



Wimmera CMA

## Wimmera CMA Newsletter

A summary of recent events

For upcoming events, please visit our website or follow us on Facebook.



There are six distinct weather periods recognised in the Gariwerd Seasonal Calendar

**Chunnup Edition 2018**  
**Season of the Cockatoo, totems and the return of Aquila Constellation (Bunjil).**



### Winter: Late May-end of July

*Chunnup season is depicted by cockatoos, fungi as well as clothes, Totems and the return of Aquila constellation (Bunjil).*

*Long cloaks were made from possum skins.*

*Old people and pregnant women rubbed emu fat into the skin for protection from the cold.*

*For ornamentation, people wore kangaroo teeth necklaces, hat mats and nose piercings.*

*The first of the winter orchids appear including tall greenhood and early Nancy Lily are in flower.*

*Many early Wattles such as Long leafed Wattle, Golden Wattle and Prickly Moses are also in flower.*

*Possums have young in pouch during Chunnup, Sugar gliders give birth and Echidnas are searching for mates.*

*Rising waters cause ducks to seek new feeding and nesting areas and Lapwings are nesting on eggs. Swans and Coot graze on lake shores.*

*Frogs actively call during Chunnup and the ponds are full of water creatures.*



## WATER IN THE WIMMERA

### Environmental Flows:

Flows are temporarily ceasing to ensure sufficient water availability for flows later in winter/spring. However if dry conditions persist, flows for the Wimmera River, Mt William Creek and lower MacKenzie River will recommence in mid-late July. These flows are important to manage water quality issues and maintain habitat.

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### Monitoring:

Platypus monitoring along with fish and vegetation monitoring took place on the MacKenzie River, Burnt Creek and Mt William Creek in April. All the monitoring work will be valuable in terms of informing the effectiveness of environmental watering actions and hopefully provide some good engagement outcomes as has been the case in past years.



During the monitoring, we were thrilled to discover a new adult male in the MacKenzie River at Zumsteins by wildlife ecologist Josh Griffiths. While the discovery of a new adult male platypus attracted a lot of attention, findings relating to smaller yet also unique species has excited researchers and waterway managers at WCMA. The rare Glenelg spiny Crayfish, whose main body grows to around 13cm are steadily spreading downstream from Fish Falls to Zumsteins. The Western Swamp Crayfish, which only grows to 3 cm in the main body are moving further downstream in MacKenzie River and

Burnt Creek through to Wonwondah.

Ecology Australia researchers have since mapped the extents of the crayfish species in the Northern Grampians. Research suggest that like the Platypus, the Crayfish are especially enjoying sections of the waterways where Wimmera CMA targets environmental water. With these regular flows, the species have increased opportunities to breed and disperse into new habitats.



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### ENDAWater:

Samples from downstream of the Grampians Gariwerd National Park have returned strong platypus eDNA signals in areas where researchers haven't recorded the elusive mammals since the Millennium Drought. These results support the Laharum communities recent sightings below Dad and Daves water infrastructure.

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## VIRTUAL RIVER YARNS

### World-first launch of Wimmera Cultural Heritage Game.

Horsham is the launching pad for a world-first simulation game that immerses people into the Wimmera's cultural heritage.



Immersive heritage specialist, virtual historian and artist Brett Leavy will be in Horsham on July 10 to launch the Wimmera's Virtual River Yarns as part of a regional project to strengthen cultural and environmental outcomes.

The interactive launch in Horsham Town Hall from noon until 3pm is part of NAIDOC Week celebrations. The free event includes lunch and children's activities.

Virtual River Yarns will reveal how the Wimmera looked before European settlement thanks to the contribution of cultural stories and history from Traditional Owners and other partners.

Brett is from Bilbie Virtual Labs, a dedicated team of First Nations and non-Indigenous serious game developers who recreate real environments for mapping Indigenous culture and heritage.

Brett has run a series of workshops and has been testing the game with local community members over the past six months. He's worked with Aboriginal digital media students from the Horsham Campus of Federation University Australia as well as Horsham Primary School pupils.

Brett also used information gathered during last year's River Yarns tour, part of a Barengi Gadgin Land Council and Wimmera Catchment Management Authority Wimmera River Aboriginal Water Project. River Yarns

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## DRONE TRIALS

The trial has examined the use of drones to capture high resolution aerial imagery for the purpose of obtaining floor level heights of buildings in Horsham. The data will be used to improve flood intelligence for Horsham.

The drone captured an area of 76 hectares in Horsham that represented a variety of terrains and objects. The range of terrains was an opportunity to test the technology in landscapes similar to those experienced throughout the region, with vegetation, urban, industry and a wetland system being examined.

Assessment of the performance of the model comparing with known survey points is continuing.



*Setting up ground controls for drone trial in Horsham .*

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## RESEARCHERS REVISIT CARP HOT SPOTS.

Researchers are revisiting a dozen Wimmera Carp hot spots that are the target of Carp removal work to track the success of the program and guide future Carp control.

Results so far have found the pest is retaining a stronghold in Lake Marma but less so in Warracknabeal and Brim weir pools.

Wimmera CMA is tracking the success of its Carp removal work from the past two years with follow-up surveys across the region including the Wimmera River near Jeparit, Mt William Creek and Wal Wal Swamp.



The CMA's removal program aims to improve conditions for native fish and obtain more data on carp numbers and sizes. This will inform future Carp control actions such as the potential release of the carp herpes virus.

Wimmera CMA water Planning and Policy officer Greg Fletcher said the survey results from the Yarriambiack sites were mixed.

"Lake Marma in Murtoa has a very large Carp population compared to the weir pools and other locations around the region.

On the flipside, the surveys found good numbers of Freshwater Catfish in the lake."

Dr Dion Iervasi from Austral Research and Consulting is doing the survey work with an electrofishing boat which uses an electrical current to temporarily stun fish so they can be removed by nets. He is also trialling a multi-beam side-scanning sonar to more effectively spot fish under the water.

Greg said results also indicated that Carp removal works had been effective in reducing the carp population in Brim Weir Pool.

"Results show numbers are reducing over time and still remain quite low a year on from the last surveys. Dion also discovered large Freshwater Catfish and Golden Perch in Brim Weir Pool. He has returned the native fish safely to the water to hopefully be caught by more traditional techniques in the future."

Carp have been a menace in the Wimmera's waterways for decades with their feeding behaviour muddying waters and threatening other species

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## PROJECT HINDMARSH TREE PLANTING WEEKEND!

Registrations have opened for the Project Hindmarsh tree planting weekend on 6-8 July, 2018. This year volunteers will plant 12,000 trees, shrubs, herbs and grasses on a property at Dinyarrak, near Kaniva, which covers a Grey Box – Buloke grassy woodland, a Black Box swamp with Yellow Gum hinterland, and a section of Tatiara Creek. For more information or to register see

<https://www.hindmarshlandcare.org.au/>



## 2018 NATIONAL LANDCARE CONFERENCE- Attendance Sponsorship



### Wimmera Landcarers invited to apply now for sponsorship to attend the 2018 National Landcare conference.

*Thanks to the Victorian Government's Victorian Landcare Program, Wimmera CMA is pleased to offer sponsorship of up to \$500 (inc. GST) for community members and volunteers to attend the 2018 National Landcare Conference and National Landcare Awards Gala Dinner in Brisbane. Applications for sponsorship close Tuesday 12 July 2018.*

Sponsorship is available to community members and volunteers from the Wimmera CMA region who have been involved in Natural Resource Management activities in the region over the past two years. The 2018 National Landcare Conference and Awards is your opportunity to contribute to, engage with, and learn from your community and peers.

To submit an expression of interest (EOI) for sponsorship, please email [boydj@wcma.vic.gov.au](mailto:boydj@wcma.vic.gov.au) and answer the following questions:

Briefly explain why you would like to attend the conference and what your main areas of interest are.

How will you share the knowledge gained from the conference with your group and/or local community?

Are you a member, volunteer or Facilitator of a community NRM group in the Wimmera CMA region?

What is the group's name and your position in the group (if applicable)?

If you have already submitted an abstract for the conference please attach your abstract or outline your abstract or poster topic.

2018 National Landcare Conference and National Landcare Awards Gala Dinner in Brisbane.

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## JUNIOR LANDCARE and BIODIVERSITY

### Grants available.

The Victorian Government is funding up to \$400,000 for Victorian Junior Landcare and Biodiversity Grants. Schools, groups and organisations could be awarded up to \$5,000 if they have a project that focuses on improving biodiversity through the development, improvement or restoration of habitat for Victoria's native plants (flora) and animals (fauna) and/or educating, involving, and engaging young people in valuing and actively caring for Victoria's natural environment.

Victorian schools, kindergartens, childcare centres and youth/community groups are invited to apply for grants of up to

\$5,000 to undertake projects that focus on improving biodiversity through the restoration of habitat for Victoria's native flora and fauna.

Projects could focus on Improving biodiversity through the development, improvement or restoration of habitat or educating, involving or engaging young people in valuing and actively caring for Victoria's natural environment.

More information can be found at

<https://agribusiness-yarravalley.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=1ec64f89892bd0c9505b09db4&id=7bfc5c761e&e=5a287dd7cf>

**Applications close Friday 20 July.**



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## 'ART IS' FESTIVAL



As in previous years Wimmera CMA delivered community engagement activities in support of the 'Art Is' Festival in Horsham.

**This year's festival theme was "Art is-A Footprint."**

A Nature Connection activity was delivered at Weir Park for Horsham Primary School students on 6 June 2018 (pictured left) and activities were delivered at Art Play Sunday on 3 June 2018 at Horsham Town Hall.

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## HAVE YOU SPOTTED A PLATYPUS RECENTLY?



While you're out and about, keep an eye out for the elusive platypus in our local waterways and get involved in the community driven Platypus Spot website.

Over the last decade cesar has worked together with the Wimmera CMA and Project Platypus to conduct intensive research and population surveys of platypuses in the Wimmera Catchment. While a lot of vital information has been gathered over this time, it's clear that if we want to improve management and conservation outcomes for the platypus we need to know more about their current and historic distribution.

We're asking everyone to play a role in the conservation of this iconic species. If you've been lucky enough to see a platypus, jump onto the new website and let us know. You don't need to have a photo, just report where you saw it.

This website, developed by cesar and Melbourne Water, allows you to submit your sightings, upload a photo, view sightings in your local area, learn about platypuses, and interact with other 'platypusSPOTters'. Your information will contribute to a better understanding of platypus distribution and enable more effective conservation of this unique Australian animal.

Human activities pose the biggest threat to the long term health and survival of platypus populations, but with appropriate management, conservation efforts and community engagement we believe it's possible for platypuses to thrive in both rural and urban environments.

We look forward to your feedback and seeing your contributions to [www.platypusSPOT.org](http://www.platypusSPOT.org)!