

The Yarrilinks Loop

Quarterly Newsletter

Produced by Yarrilinks Landcare Network, covering Landcare and sustainable agriculture groups in southern Yarriambiack Shire.

Yarrilinks Landcare operates on the Traditional Lands of the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk people. We acknowledge them as Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country, and pay our respects to elders past and present.

Facilitator Update

Despite the wetter-than-expected summer, I hope everyone managed to get harvest in safely and enjoy a well earned rest. I spent some time along the Murray River in South Australia and was blown away by the amount of bird life following last year's floods.

It's been quiet over the holidays as we gear up for the year ahead, but we've got some upcoming events to kick off a great year for Yarrilinks and our community!

Read on to learn more about:

- Strategic Plan Launch and Clean Up Australia Day!
- Yarrilinks membership
- The 2023-24 Landcare Awards & other news
- Landcare Priorities Survey & more project updates
- Upcoming events from other organisations
- Volunteer opportunity: help CFA predict fire risk
- Wildlife sightings from around the traps

- Alicia Merriam, Yarrilinks Landcare Facilitator

Yarrilinks Membership

Become a member of Yarrilinks Landcare Network to show your support for the environment in your community. Best of all, it's FREE!

Developing a membership base is a great way for Landcare Networks and Groups to demonstrate local support - this helps with funding applications and getting projects off the ground, and ensures the longevity of the group.

To sign up head to <https://bit.ly/JoinYarrilinks> or contact Alicia on 0455 166 445 to request a hard copy.



Subscribe and follow us!

Subscribe to receive this newsletter by email using the QR code on the back (or email landcare@yarrilinks.org.au), and stay in touch between newsletters by following us: Facebook: @yarrilinks / Instagram: @yarrilinks_landcare

What's bit.ly and how does it work?

Bit.ly is a service for shortening website addresses, so they fit better in our newsletter. They are CaSe SeNsltlvE and must be typed into your web browser address bar exactly right to work correctly, but they are safe to use!



Upcoming Yarrilinks Events



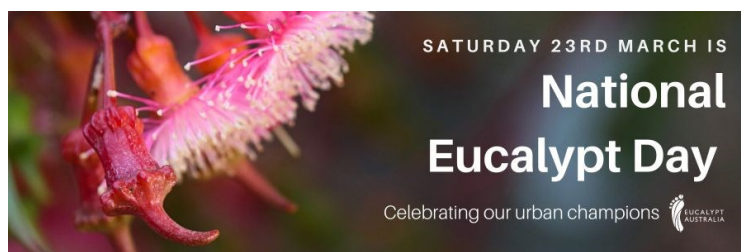
Sun 3 Mar, 10am-1:30pm, Creekside Hotel Warracknabeal

We're launching our new strategic plan on Clean Up Australia Day! Meet us at the Creekside Hotel for a walk along the creek to collect rubbish, followed by lunch, presentation of the plan, and finishing with a quiz game! Several walk options available depending on activity level.

Participants who help out on the cleanup and sign up for Yarrilinks membership will have their lunch subsidised.

Please bring sturdy shoes, hat, sunscreen, water, bug spray. All ages event but children must be under adult supervision.

Register: <https://bit.ly/yarrilinks-creek-clean> or contact Alicia



Our very own Eucalyptus yarriambiack!

Sat 23 Mar, Brim, details TBA

Did you know we have our very own Eucalyptus species that's found nowhere else? The Yarriambiack Mallee-Box is known from only a handful of specimens just north of Brim. Join us on National Eucalypt Day to learn about this very special species and share a picnic lunch. More details to come, contact us to learn more!

Yarrilinks Meetings

Next: Thursday 15th February, Warracknabeal

The Yarrilinks committee meets approximately quarterly. Recently we've been working on our Strategic Plan, and formalizing the structure of our network. Our next meeting will be on the 15th of February, so if you would like an issue raised please get in touch with Alicia.

If you are interested in joining the committee, please reach out for a chat. We are always keen for new members!

2023-24 Victorian Landcare Awards

The awards are open for nominations to celebrate people contributing to positive environmental outcomes in their local communities. Prizes of up to \$4000 include travel/study grants and cash prizes.

Nominations close on the **1st March!** Learn more and submit a nomination here:

<https://aucklandcareawards.awardsplatform.com/>



Seed collection for large scale revegetation

Alicia recently attended a seed collection workshop by Seeding Victoria as part of the Bushbank program. This program aims to revegetate and protect 20,000ha of private land in Victoria. This ambitious target requires a LOT of seed, so these workshops are being offered to build capacity.



The workshop covered the basics of seed collection, cleaning and storage, and different types of fruits and seeds of Australian native species. We also touched on permits and safety, and where to look for further resources. In the afternoon, we headed into the field to put the learning into practice.

Natural Resources Trust Seedbank Revolving Fund

Normally seedbanks sell seed on consignment, but this new initiative allows seed collectors to be paid a portion of their fee up front when submitting seed to the bank! There is a list of eligible species for the Wimmera and Seeding Victoria has quotas for each one, so get in touch (info@seedbank.com.au) to check before collecting! More info: <https://bit.ly/SV-NRCT>

Seeding Victoria plan to deliver more workshops so keep an eye on their social media: @seedingvictoria.

A Biosecurity Strategy for Victoria

Agriculture Victoria has developed a Biosecurity Strategy following an in-depth consultation process. AgVic is the lead agency for biosecurity in Victoria but the strategy stresses the importance of collaboration across agencies, industries & landscapes for a strong biosecurity system, with a focus on community-led initiatives & Traditional Owner involvement.

Read the strategy here: <https://bit.ly/3ScxGe6>

Partnerships against Pests grants

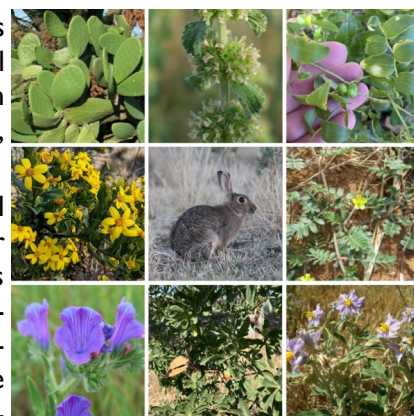
A new round of grants was also announced in conjunction with the strategy to improve capacity in managing weeds and pest animals. The Partnerships Against Pests grants are open to community groups and Yarrilinks is planning to apply. If you have suggestions about a particular pest, weed, or other issue you'd like to see addressed, get in touch!

Council Roadside Weed and Pest Control Plan

Roadside weeds and pests are a huge issue in rural areas and our Shire, with its extensive road network, is no exception.

Yarriambiack Shire Council is currently preparing their 2023-26 Roadside Weeds and Pests Plan. The program seeks to manage invasive species across the shire effectively and proactively. The scope of the program includes rabbits, weeds that are either prohibited, controlled or restricted, and excludes VicRoads managed roads.

More info: <https://www.yarriambiack.vic.gov.au/Engage-With-Us/Share-Your-Feedback> Or contact La Vergne Lehman (03 5398 0100 / llehmann@yarriambiack.vic.gov.au)



Wimmera Representation on the Landcare Victoria Inc (LVI) Member's Council

Alicia recently joined the LVI Member's Council. This role will facilitate two-way communication between LVI and the Landcare community of the Wimmera.

LVI is the peak body for Landcare in Victoria and provides insurance cover, grant support, advocacy and training for the Landcare community. The organisation is governed by a volunteer Board, and Leanne Jackman of Northern Grampians Landcare Group represents the Wimmera on the LVI Board. The role of the Member's Council is to represent community Landcare, advising on policy and Landcare issues and facilitating communication between LVI and the community.

Alicia can help to communicate concerns of the Wimmera Landcare community at the state level and bring news from LVI to the Wimmera. There are also openings for two volunteer Landcarers from the Wimmera to join the Member's Council. Contact LVI: info@lvi.org.au for info.

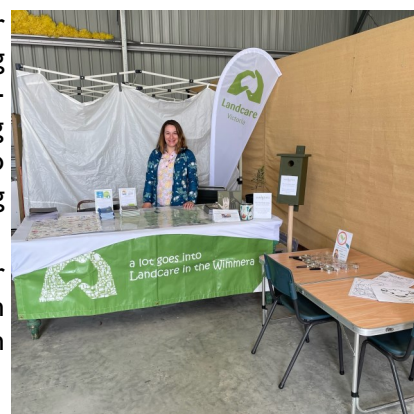
Learn more here: <https://bit.ly/3HsvrRH>

Warracknabeal Show 2023

Yarrilinks went to the Warracknabeal Show on the 12th of October this year with some activities for kids. The weather was wild and windy but after a few years of cancellations due to Covid and last year's October floods, the community was thrilled to have the show back!

Alicia had copies of our newsletter, bird and frog ID booklets, and kids activities including colouring and nature treasures to investigate with magnifying glasses!

We also held a draw for some native plants, which was won by Karen from Horsham - Enjoy, Karen!



Landcare Priorities Survey

Last year Yarrilinks conducted a survey of Landcare priorities in our region to help inform the review of our strategic plan. A total of 54 responses were received (21 from a student survey at Warracknabeal Secondary College).

The results of the survey are now in and we look forward to sharing them with you! You can find a full report of the survey results here: <https://bit.ly/YarrilinksSurvey>

Wimmera CMA Soil Moisture Probe Network

This network of weather stations collects data on soil moisture, air temperature, Delta T, humidity, wind speed/direction, rainfall and harvest fire danger index, and includes around 20 stations in the Yarriambiack region.

Farming is an expensive and high-risk enterprise. Accurate data from the network can be combined with climate forecasts and yield calculators to inform decision-making and reduce risk exposure.

This project was delivered through funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund.

Learn more and access the portal: <https://wcma.vic.gov.au/soil-moisture-probe-portal>

Weeding with Woodcroft College

Students from South Australia recently visited for their annual school camp in the Grampians. They had a full schedule of activities and spent some time with each of the Landcare Networks in the Wimmera—including Yarrilinks! A huge thanks to the Woodcroft College students and teachers!

Minyip Wetlands Wimmera Riceflower Site

The Minyip wetlands are home to the critically endangered Wimmera riceflower (*Pimelea spinescens* subsp. *pubiflora*). The students helped clear weed competition from around some transplanted seedlings, and removed an irrigation system that was installed to help the plants get established.



Grass weed competition is an ongoing issue so we are exploring some management/monitoring options with Minyip Landcare Group, Minyip Progress Association and DEECA.

Murtoa Trust for Nature Covenant Site

The students also visited a Trust for Nature property near Murtoa that has important remnant vegetation, however, encroaching weeds are an ongoing issue.

Many of the weeds at the site are large, spiky, or both, so we focused on mapping weeds that were too difficult or dangerous to remove so they can be tackled by a contractor. The main concern was boxthorn, but we also removed some boneseed. Saffron thistle was also noted in a few locations, along with Flinder's Wattle.

We also came across a brown snake! The students did a great job of staying calm and cool!

FrogID Week with Yarrilinks!

FrogID week happens in November each year and is a citizen science event that encourages people learn about frogs. The FrogID app, developed by the Australian Museum, is free, easy to use, and identifies frogs based on their calls.

Last November Yarrilinks gathered with some frog enthusiasts at Rupanyup for a twilight walk. There are about 13 species of frog found in the Wimmera (although some call at different times of the year) and we came across 4:

- Common eastern froglet (*Crinia signifera*)
- Eastern Banjo Frog (*Limnodynastes dumerilii*) (aka pobblebonk!)
- Peron's tree frog (*Litoria peronii*) (aka laughing tree frog/maniacal cackle frog!)
- Eastern sign bearing froglet (*Crinia parinsignifera*)



We hope to run the event again next year so keep an eye (or ear!) out for it in November!

10th Annual Aussie Bird Count

The annual Aussie Bird Count is a national citizen science event organised by BirdLife Australia now in its 10th year. A small group of us gathered on a windy day at Lake Marma in October to submit some data using the Aussie Bird Count app. The app lets you record the number and species of all birds you see during a 20-minute window at a given location.

We started at the northern end of the lake near the pergola Alicia recorded the data on her mobile while the other volunteers helped look for birds. We then did a second count at the southern end of the lake.

Across both sites, we saw a total of 19 different species and 151 birds, with a few species observed at both sites. Although all the species we spotted were fairly common, we were really pleased to see that a majority were native birds. Although we observed fewer total birds and fewer species at the southern site, a greater proportion were native species.

A big thank you to the bird counters who joined us! We hope to this again next year. What's your favorite bird watching spot in the Yarrilinks area? Let us know!



Upcoming Projects

In 2024 Yarrilinks will be supporting a project by Rupanyup Landcare Group to plant grass seeds at the Reservoir in autumn, along with infilling some trees that have died. We're also planning a mini plantout with Minyip Landcare Group this winter. Stay tuned for more updates in our next newsletter, or on social media (Facebook: @yarrilinks / Instagram: @yarrilinks_landcare)

Around the Network

Readers are encouraged to share nature pictures from the Yarrilinks area! Whether its flora, fauna, farming, or simply a beautiful Wimmera Landscape, we'd love to hear from you! Here are some we received recently:



Peron's Tree Frog

After our FrogID event, Adrian Tyler of Rupanyup took this picture of a Peron's tree frog (*Litoria peronii*). The species is distinguished by a thin dark line on the upper edge of the tympanum (eardrum), a vertical line through the pupil, and mottled yellow, orange and black markings in the groin and armpits. Although it's common in the Murray-Darling Basin, it was only first recorded in the Wimmera in 2015.

Australian Boobook

Taking good bird photos can be tricky. Mobile phone cameras aren't great at a distance, and birds are often quite, well, flighty! Ali Perris took this photo of a juvenile Australian boobook (*Ninox boobook*) along the Yarriambiack Creek at Kewell using a phone and binoculars. It takes take some practice to line the lenses up but it usually gives a bit better magnification than using the zoom on the phone itself. It might be just enough to capture the features to identify a species! The boobook gets its name from its call, and is the smallest species of owl on the Australian mainland.



Tawny Frogmouth

Corinne Heintze sent in this photo of a pair of tawny frogmouths (*Podargus strigoides*) near Minyip! She commented on the range of noises they make—often sounding as if they have a head cold! Like the boobook, they are mainly nocturnal but can be active during the day.

Lace Monitor

Looks like this lace monitor (*Varanus varius*) was helping to enforce traffic rules! Thanks to Damon Bryce for sharing this photo. Lace monitors are the second largest monitor species in Australia and are adept climbers, as evidenced here! Their bite actually carries a mild venom but it is not normally dangerous to humans.



Other Upcoming Events

Agriculture Victoria

In Good Times & Bad: Adaptive Skills for your Farming future. 7-8 Feb, Kalkee Football and Netball Club. Featuring Dr Kate Burke. <https://bit.ly/3Sow2XQ>

Birchip Cropping Group

More info and register: www.bcg.org.au/events/

Trials Review Day. 23 Feb, Birchip Community Leisure Centre. Members only event.

Young Farmer Network Ball. Fri 15 Mar, Bridgewater Hotel, Bridgewater on Lodden. Social event—all welcome.

Seeder Demonstration Day. 10 Apr, Wallup. In partnership with Wallup Ag Group.

Landcare Australia Limited

On Farm Connectivity Program and Farmbot Demo. 26 Feb 11-11:30 am, online.

<https://landcareaustralia.org.au/landcarefarming/webinars>

Landcare Victoria Inc

More info and register: www.landcarevictoria.org.au/LVI/LVI/News-Events/Events.aspx

Container Deposit Scheme in Victoria for Landcare. 20 Feb 5:30pm, online

Media Engagement for Landcare Pt1 27 Feb 5:30pm, online

Media Engagement for Landcare Pt2 5 Mar 5:30pm, online

Victorian Landcare Forum. 8-10 May, Bendigo

Wimmera, North Central and Mallee CMAs

Wimmera Mallee Pipeline Wetlands community tour. 21st February, Meeting location TBA (possibly Donald)

Wetland field tour including some in our region (Near Rupanyup and Watchem). Details TBA, please register interest: Landcare@yarrilinks.org.au

Volunteer Opportunity

The CFA (Country Fire Authority) is looking for volunteers to help monitor grass curing during fire season. This info is really useful in predicting fire risk, and the more data the better! Currently CFA is seeking more volunteers in western Victoria especially.

After a quick 30-min training, you can sign up to be a Grassland Observer and help by monitoring a site weekly. Choose your own site at your convenience!

More info: <https://bit.ly/3SrS7F0>



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