a small selection of some of the amazing night visitors that showed up on the evening.





## SOLN Support Centre

*Large hearts looked after, with thanks to Bendigo Community Bank*



SOLN's fabulous volunteer network is comprised of people with large hearts who want to contribute something positive to our Southern Otways community and landscapes. These large hearts are very important to us and, given that many of them have experienced quite a bit of living, we need to ensure we keep them beating if an emergency arises. Our Support Centre on Piggery Lane receives a great deal of this volunteer activity, so it's important that the centre has the equipment it needs to take care of our SOLN community.

More than 30,000 Australians suffer from sudden cardiac arrest each year and it can occur without warning to people of all ages, backgrounds and health status. Without immediate defibrillation and CPR, less than 26% of people will survive. If an individual receives defibrillation within the first few minutes of having a sudden cardiac arrest, their chance of survival is **increased to beyond 70%**. In other words, **accessing a defibrillator can be the critical difference between a life lost and a life saved.**

An automatic external defibrillator (AED) can be used by anyone, without needing any prior training. However, these devices are quite costly and usually out of the price

range of non-profit community organisations. Fortunately, SOLN received some big-hearted funding in 2023 from Bendigo Community Bank (Apollo Bay & District Community Bank) to purchase this vital piece of equipment for our Support Centre.

The fully automatic device arrived just before Christmas, with its own cabinet and an alarm to out-compete the largest flock of early-morning cockatoos, and Nigel Senior fitted it in our kitchen shed. Community Bank Manager, Luke Wilson, visited Shrub Club to officially present the device and funding to the SOLN community. (See photo of that wonderfully large cheque!)



In January, we were very grateful to receive a visit from Affiliate Professor Charlie Corke (Intensive Care Specialist, well-known and beloved local doctor) at Shrub Club. Charlie showed us how easy it is to use the device, refreshed our knowledge of CPR and the importance of beginning it immediately, and left us with a very important message: if a person collapses and isn't breathing, **don't hesitate... call 000 (person 1), begin CPR immediately (person 2), fetch the AED and follow its instructions (person 3).**





We hope we may never need it, but we heartily thank Bendigo Community Bank for enabling us to look after our community's large hearts. *Andrea de Kauwe*

## COMMUNITY GROUPS

### Shrub Club Community Nursery (SCCN)

#### *News from the Nursery*

Summer is a great time to be a shrub clubber. As the flowers of spring wilt and develop into seeds of many shapes and sizes, a great horticultural treasure hunt begins throughout the hills, heaths, valleys, swamps and beaches of the Otways.

Many of our local native species have a short window between the ripening of their seed and its disappearance/dispersal via wind, hungry birds, or various ways of dropping/shooting/exploding from the plant. For a lot of these species, summer is the only chance to collect seed, so our mission is to get out into the bush and get collecting whilst the going is good.



Our weekly plant walks have been a great success this summer, giving us the opportunity to explore various botanically interesting (and usually stunningly beautiful) locations, learning and cataloguing plants along the way. From the grand eucalypt

woodland of Kennett Spur to the low coastal shrub of Castle Cove we managed to collect seed from a diverse range of species, aiding our aim to grow a wide variety of local native plants.

Back at the nursery we've been working hard to sort through the collected seeds, sowing some and storing others in the fridge for later propagation. Whilst some seed is identified, separated and cleaned easily through sieves of different sizes (e.g. the hard shiny seeds of Prickly Moses), others can be much more tricky, finicky or time consuming.

After weeks of popping Mock Olive seeds



from the fleshy fruit Hughie went on a much-needed strike! Needless to say we're all deepening our knowledge and appreciation for seeds and their

ability to grow into amazing plants of all sizes.

Meanwhile, we have continued potting away at our general propagation duties and a few handy souls have also been concocting more plans to improve our infrastructure on the nursery site, including a new storage shed which will free up some space in our larger propagation shed. As always there's lots to do, and the work of our volunteer community is constant, dedicated and much appreciated.

As summer winds up we'll be returning to monthly plant walks soon, but Wednesday mornings at the nursery will continue every week – if you're interested in learning about our local native plants and how to grow them (and cooking/eating delicious lunches) come down and get involved!



We also have plenty of plants carried over from last season which will be ready to go in the ground as soon as we head into the colder, wetter months of the year – if you, or someone you know, are interested in doing some revegetation work this autumn to spring, don't hesitate to get in contact.

*Seamus Fillmore*

## Planting Days

*GORCAPA - Landcare working bees around Marengo Caravan Park*



I took part in two working bees at Marengo Point in January as part of the Great Ocean Road and Coastal Parks Authority (GORCAPA) - Landcare efforts to remove non-indigenous vegetation, restore the old quarry, and replant the area with more suitable local coastal plants.

The first session was a small crew, but it was a very productive morning working with members of both organisations, chainsaws, loppers and poison-paint to remove a lot of Mirror Bush (*Coprosma repens*), Coastal Wattle (*Acacia sophorae*) and other non-local native trees and bushes towards Marengo Point. This was followed by a nice BBQ provided by Leigh Williams, Marengo CP Manager.

There was a much bigger turn-out for the second working bee, including lots of kids. This was possibly because word had got out that Peters ice-cream kindly provided copious supplies of Magnum ice-creams!

One group tackled the huge Coastal Wattle tree just by the entrance to the park. In this risk-averse world, it was great to see young and old confidently attacking the tree with saws, loppers and chainsaws – all but the tree came through unharmed, and what a difference this removal makes to the view.



A second group tackled blackberry, ragwort and other weeds that had dared to sprout up in the newly cleared old quarry. We finished with a sense of achievement, another lovely bbq and many ice-creams.

Great to see GORCAPA, Landcare and volunteers working together to restore local areas. *Vicky Thursfield*





## Plant Walks



It is true that the key purpose of plant walks is to collect seeds and cuttings from plants for SOLN to propagate indigenous species in the nursery. However, that is only part of the story of plant walks.

Of course, you can't collect propagation material without absorbing some knowledge about the plants as you go along. Then there is the exercise factor – mostly we walk slowly to spot likely plant candidates. However, being the Otways there is usually a lot of up and down involved which can get you puffing a bit -or in some cases, puffing a lot.

There is always time to take in the beautiful Otways scenery. There are ocean views, countryside and forest views, river views and in some high up places everything at once. It is likely that we will visit places you

have never been to before and maybe did not know existed.

The Otways is about creatures as well as plants, and there will not be a walk where you do not get



to see and hear at least some of them. It may be a wallaby, koala, kangaroo, echidna, birds, birds, and more birds, or a butterfly, an interesting beetle, or a leech. OK, you can't hear leeches, but you can hear the persons to whom they become attached!

Plant walks??? Well, sometimes it's a plant *drive*. A couple of our company seem to have an innate ability to spot likely plants while travelling along unmade winding tracks. At which point everyone piles out of the vehicle/s collects the required material, then drive and repeat.



There can also be a bit of larking about – just a little bit. Such as Kel demonstrating centrifugal force by swinging a bucket of water over his head. Would it have been even more amusing if the handle had come off at the halfway mark?!

So, you see, a plant walk is more than a plant walk. Think about coming along one Tuesday afternoon to get the full experience.



## 'Plant Drive'-Marengo to Aire

Commencing near Marengo, after a false start, we (Olly, Ian, Seamus, Amber, and myself) headed up a back road and started collecting Red Fruit Saw Sedge (*Gahnia sieberiana*) seeds by the roadside. A few more roadside stops saw us near Liz's place at Hordern Vale, gathering blackwood, mock olive and tall sword sedge. On toward Aire River flats and the GOR roadside verge fed us blackberry, wild raspberry, and nearby cumbungi (or bulrush). We ventured into the Game Reserve at Aire River and found some fun plants and seed such as Pale Rush, Jointed Twig Rush and Broom Rush.

Heading further West, and back into the forest, we collected Hop Goodenia and Spike Beard Heath amongst other plants at a roadside stop in Glenaire where Ian spotted a weed grass (Dotted Sedge, *Carex punctata*) from Gippsland that was looking established. Worrying.



Lunch, chat, leaving the Aurion (my car) behind and altogether in the Hilux toward Holy Water track. Religion has never really moved me, but this Tuesday afternoon left an indelible impression. On the ascent and around the bends of Aire Settlement Road, we found various species and collected seed from plants like Stinkwood

and Forest Boronia.

On Holy Water we were treated to a variety of landscape and plant life. We ventured off Holy Water side tracks, and bit by bit, the going became more challenging. The most distinctive memory for me was the area with sodden peaty soils, no trees for what might have been a kilometre radius. Tea tree, shrubs and a most *grass-like* plant (*Calorophus elongatus* - Long Rope-rush) that seemingly grew in mid-air. Ian had predicted this spot and told us that this plant's only other location in Victoria is in a limited area of East Gippsland, (although is more widespread in western Tasmania).



Courageous driving from Seamus, with expert 4WD coaching from Ian, saw us safely out of some challenging terrain. Perhaps a higher force was watching over us. I headed west, and the rest continued on.

A great day well spent. *Richard White*

## Otway Ocean Care (OOC)

### *Puerulus monitoring and...*

***If you've been reading this newsletter over the past year, you may know that...***

A commercially significant species in the seafood industry, the southern rock lobster





(*Jasus edwardsii*) is monitored to protect its longevity.

The term **puerulus** refers to the final series of larval moults that take place before becoming a juvenile. Prior to that, two planktonic life stages and 18 months or so drifting through the open ocean, see the lobster larvae make their way towards the coast and find sheltered crevices to settle in. Once settled, they'll moult and transform into the first puerulus stage (P1) before progressing to PP (post-puerulus), after which they then become juveniles.



The lengthy and cryptic life cycle of *J. edwardsii* has so far prevented it from being successfully farmed, and it is instead harvested from the wild. Monitoring puerulus settlement helps to inform us about the future health of the rock lobster stock.

Puerulus settlement at the Apollo Bay harbour has been regularly monitored since 1994. In the past, the collection baskets wherein the puerulus would settle, were located offshore, and accessed by divers. Maintaining this method of data collection was proving costly, and the Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) was looking for other ways to keep this program going.

So, in early 2022, the VFA recruited Otway Ocean Care to lead the monitoring as a

citizen science project, and since then we have been meeting at the harbour each month to assess the traps for puerulus.



We count the number of puerulus in the collection baskets and measure the carapace size and puerulus stage of each individual.

The data then goes to the VFA, who use it to look at trends of settlement and recruitment and make predictions on overall stock viability.

### ***But you may not be aware that...***

Alongside the puerulus monitoring arose a pastime of studying the diverse array of local marine life that had also made a temporary home in the traps. As well as puerulus, we were finding all kinds of interesting worms, nudibranchs, and crustaceans— among other things.

Many of these tiny creatures would be hard to spot in the wild, so this gave us a great opportunity to discover and share the hidden world of marine invertebrates. We constantly have new volunteers come by and help out. Many bring their kids who



participate with excitement and fascination at the variety of life that lives in our waters.

Experts from Museums Victoria have even used the puerulus monitoring as an opportunity to collect specimens for inspection under the microscope at our worm and sponge workshops in 2023.

As well as recording puerulus, we now use the sampling events to implement a broad marine biodiversity monitoring project whereby we upload our observations to iNaturalist. Here are a few of our favourites finds.



We aim to one day expand this project to begin monitoring particular species or environmental conditions that could give us valuable data and provide insight into the health of our local marine ecosystem. If you have suggestions for anything specific, we could be looking out for, feel free to send an email to [darcy.landcare@soln.org](mailto:darcy.landcare@soln.org) and we will take your ideas onboard.

New volunteers are always welcome! So come join us at the last pontoon of the Apollo Bay harbour and learn about some local marine life.

Upcoming monitoring events will be at 11 AM on the mornings of:

**Tuesday 26 March**

**Friday 26 April**

**Saturday 25 May**

Join our iNaturalist project and stay apprised of all the cool creatures we find (<https://inaturalist.ala.org.au/projects/puerulus-monitoring>).

### 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.





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### Otway Mushroom and Fungi Group (OMFG)

#### **\*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.

### Otway Bird Observers (OBO)

#### *Bird ID Course: Discover the shorebirds and seabirds of the Otway Coast*



Buller's Albatross

The Otway Coast is a unique place that lures people from across the world, many of whom fly

thousands of kilometres over vast oceans to slow-down, relax, and feast their eyes on the range of delights our shoreline has to offer. It also attracts migratory birds from all over the world, who fly thousands of kilometres to be here, and for these birds, the relaxing and feasting part is critical to their survival and wellbeing.

On Saturday 24 and Sunday 25 of February members of the community and the Otway Bird Observers gathered at the Apollo Bay

Senior Citizens Centre to take part in a two-day Shorebird (Waders) and Seabird identification



workshop. Our guest teachers were Dr Greg Kerr from the Nature Glenelg Trust, who led the Shorebird training on the Saturday, and Georgie Custance from

the Threatened Species Conservancy (TSC) who led the Seabird training on the Sunday.



Eastern Curlew

The workshop was designed to help foster community care for our local species by giving participants the opportunity to learn about their life histories, biology, habitat, and critically... how to recognise them!

With just two days to cover a lot of ground, after a crash course in bird biology and evolution our participants enthusiastically jumped straight into their field guides deftly led by Dr Kerr who highlighted the key methods to distinguish between the different shorebird groups, because let's face it, some shorebirds and seabirds are quite hard to tell apart.



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Just before lunch, Conservation Ranger Kristian Russell, from the Great Ocean Road and Coastal Parks Authority (GORCAPA) stopped by to give an update on the local

Hooded Plover, “Hoodie” conservation project and to explain how to get involved. It might seem like Hoodies get a lot of attention (compared to some threatened species) – but the reality is that their nesting and breeding areas just happen to be on the ground, on those attractive beaches with low dunes and wide sandy shores... the very same beaches that humans love to death and often modify beyond recognition.



Hooded Plovers

If you'd like to get involved in the local Hoodie monitoring project, you can learn more here:

<https://www.greatoceanroadauthority.vic.gov.au/Conservation/Fauna/Hooded-Plovers>

After a delicious lunch provided by Wildlife Wonders, and a shorebird spotting field trip to Marengo – Dr Kerr upped the ante and introduced some techniques for how to count flocks of shorebird species, and mixed flock groups. And we're not just talking a handful, or even 50 or maybe a 100, it could be up to 10,000 shorebirds!



On Sunday, Georgie Custance (TSC) led the group off land and onto the open seas, and our participants explored the mysterious lives of seabirds. With many spending almost their entire lives on the open water, to observe them you really must get out on a boat sometime. Fishing boats and trawlers are often a magnet for these birds, but tragically also a significant threat, as fishing lines and nets can entangle the birds as they dive for prey.

In lieu of a boat, after lunch, the group headed out to the next best thing, the Apollo Bay Harbour, to try and spot some of the birds they had learned about over the weekend.



Crested Terns

After the course it was heartening to hear about how it had changed things for some of our participants:

*“Being honest, shorebirds and seabirds have always been my least favourite groups to spend time observing. After the course, I came away with a better*





*appreciation of the incredible lives they live and the challenges they face. A highlight for me was learning about migratory pathways,” – Jane.*

*“The event was very informative, I found I was just listening to every word Greg and Georgie spoke. Their knowledge is second to none. I always learn so much, and it keeps me eager to learn more. As I’m an avid bird photographer, I have always stayed clear of shore birds due to their bland palette. But partaking in this course, made me appreciate them more and to eagerly search for them to photograph...am now applying for the Arts fellowship to Antarctica, hopefully to win and photograph the Albatross. So excited and I can’t wait to apply this month.” – Amber*

The Otway Bird Observers would like to thank Coastcare Victoria and the Victorian Government for their assistance in funding this project. If you would like to join the Otway Bird Observers, contact [clem.landcare@soln.org](mailto:clem.landcare@soln.org) or find our group on Facebook at:

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

## Edible Gardens Group

*Open Gardens with the Edible Gardens Group*



Olly Kerr and Patrick Liederbach, both passionate gardeners, kindly opened their gardens on Sunday 18 February to more than 15 interested EGG gardeners, sharing

their knowledge and enthusiasm for edible gardening.

As well as taste-testing the successes (delicious strawberries and mini cucumbers), we also heard of troubles with birds, cherry slugs, weather extremes, and encroaching couch grass, and what deterrents work and what doesn't.

Soil, soil, soil. It all starts by feeding your soil. Delicious stuff like compost, manures, straw, scratching pooping chickens, chop and drop pruning. Then map out summer and winter sun areas, where to put the chooks, fruit trees, vegies and, oh yes, a bit for the kids, dog and washing line!

Many kids were there, and they knew what was ripe to eat, and what not to stand on. They were learning early the benefits of healthy eating, being in nature, and getting their hands dirty.



Even though gardening styles were a bit different — one was a bit more haphazard than the other— both worked well and provided delicious food and gave their owners a sense of relaxation and achievement. Both Patrick and Olly are resourceful gardeners, using materials on-hand or local, and repurposing items like concrete pipes and old windows. No



pesticides were used, and no children were hurt in the making of these gardens.

**One last tip from these gardeners:** don't forget that you also can make use of nature strips... just as long as your neighbours don't object!



**Enjoy your edible gardening!**

*Chris Raymant*

## Apollo Bay (AB LG)

### AGM

The AGM for Apollo Bay Landcare Group took place on Saturday 27th January. President Colin Jevons shared an update of the terrific year of growth and development for the group and the wider Southern Otways Landcare Network. Successful grant applications and multiple projects across our patch were conceived, planned, and implemented. (see Charlie O'Sullivan's comments in 'Small Blocks Big Dreams' article, page 2). Mark Gordon as Treasurer provided a comprehensive report on funds and utilisation thereof and highlighted progress with internet banking and methods for donation.

We are delighted to confirm the Office Bearers for the forthcoming year, as follows:

**President -**

**Colin Jevons**

**Vice President -**

**Ken Forrester**

**Secretary -**

**Isla Woods**

**Treasurer -**

**Bill Gross**

**Newsletter Co-Ordinator - Nick Luxton**

**SOLN Representatives - Ken Forrester, Kevin O'Connell and Colin Jevons**

**General Committee Members - Jeanette Van der Veer, Ted Van der Veer, Phil Langdon, Mardhiyyah Muhammed, Kim Stevenson**

Special thanks to our two retiring members of the COM, Mark Gordon and Judi Forrester for their long-term, enthusiastic and capable service. Judi retires as Vice President and Mark steps down from his dual roles of Treasurer and Newsletter Co-ordinator.

## Ridge to Cape (R2C LG)

*formerly Hordern Vale Glenaire Landcare Group/Lavers to the Lighthouse Landcare Group*

### AGM

Fifteen members of the group met for the AGM at the Perch in Lavers Hill on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> February.

Prior to the meeting we enjoyed a walk through an adjacent rainforest gully that Perch owners, Gabe and Dean have been working on to improve access for guests and the public to enjoy.

The hard work clearing blackberry and debris, reclaiming walking paths and managing the steep areas with steps etc has also allowed the Old Ocean Road to reemerge from the past.

The meeting opened at 3.38pm and SOLN Landcare and Nursery facilitator Seamus Filmore gave a report on the 'Small Blocks Big Dreams' Project. Facilitator Clem





Wetherall then reported on the progress of the Colac-Otway Shire funded workshop series 'Understanding our Land – From Hordern Vale to Yuulong'. Two events have been delivered, one in Lavers Hill and one in Yuulong (see 'Pollinators and Beneficial Insects of the Otways' and 'Insects after Dark', p. 7-9 in this newsletter), with four remaining to be delivered before the end of June 2024. The next event is scheduled for mid-March and will be a workshop in Hordern Vale on the Hydrology of the Otways with guest expert Peter Dalhaus from Federation University.

Outgoing president Kel Needham gave thanks to facilitators Clem Wetherall and Joy Whitton for their work in gathering interests from members and for putting them into action. He also acknowledged and gave great thanks to Joy (now returned to Melbourne) for her contributions as a member of the Committee of Management and as a Facilitator, who will be much missed.

### *Changes to financial reporting*

After the treasurers report a motion was moved by John 'Harry' Harris to change financial reporting from a financial year to a calendar year so that it aligns better with the AGM. Seconded by David Simmonds. All in favour.

### *Election of Office Bearers*

The following members were elected to office positions:

- ☑ **President – Rohan Morris** – moved by Jenny, seconded by Harry, all in favour.
- ☑ **Vice President – Clem Wetherall** – moved by David, seconded by Kel, all in favour.
- ☑ **Secretary – Sandra Curtis** – moved by Rohan, seconded by Harry, all in favour.
- ☑ **Treasurer – John 'Harry' Harris** - moved by David, seconded by Kel, all in favour.

## ☑ **CoM Volunteers – 1) Rohan Morris 2) Clem Wetherall 3) Kel Needham**

### *Formal adoption of name change*

Last AGM it was suggested that we needed a new name as our members were from much wider than just the Hordern Vale to Glenaire area. At this AGM the 'working title' Lavers to Lighthouse (in use the last year) was discussed and there was concern it might not reflect the broader geographical area that encompasses our current member base. As this now extends all along the ridge from Yuulong area through to Wyelangta, then also from Lavers Hill down to the coast and across to Cape Otway, it was suggested RIDGE TO CAPE would be a better name.

Adoption of the new name Ridge to Cape (R2C) was moved by Lee Bryant, seconded by Harry, all in favour.

Follow up actions: John 'Harry' Harris will now go forward to formally change the name with ASIC etc and will report back to the committee.

After the discussion of other business, guest speaker David Ugalde presented on Climate Change impacts in the Otways and what we can do to meet these challenges. The presentation invoked a strong response from our members, and we'd like to thank David for inspiring us to consider how our group can start taking action to adapt. We look forward to working with him into the future on ways our community can work to support one another and our networks through these changes.

AGM report compiled by Clem Wetherall and Sandra Curtis.

For a copy of the minutes please email Secretary Sandra Curtis:  
sandra@simmonds.com.au



## Marengo Barham Catchment (MBC LG)

### AGM

Sixteen members attended our AGM which was held on Friday evening, 9<sup>th</sup> of Feb, and enjoyed pizzas and drinks beside the Barham River at the Recreation Reserve. Future projects were discussed, election of officers for the next year took place, and concerns of various members about waterways in our area were tabled.

If you live our area and want to participate in various projects designed to improve the natural environment in which we live please contact us via our email address: [marengobarhamcatchmentlandcare@gmail.com](mailto:marengobarhamcatchmentlandcare@gmail.com)

In the meantime, you are most welcome to join us in one of our current weeding projects. **Meet at Marengo Tramway Reserve off Panorama Crescent at 10 am on Saturday 23 March**, and enjoy a lunch provided afterwards. Let us know if you are coming via the above email and any dietary requirements so that we can cater for you.

### *Reviewing a revegetation site by boat*



After more than a year attempting to gain access to the Landcare planting west of the Great Ocean Road Barham River. Bridge, we decided to go by rowboat as the old bridge to the site has been permanently closed.

The river mouth was blocked by a sandbar and the river was almost full, good for

rowing but hard to land people ashore without getting boots wet.

The Landcare site, planted around 2007 with a top up of trees in 2009 and 2022 has plenty of healthy trees with seed capsules (names taken) and some blackberries, but sheep have been ducking under the electric fence so the 2022 top up was disappointing. Five of us visited the site.

Four decided to row part of the river and with two rowing, and a tail/stern wind in an 11-foot Pompi boat, we may have achieved 4 knots; with the return trip against the river flow, wind and small waves, maybe 2 knots.

Thanks to those who came along, we hope to do something similar soon.

*Tony Webber*

## Wye to Wongarra (W2W LG)

The Wye River Surf Club was packed in February as our community came together to learn about living with snakes in the Otways.

'Snakes Sense - Myths and Hisses' was an idea of Wye to Wongarra Landcare Group, funded by the Colac Otway Shire.

Colac vet Evelyn Lyons, Lorne Hospital nurse Jason Phielers and local Colac snake catcher Benny McNamara enlightened the audience with information based on real life experiences.

Participants Cate and Harry Lewis shared their thoughts:

*"This event was impressive, and impressively informative. The three presenters all spoke from long experience of dealing with pets (dogs and cats) with suspected snake bites (that was Evelyn our vet); snakes themselves (that was Benny our snake catcher) and humans with suspected snake bites (that was*





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*Jason, our Nurse Unit Manager). They mixed insights into the animals in focus with a rich supply of anecdotes from their own practices.*

*Humans came at the end with Jason, and it was a relief to hear from him that in Australia no more than two humans actually die of snake bites in each year. He gave clear advice on dealing with a suspected snake bite (to a human). Top of the list after checking for your own safety is immobilising the victim and then stabilising the limb where the bite occurred before calling for help.*

*There was a full house at the SLSC meeting room and lively discussion with the audience. Congratulations to Joanne Tyler who led the Landcare team organising the event, and bravely acted as Jason's model for his demonstration of limb-immobilization using bandages."*

Wye to Wongarra Chair Joanne Tyler said the event was the largest workshop held since the Wye River fire and will be repeated in the future.



Benny McNamara, snake catcher

This event marked the fifth grant awarded to and managed by the group – others have covered weed control at Wye River, Separation Creek & Kennett River; revegetation at Kennett, Wye and Grey Rivers; community weed and fungi education activities. We were also very

pleased to be involved the development of the GORCAPA weed management strategy for our part of the coast.

**Our next event will be more sea spurge removal at Kennett River** in follow up to our successful Coastcare grant. Our focus is driven by our members – queries to [w2wlandcaregroup@gmail.com](mailto:w2wlandcaregroup@gmail.com)

## **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.

## FROM SOLN'S FACILITATOR HOT DESK

### Introducing Abby Imhoff

Having moved with my family last winter to Skenes Creek North from Melbourne, I have been eager to get to know the plants, animals and landscapes of the Otways and better understand and care for the land we are now living on. I connected



with SOLN early on and have gained so much from being involved in programs like the Small Blocks workshop series. I am thrilled to now start a role as a Facilitator with SOLN.

I grew up kicking around paddocks, riding horses and caring with injured and orphaned wildlife on my family farm in central Vic. My love of wild places stems from that time on our farm and many camping trips to far flung parts of Australia. I fell in love with the Otways when I started camping at Cape Otway with my own family when my kids were just babes and happily, last year, finally made this beautiful part of the world home.

I started my career working in community environmental programs in Southeast Asia, before spending about 12 years working in universities in research (energy policy, environmental security, regenerative food systems) and teaching (international trade policy, international governance, corporate sustainability). Like many people, I changed direction during the pandemic, returning to community work by setting up and running a kitchen garden and sustainability program at my kids' primary school. I also am now pursuing my passion for plants and regenerative and biodiverse landscapes through studying a Master of Urban Horticulture at Melbourne Uni.

I am so excited to work alongside this community of passionate land stewards and land carers, from whom I have already learnt so much. Thanks for having me on board!

**Andrea de Kauwe**

### *Partnerships Against Pests*

We all know that the Southern Otways comprise the most spectacular landscapes in the world, rich in natural assets and described as the last strongholds for wildlife

that have disappeared from other areas of Victoria.

However, these landscapes face many challenges, and invasive species are a major threat. Feral pigs and deer impact heavily on vegetation, waterways, pastures and forest ecosystems. Feral cats and foxes severely decimate bird, reptile, and small mammal populations. Blackberry infestations are rife; gorse and broom are problematic; asparagus fern and non-indigenous pittosporum species are of high concern, as are several other weeds.

Our team at the Southern Otway Landcare Network has been working with weed control contractors and our network of volunteers to remove invasive plants from both public and private land. We have also been working with the Conservation Ecology Centre over the last 3 years, during the Wild Otways Initiative, to build understanding in the community about the impacts of feral pigs and deer, and how to best report sightings to management agencies (i.e. use the FeralScan app).

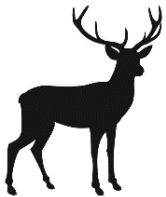
Since the completion of the Wild Otways Initiative in 2023, we've been looking out for funding to continue supporting our community engagement and education activities focussed on invasive species. Because managing invasive species requires long-term commitment, enthusiasm, and resourcing from all tiers of government and all sections of the community.

**Agriculture Victoria's Partnerships Against Pests** program enables organisations to build community awareness and technical knowledge of best practice management options for invasive species. It champions partnerships and collaborations, as well as regional and localised initiatives, recognising





that invasive species management requires cohesive action across the community. SOLN has applied for a grant under this program to resource our community engagement and education activities. We hope to hear if our application has been successful by the time our next newsletter is published.



**AND while we're talking partnerships against invasive species, Parks Victoria would like to hear from property owners of land adjoining the Great Otway National Park who are interested in deer control.**

The environmental, social and economic impacts of deer are being felt all over the Southern Otways. Parks Victoria undertook a deer control program in the Surfcoast section of the Great Otway National Park last year, and **in 2024 they will undertake a control program in the central and western regions of the park.** The program is funded by the Victorian Government's Deer Control Strategy. If you'd like to know more about the strategy, it can be found [here](#).

We know that often deer live on the park/private land interface, bedding down in the national park and breakfasting on surrounding private land. So, if we want to rid our landscapes of deer, it is really important for private and public land managers to work together.

For this reason, Parks Victoria are inviting neighbours adjoining the park (where deer control is planned), **the opportunity to opt into their deer control program. If you're a neighbour of the national park, SOLN encourages you to get in touch with Parks Victoria.** Please email the Deer Control Program: [westregiondcp@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:westregiondcp@parks.vic.gov.au)



*Photo courtesy of the Conservation Ecology Centre*

## SOLN

### Victorian Landcare Awards

The Victorian Landcare Awards are held every two years to celebrate and recognise the outstanding work done by our Landcarers and environmental volunteers in award categories that acknowledge the excellence of individuals, groups, networks, First Nations people, schools and other organisations in caring for Victoria's land, water and biodiversity.

The 2023-24 Victorian Landcare Awards include five Victoria only awards categories and nine State and Territory (national) awards categories.

SOLN's nominations for the **Landcare Awards** are

Victoria only

- **Landcare and Environmental Volunteer Network Award** – SOLN
- **Landcare and Environmental Volunteer Group Award** – Shrub Club Community Nursery

National:

- **Coastcare Award** – Otway Ocean Care



## Grant Applications and Updates



Across our network SOLN submitted 9 grants for the recently closed Coastcare Victoria Community

Grants. Landcare Victoria and Colac Otway Shire grants will be opening soon, if you've got any projects you'd like to see happen please reach out to one of the crew. A brief summary of the grant submissions is below.

### *Otway Ocean Care - Cetaceans and Cephalopods: Clever Sea Creatures*

This project will be aimed at educating the public on cephalopods and cetaceans. Workshops will cover their biology, ecology, and threats they are facing. Following the workshops will be the establishment of an ongoing citizen science program whereby the public can help monitor local whale activity. We will also provide volunteers with training in freediving and a workshop in underwater photography.

### *OMFG - workshops, surveying etc.*

This project will entail a range of workshops geared towards engaging our community's interest in fungi and further developing the fungi recording skills of our Otway Mushroom and Fungi Group volunteers and broader community. This project will follow on from a series of fungi workshops with Alison Pouliot which the OMFG and SOLN are hosting next month on fungi ID, recording and surveying. The 2025 workshop series will further build on these skills but also focus on photographing fungi, for both creative purposes and to increase our skills in recording the diverse, but largely unknown, fungi of the Otway region.

### *OBO - Feathered Friends Flight Academy*

The Otway Bird Observers are a group of people interested in learning how to identify and observe bird species in our region. Our group aims to support local conservation and citizen science activities by fostering personal passion and strong community knowledge about our local feathered friends. Following on from sold-out bird courses in Apollo Bay last year, we're hoping to run another 10-week event in Hordern Vale to engage more people in conservation and citizen science activities. This program will entail training 20 volunteers to comprehensively identify birds and run surveys to assist in conservation.

### *SC - Learning through the dunes - Apollo Bay Coastal Plant Trail*

Our project has two complementary aims. Firstly, to create a number of signs along the foreshore trail providing botanical, ecological, and cultural information about local native coastal plants. This initiative aims to encourage the community and visiting tourists to gain a deeper respect and understanding of our dune and foreshore vegetation. Secondly, we aim to enhance plant diversity on the Apollo Bay foreshore by planting more local-native coastal species among the already existing dune vegetation. The plants will be grown from seed of locally-native provenance collected by the Shrub Club volunteer community, and will be planted by our volunteers and the wider community at a working bee.

### *MBCLG - Marengo's Weed Wipeout Warriors*

Following on from the success of Apollo Bay Landcare Group's revival funding last year the Marengo Barham catchment Landcare Group (formerly the Otway Barham Landcare Group) is keen to engage more





members from the Marengo side of the catchment. Whilst Marengo has always been part of the group, the focus has traditionally centred on the Barham River. The river is now in quite good shape, whereas the group membership has seen better days. Hence, the need to shift our focus to the more populous (and weedy) centre of Marengo to both engage new members and tackle the emerging coastal weeds problem.

### *ABLG - Rooting for Tuxion: Roadside Renewal*

Old Tuxion Rd is an unused dirt road that has been circumnavigated by Tuxion Rd and is no longer used or usable. Unfortunately, due to a lack of council access, there has been a proliferation of environmental weeds and the Apollo Bay Landcare Group have been keen to build on their success from last year and try and restore it. Despite almost no car access the track is still popular for running, walking and cycling, would be a good profile restoration and would have significant environmental benefits. This project will include weed control, reveg working bees and funding for contractor weed control.

### *Skenes Ck AA - Green Skenes Conservation Coalition*

The Skenes Creek Advancement Association would like to continue the good work started last year by the Apollo Bay Landcare Group and undertake some weed control and revegetation working bees on two neglected roadside reserves in the town. We are hoping to establish a weekly weed warriors group that will meet every Monday and do 1 ½ hours of weeding followed by light refreshments. To this end, we are requesting funding to purchase tools and equipment, some native plants of local provenance and for contractor payment for the more difficult species.

### *EGG/SOBee - Understanding and recording invertebrates of the Southern Otway coastal region.*

This project will enhance community knowledge of local invertebrates and their roles in supporting healthy ecosystems. It will also support conservation efforts in the Southern Otways through building the capacity of the local community in identifying and recording invertebrates. It involves; \*Production of 'Invertebrates of the Southern Otway Region' field guide to distribute to Southern Otway Landcare Network members, landholders, schools and visitors (i.e. Great Ocean Walk hikers); \* Hosting of two 'Invertebrates of the Southern Otway Region' community workshops ('native bees & wasps', and 'beetles'), with a focus on the ecology of invertebrates and identification and recording techniques.

### *SOLN - Beat the Sweet (Pittosporum)*

The Kennett River community loves their coastline and environment. They want to contribute proactively, in collaboration with agencies and traditional owners, to care for and improve their 'backyard' for the benefit of current and future generations. This project aims to remove Sweet Pittosporum at Point Hawdon. By eliminating this significant weed species, and replanting natives, it encourages an increase of biodiversity and habitat, and reduces the spread of the weed into the Otways. To leverage the community's enthusiasm, this project provides the opportunity for people to volunteer in making an onground difference whilst increasing awareness and education through participation.

*Oliver Kerr*

**\* INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS:**

[SOLN Facebook](#)

[SOLN instagram](#)

[Otway Ocean Care Facebook](#)

[Otway Ocean Care Instagram](#)

[Otway Mushroom and Fungi Facebook](#)

[Otway Bird Observers Facebook](#)

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

**[Online Calendar:](#)**

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

## EMAIL REGISTER

SOLN's main means of communication is now through our mailing 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.

Alternatively, contact us to discuss your interest.

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





## 2024 CALENDAR

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

Event	Date	Time/Location
Shrub Club	Every Wednesday	9.30am-12pm, followed by lunch @ SOLN Support Centre Piggery Lane
Puerulus monitoring	Tuesday, 26 March Thursday, 25 April Saturday, 25 May	11am Apollo Bay Harbour, last pontoon
Plant Walks/Seed Collections	Tuesdays	2.30pm Landcare Office, Nelson St
Fungi Foray	Thursdays in Winter months	Details on OMFG Facebook page
<b>Alison Pouliot - Southern Otways Fungus Survey</b> – Fungus Identification & Survey Training Workshop	Tuesday 9th and Wednesday 10th April	10am and 1pm TBA
<b>Alison Pouliot - Unruly renegades</b> – Exploring the Fungi of Southern Otways	Friday 12th April	6:30-9pm Senior Citizens Hall, Apollo Bay
<b>Alison Pouliot - Discovering and Fostering Fungi Workshop</b>	Saturday 13th April,	11am-2:30pm Senior Citizens Hall, Apollo Bay
Fungi collection skills workshop – Collecting for the National Herbarium of Victoria	mid-April, date TBC.	SOLN office
Sapphire McMullen Fisher - What are those fungi doing on my land?	Friday 3rd May	Evening Lavers Hill Hall
Sapphire McMullen Fisher – Backyard fungi talk and site visit	Saturday 4th May	9-1pm Lavers Hill Hall
Seed Saving Workshop	9 March	9.30am Marrar Woon Neighbourhood House event
Reptile Workshop	25 March	1-4pm Kennet River SLC
Wye to Wongarra Landcare Group	TBA-Details to be posted on Instagram: w2wlandcaregroup	

*Please note: online calendar, social media\* and email updates may provide more up to date information as events are added and details finalised throughout the year.*



## **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/>*