

# North Central Chat

Keeping you up to date with all the Landcare and WaterWatch news



April 2025

## A message from the Regional Landcare Coordinator

Hi everyone,

Last month I enjoyed getting out and about at a grant writing workshop at Inglewood, rabbit management events at Daisy Hill and Lockwood, and the Nature Network's Meet and Greet event at Bendigo. It was great to catch up with representatives from the Nature Network groups and to support this get together as the Network finds its feet and Jenny continues to connect with the member groups.

There's another couple of grant writing workshops coming up on Tuesday, 1 April at Castlemaine and Thursday, 3 April at Kyneton. If you would like to attend either of those, please let me know.

Remember to get your Victorian Landcare Grant application in by 5pm Wednesday, 16 April. I strongly encourage all Landcare and environmental volunteering groups to at least apply for a \$500 Support Grant this year, which can help cover the costs of insurance and incorporation. If you would like support in how to use Smartygrants or iMap, please reach out to me and we can find a time to chat.

Finally, I was excited to be able to include an observation of some grey-headed flying foxes in [DEECA's flying fox map](#) a few weeks ago. What started as about 30 flying foxes hanging out in a couple of trees in Phillips Gardens in Maryborough has now turned into more than 100. This is the first time in my memory flying foxes have camped out in Maryborough, so it's pretty exciting. However, there are so many myths flying around about these incredible animals. I'm hoping we can start de-mystifying and debunking myths about these misunderstood mammals. If you want to know more about our incredible population of grey-headed flying foxes in Victoria, there's [plenty of resources](#). Have you seen a flying fox recently? Be sure to record your sighting on the [map](#), and help spread the word about the importance of these flying friends.



Happy reading,

Belinda Pritchard

Regional Landcare Coordinator  
North Central CMA

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This newsletter is produced with funding support through the Victorian Government's Victorian Landcare program



Connecting rivers, landscapes, people

The North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) acknowledges Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the region, their rich cultures, spiritual connection to Country.

[www.nccma.vic.gov.au](http://www.nccma.vic.gov.au)



## News

### 2025 Victorian Landcare Grants open

Applications are now open for the 2025 Victorian Landcare Grants.

Through the 2025 Victorian Landcare Grants, \$3.55 million is available for Landcare and other environmental volunteer groups and networks that are working to protect and restore land and the environment.

Up to \$20,000 is available for project grants and up to \$500 for support grants.

The grants are open to environmental volunteer groups, including Landcare groups and networks, Friends groups, Conservation Management Networks, Committees of Management, Coastcare groups and First Nations groups to support their important work in helping protect the health of our land, waterways, and biodiversity.

Applications close 5pm Wednesday, 16 April 2025. For more information go to <https://www.nccma.vic.gov.au/get-involved/landcare/>



### New research demonstrates the importance of multiple interventions in restoring degraded floodplain wetlands

#### Article from the Arthur Rylah Institute Aquatic Quarterly Update Summer 24-25

Just one year after the Wetland Revival Trust (WRT) began restoring wetlands on farms along the lower Loddon River floodplain, the results have been incredible.

The WRT aims to improve drought resilience and create drought refuges for threatened flora and fauna. By delivering water for the environment in combination with revegetation and livestock exclusion, the wetlands have

been transformed. Previously in poor condition, the wetlands are now diverse in inundation-tolerant native vegetation including several endangered plant species listed under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act (1988).

Before restoration began, ARI surveyed four wetland sites in 2023 that were targeted for restoration along with matching control (unrestored) sites. This initial monitoring found the vegetation was degraded at all sites, with limited ground layer vegetation and a dominance of terrestrial plant species.

Surveys repeated one year later found restoration actions were successful in achieving the following vegetation goals:

1. An improvement in the abundance of native wetland plants
2. An increase in native species diversity.

In contrast, no improvement was found at control sites, despite natural flooding. Wetland restoration projects rarely evaluate ecological outcomes, with most reporting only on the delivery of on-ground management actions. This project applied a rigorous monitoring design to support adaptive management and learning and help build confidence in restoration programs.

The project was a collaboration between the WRT, local farmers, local Traditional Owners, Deakin University, ARI, the Murray-Darling Wetland Working Group and the North Central Catchment Management Authority. The Australian Government's Future Drought Fund provided funding.

Read this article and more in the [ARI's Aquatic Quarterly Update](#).

### The Great Aussie Fungi Hunt 2025

#### Fungimap

The Great Aussie Fungi Hunt is kicking off in April. Citizen scientists are encouraged to use iNaturalist to record observations and upload photos of fungi. The observations can provide significant data for the Atlas of Living Australia that Fungimap hopes will be used for current and future research and conservation purposes.

There's prizes for the rarest and most unusual species and the most research grade observations. Check out Fungimap's [socials](#) and [webpage](#) to stay in the loop.

There's also a video from the fabulous team at [Planet Fungi](#) to give you all the guidance on how to spot those elusive fungi, see it [here](#).



## Loddon Campaspe Drought Resilience Grant

### North Central CMA

The [Regional Drought Resilience Planning \(RDRP\) Program](#) is supporting nine regions in Victoria to prepare place-based, community-led Regional Drought Resilience Plans (RDR Plans). These Plans inform future priorities and specific actions to support agricultural communities and industries to build greater resilience to drought.

The RDR Plan for the North Central region can be found here: [Loddon Campaspe Drought Resilience Plan](#)

There are two-tiered grant options available for projects: up to \$10,000 (GST exclusive) and up to \$50,000 (GST exclusive) which support the delivery of selected actions from the Plan.

Activities must be completed by 30 November 2025.

**Applications close 5pm AEST on 13 April 2025.**

Implementation Grants are provided through funding from the Commonwealth Government's Future Drought Fund and the Victorian State Government.

**Please find the grant guidelines and application form here [Dryland Agriculture | North Central Catchment Management Authority](#)**

If you have any further questions or comments, please contact Jacqui Knee on 0400 054 690 or at [LCDroughtResilience@nccma.vic.gov.au](mailto:LCDroughtResilience@nccma.vic.gov.au)



## Latest Victorian Landcare and Catchment Management magazine now available

The latest issue of the Victorian Landcare and Catchment Magazine has been published [online](#). The latest edition showcases innovative farming projects focused on sustainability and resilience, covering topics such as whole-farm planning, salt-affected land restoration, and vineyard biodiversity.

Read the stories in this issue from:

- The Warrenbayne Boho Land Protection Group, revisiting whole-farm planning to help landholders plan for the future.
- The Mallee Sustainable Farming Group, using interactive decision trees to reclaim salt-affected land.
- The National EcoVineyards Program, supporting vineyard resilience with native ground covers.
- The Victorian Equine Landcare Community of Practice, a new network helping horse owners improve land management.

You can also access the current issue (no. 89) of the Landcare magazine in low-resolution [PDF](#) format.



## Irrigation drainage strategy release

### North Central CMA

The Loddon-Murray Irrigation Region Irrigation Drainage Strategy is a plan to guide the effective management of irrigation drainage across the region.

The strategy is crucial for safeguarding agricultural productivity, high-value industries, and public assets, while acknowledging evolving environmental priorities and First Nations aspirations.

The plan addresses the risk of waterlogging, salinity, and decline in water quality caused by irrigation-induced rainfall runoff from irrigated land.

North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) Irrigation Drainage project manager Jacqui Knee said after months of feedback, the strategy was complete.

“This strategy has input from irrigation farmers and partners who have roles and responsibilities in ensuring the irrigation drainage system in the Loddon Valley and Torrumbarry Irrigation Areas operate effectively,” she said.

“The plan is vital to address the changes in irrigation across the region, such as reduced volume of water delivered, on-farm efficiencies, and opportunistic irrigation.

“The strategy has prioritised actions that will contribute to an effective drainage system, potentially reconnect water movement across the landscape and consider how this can improve cultural values.”

The LMIRDS focuses on irrigation-induced rainfall runoff, not flood waters, and recognises the changing climate and irrigation trends over the past two decades.

It covers the Loddon Valley Irrigation Area and the Torrumbarry Irrigation Area.

“This plan informed our next irrigation drainage program,” Ms Knee said.

“An irrigation drainage toolkit will be developed to assist farmers navigate management of drainage both on and off farm.

“North Central CMA has led the development of the strategy with input from the irrigation community, local councils, Goulburn-Murray Water, First Nations groups and Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action.

“This support will be ongoing with the delivery of the next irrigation drainage program.

More at [nccma.vic.gov.au/projects/agriculture/lmir-drainage-strategy](https://nccma.vic.gov.au/projects/agriculture/lmir-drainage-strategy)



## Community circular economy guides

### Sustainability Victoria

Community efforts to tackle climate change and create a sustainable future are on the rise, and if you are inspired to be part of this movement, these guides are for you.

These guides provide practical information for groups and organisations who want to establish community-based circular economy initiatives.

In each guide, you will learn how to approach the critical planning, implementation and evaluation phases.

There is no single solution to any challenge or opportunity. Your initiative should take into account your audiences and communities, sector, resources, capacity, and overarching goals. These guides provide lists of useful resources and networks to support your planning, knowledge building, and communications.

The knowledge and inspiration for these guides came from local community groups, social enterprises and other not-for-profit businesses who were supported by Sustainability Victoria’s [Circular Economy Communities Fund](#) to explore creative solutions for waste management with activities that built local skills, encouraged social connections and create new business opportunities.

[View guides for community-based circular economy initiatives here.](#)



## WaterWatch Victoria

### April is Frog Month

#### Join the Victorian Frog Census

Each April and October we celebrate Frog Month and call on the community to help record their local frog species. Download the Frog Census App and contribute to vital conservation research.



The recordings will help protect local frog species including the threatened Bibron's toadlet.

This small cryptic species is listed as endangered in Victoria after having disappeared from much of its original range. Not actually a toad, the toadlet has been given this common name due to its superficial toad-like appearance and tendency to walk instead hop.

Adults use a variety of habitats including dry forests, woodland, shrubland and grasslands, preferring areas that are prone to inundation after rain. They shelter in damp areas under leaf litter, logs, or other forms of cover

Males call from within a nest or burrow. If you hear one, please don't try to get too close!

The female lays her eggs on the ground among moist leaf litter or under rocks and they are very susceptible to trampling. Best to listen for the male's call and record it from a distance while staying on existing tracks where possible, to avoid damaging nests and habitat.

Find out more about this unusual little species [here](#).

Their call can be heard and recordings made on the Frog Census App:

[Download the app for Android](#)

[Download the app for iOS](#)



Photo: Jodi Rowley/Australian Museum

The peak call period for the Bibron's Toadlet is April and May, so get on board and hop to it!

### QAQC (Quality Assurance Quality Control)

#### QAQC sessions - now with bonus threatened fish!

During March and April, we have organised two QAQC (Quality Assurance Quality Control) sessions for North Central WaterWatch volunteers. QAQC helps to ensure WaterWatch methods are consistent and the equipment is functioning properly - it's an important part of the program to ensure we are collecting high quality data.

The sessions involve volunteers coming together to analyse mystery water samples and compare results.

It's a great opportunity to gather with other volunteers, and also a chance to get equipment replaced or fine-tuned.

The first QAQC in March was held at Riley Street Wetlands in Bendigo. To make this year's QAQC sessions even more fun, North Central CMA's native fish expert Dr Peter Rose is joining the sessions to talk about his work with threatened small-bodied native fish, including the chance to observe his live trapping and monitoring program in action.



Peter Rose presenting on small-bodied native fish to WaterWatch volunteers

Olive perchlet and southern purple-spotted gudgeon were the focus species at Riley Street. Both are threatened species which were captive-bred and released at the site. They must be happy there, because Pete’s trapping brought in a great abundance of both species. Pete counted and measured each fish on site and then translocated some of the gudgeon to another nearby wetland.



Southern purple-spotted gudgeon at Riley Street Wetlands

The allure of the fish brought in a good number of fourteen volunteers to this QAQC event. After the excitement of Pete’s fish presentation, the group sat down to diligently do their testing of mystery samples and update their kits.

The next QAQC will be on 10 April in Chewton – if you would like to attend please email [britt.gregory@nccma.vic.gov.au](mailto:britt.gregory@nccma.vic.gov.au) for details.

Britt Gregory  
 WaterWatch Project Officer  
 North Central CMA  
 Email: [britt.gregory@nccma.vic.gov.au](mailto:britt.gregory@nccma.vic.gov.au)

**Water storages update**

Region	Water Storage	% full	% full same time last year
Murray Storages	Dartmouth Dam	82.80	95.19
	Hume Dam	26.76	0.00
	Reedy/Middle Lk	95.39	95.92
	Kangaroo Lake	96.14	97.11
	Kow Swamp	89.50	86.52
	Lake Boga	71.13	81.17
	Lake Charm	95.17	95.48
Loddon Storages	Cairn Curran Res	45.83	76.88
	Tullaroop Res	51.89	88.52
	Laanecoorie Res	38.00	34.85
Bullarook Storages	Newlyn Res	25.60	60.26
	Hepburns Lagoon	21.04	48.19
Goulburn Storages	Lake Eildon	66.89	93.56
	Waranga Basin	42.65	65.60
Campaspe	Lake Eppalock	64.16	94.17
Coliban Water Storages	Upper Coliban Res	57	88
	Lauriston Res	84	91
	Malmsbury Res	19	45

**Upcoming events and special days**

April	
World Earth Day	22 Apr
May	
International Compost Awareness Week	4-10 May
World Bee Day	20 May
International Day for Biological Diversity	22 May

National Reconciliation Week	27 May-3 Jun
<b>June</b>	
World Environment Day	5 Jun
World Oceans Day	8 Jun

**Courses and resources**



**AgVic Talk Season 9: Adapting to the seasons**

The latest AgVic Talk season: Adapting to the seasons explores the resources, practices and tools available to help improve your farm business, prepare for dry seasonal conditions and our changing climate.

Farming is rewarding, but it can also be challenging, and no two stories or businesses are the same. We can all learn from each other and set a plan for success.

To listen to all available episodes of Season 9 visit [Ag Vic Talk](#)



**BirdLife Australia launches Habitat Gardening online course**

**From BirdLife Australia's website**

Want to attract more native birds to your backyard, but don't know where to start? [BirdLife Australia's brand-new Habitat Gardening for Birds online course](#) has got you covered!

Brought to you by the [Birds in Backyards](#) team, this free Habitat Gardening for Birds course provides practical, step-by-step guidance on designing, creating and maintaining habitat for your local native birds at home.

[Find out more here.](#)

**VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP FORUM**

## Recognising and Valuing Volunteers

Volunteers don't start because they're expecting a reward, but it is important that organisations or groups celebrate and value what the volunteers have done. Acknowledging the contribution made by volunteers shows that your organisation or group appreciates their input and commitment. Doing this can help volunteers feel valued and supported. If volunteers feel appreciated, they are more likely to stay with your organisation.

This online leadership session looks at why it is important to appreciate our volunteers with some ideas of how you can recognise and thank your volunteer team

**Date: Thursday 24 April, 2025**  
**Time: 10 am to 11.30 a.m.**  
**ONLINE**  
**Register:**  
[bvrchub@bgvolunteers.org.au](mailto:bvrchub@bgvolunteers.org.au)

**Bendigo Volunteer Resource Centre**  
 Funded by the Australian Government  
 Department of Social Services

# LGBTQIA+

**101 for Volunteer Involving Organisations**

A workshop for leaders and managers of volunteering involving organisations to understand LGBTQIA+ identities and build acceptance and allyship for LGBTQIA+ people.

**NOT SURE WHAT LGBTQIA+ STANDS FOR?**  
**WHY USE PRONOUNS?**

**WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SEX, GENDER AND SEXUALITY?**  
**HOW CAN YOU BE A RAINBOW ALLY?**

**WHAT STEPS CAN YOU TAKE TO BE MORE LGBTQIA+ INCLUSIVE IN YOUR WORK AND WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES?**

About the workshop

The information, activities, and discussion included in the workshop will be delivered by Thorne Harbour. Thorne Harbour leads service with respect to the health needs of our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ+) communities to ensure all gender, sex, and sexually diverse individuals are treated with dignity and can participate fully in society.

The content is suitable for people who have or want to support having LGBTQIA+ volunteers and to ensure that their services are welcoming and friendly towards LGBTQIA+ clients and visitors.

Workshop will include an introduction to the alphabet that is LGBTQIA+.

**REGISTRATIONS ARE ESSENTIAL**

**WHEN** **MONDAY**  
**April 28, 2025**  
**10 AM TO 12 PM**

**ONLINE SESSION**  
**RSVP**  
[bvrchub@bgvolunteers.org.au](mailto:bvrchub@bgvolunteers.org.au)

Funded by the Australian Government  
 Department of Social Services

**Australian Government**  
 Department of Social Services



**BUSH GUIDE TO GOOD GOVERNANCE**

How to use the tools of good governance to enhance the performance of your organisation. A two-part workshop series designed for all people on the boards or committees of management of small and medium-sized community groups.

Part 1 - Tuesday 29 April 2025  
AND  
Part 2 - Tuesday 6 May 2025

Time: 5.30 pm to 7.30 pm  
Venue: Activity Room Two, Bendigo Library

**REGISTER NOW** >

Bvrchub@bgovolunteers.org.au





**Events...**



**Spudfest 2025**

The North Central CMA's A Healthy Coliban Catchment and Tullaroop Tributaries project teams will be on site at the 2025 SpudFest event in Trentham. Come along and have a chat with the team about the waterway protection projects in the upper catchments.

**When:** Saturday 3 and Sunday 4 May, 10am to 4pm  
**Where:** Trentham  
**Cost:** Free, but some special events require a paid ticket  
**What to bring:**  
**RSVP** and find [more information here](#).



**KERANG CARP CATCH**

The North Central CMA invites you to a FAMILY day of FREE activities

**Sunday 13 April**  
10am - 1.30pm

**Kerang Regional Park**  
End of Wyndham Street, Kerang

Register on the day. Heaps of prizes. Bait supplied and bank fishing only.

- ✓ Welcome to Country
- ✓ Turtles Australia and native fish displays
- ✓ Free lunch
- ✓ "Ask me about Waterbugs" with Waterwatch
- ✓ Kids' colouring tent
- ✓ Hear about our Native Fish Recovery Project and what we're going to bring back native fish ...and lots more!



**Kerang carp catch**

The North Central CMA invites you to a family day of FREE activities.

Register on the day, heaps of prizes available. Bait is supplied; bank fishing only permitted.

Included on the day:

- ✓ Welcome to Country
- ✓ Turtles Australia and native fish displays
- ✓ Free lunch
- ✓ "Ask me about Waterbugs" with WaterWatch
- ✓ Kids colouring tent
- ✓ Hear about our Native Fish Recovery Project ...and lots more!

**When:** Sunday 13 April 10am to 1.30pm  
**Where:** Kerang Regional Park, Wyndham Street, Kerang  
**Cost:** FREE  
**What to bring:** Sun protection  
**RSVP:** Register on the day





### School holiday biodiversity events in Bendigo

City of Greater Bendigo are running a series of events during the school holidays for the community to learn about Bendigo's wildlife.

**Frogs of Bendigo:** Monday 7 April 10am to 12pm, Riley Street Nature Reserve

**Nature by night:** Tuesday 8 April 6.30pm to 8.30pm, O'Keefe Rail Trail, Wilkie Road

**Nature in the Mall:** Wednesday 9 April 11am to 2pm, Hargreaves Mall

**Birds of Bendigo:** Monday 14 April 7.30am to 9.20am, Crusoe Reservoir

**Nature by night:** Tuesday 15 April 6.30pm to 8.30pm, O'Keefe Rail Trail, Wilkie Road

**Bats of Bendigo:** Thursday 17 April 10am to 12pm, Rosalind Park

Scan the QR code for tickets and more information, or head to the [website](#).



## Funding opportunities

### Get expert grant guidance – at no cost

Confused about which grants to apply for? Expert assistance is available!

The North Central CMA's free public access grants portal offers more than a billion dollars in grants, suitable for various applicants including unincorporated groups, not-for-profit, tax-deductible entities, schools and individuals,

If you have any doubt, contact us for free support.

*To avoid conflict of interest, we cannot write the grant for you. Advice is provided only.*

For assistance, email [bdp@nccma.vic.gov.au](mailto:bdp@nccma.vic.gov.au) or call 03 5440 1805.

Access the grants portal here <https://www.nccma.vic.gov.au/resources/grants-search/>

The screenshot shows the 'Search Grants' interface with the following fields and callouts:

- Keywords:** Search Grants (with a magnifying glass icon)
- Provider:** Select a provider (Callout: Australia, Victoria, your Shire)
- Regions offered:** Select Location
- Eligible to:** Select Eligibility (Callout: Choose all that apply)
- Categories:** Select Category (with a toggle for 'Search by primary category only')
- Activities:** Select Activity (Callout: Landcare has a DGR auspice)
- Funding Amounts:** min \$0, max \$0
- Filters:**
  - Include closed grants
  - Exclude grants requiring DGR status
- Buttons:** Clear, Search