



**Australian Government**



“ Landcare’s  
not just for  
rural people or  
farmers. It’s for  
everyone ”

Ray Zippel



## Wimmera Landcare

Wimmera Landcare activities kicked off soon after the State Government and Victorian Farmers Federation launched the Landcare concept in 1986. Wimmera farmers and rural communities responded to the call to action, tapping into their wealth of knowledge and leading a new approach to community investment in land, water and biodiversity.

Years later, the Wimmera now boasts more than 60 community-based groups active in Landcare. More than 2000 members and volunteers contribute throughout a region which makes up more than 10 percent of Victoria. Wimmera Landcare also supports Landcare networks including Project Platypus, Hindmarsh Landcare Network, Grampians to Little Desert and the Yarrilinks network.

Landcare encourages community participation in environmental, cultural and social activities. Key Landcare challenges include tackling soil erosion, improving water quality, arresting a decline in the quality of native vegetation, and protection of natural and cultural assets on private and public land.

The Wimmera region is home to the Little Desert and Grampians National Parks, one quarter of Victoria’s wetlands and the Wimmera River System.



# What Wimmera Landcare does

Wimmera Landcare contributes to the environmental health of ten percent of Victoria – a vast expanse of country, varying between agricultural plains, steep and rising hills and wetlands.

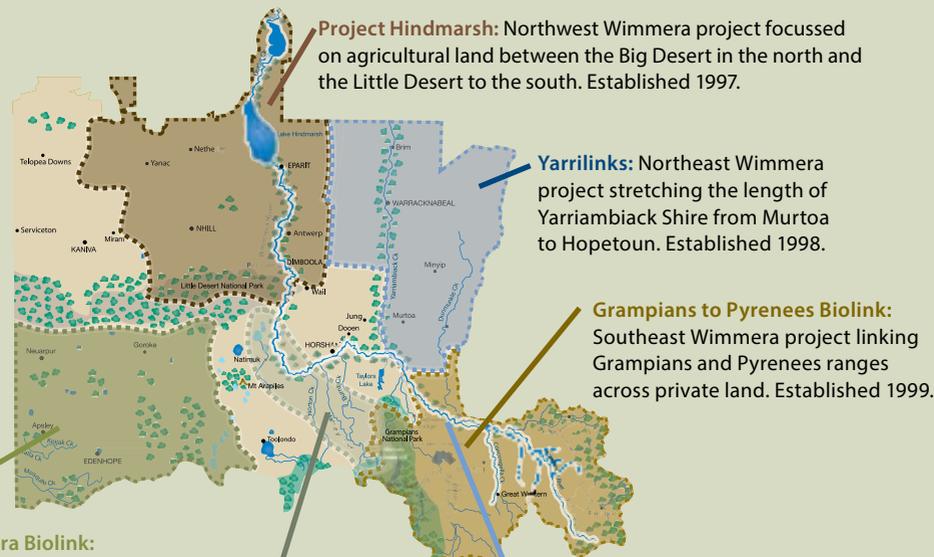
80 percent of the Wimmera region is privately owned and most of this is used for broadacre crop or stock production. This means Landcare relies heavily on partnerships, cooperation and dedication from farmers, landowners and rural communities.

Strong partnerships have led, and continue to lead to high-calibre, inclusive events and programs with an aim to spread the Landcare message beyond individual groups and members. It also aims to increase community knowledge of environmental issues and encourage people to get involved.

Wimmera Landcare's charter is to balance agricultural, economic, cultural and social values with environmental needs. This concept is designed to maintain environmental and farming sustainability through improvements to soil, water and native vegetation.

## Landcare snapshot: Iconic projects

Wimmera Landcare groups oversee and run landscape-scale projects with a strong focus on landowner, community, government and volunteer participation. Strong community partnerships and an acknowledgement of Indigenous values are fundamental to Wimmera Landcare success. There are six major Wimmera biolink efforts supported by Landcare groups.



# What Wimmera Landcare does



## Landcare snapshot: Farming for the Future Forum- October 2008

An example of Wimmera Landcare action was the highly successful Farming for the Future Forum, held at Longerenong, in October 2008. World-renowned palaeontologist Professor Tim Flannery, Bureau of Meteorology senior research scientist, Dr Scott Power and president of the Poola Foundation, Mr Mark Wootton, were among guest presenters at the forum.

The event was organised in response to Wimmera Landcare networks' interest in seeking answers about the impact of climate change. 400 people attended the forum and 200 people sat down to a business breakfast. The event targeted landholders, farmers and the wider community, providing in-depth analysis of climate variability and change and examining the relationship between communities, the environment and farming.

A key message at the forum was there are opportunities for agriculture to play an important role in reducing or negating carbon emissions. Wimmera Landcare also ran a series of local 'follow-up information sessions' about farming and climate change.

# What Wimmera Landcare does



## Landcare snapshot: Indigenous Involvement

Aboriginal people were the Wimmera's first 'Landcarers', maintaining the balance between land use and environmental health over thousands of years. Descendants maintain this responsibility today.

'Caring for Country' describes the traditional Indigenous approach to land management. This is largely compatible with basic principles that drive Landcare and why Wimmera Landcare fosters a strong connection with Aboriginal Traditional Owners. Wimmera Traditional Owners include the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagalk people.

A working relationship between Wimmera Landcarers and Traditional Owners has developed over several years. It continues to evolve and is an example of how Wimmera Landcare embraces cultural as well as environmental values.



# What Wimmera Landcare does

## Landcare snapshot: Collaboration between Landcare and Traditional Owners

### Cultural recognition

Wimmera Landcare seeks and identifies opportunities for Indigenous involvement in community events. Traditional Owners regularly contribute to Landcare events such as annual 'plantout' weekends with 'Welcome to Country' ceremonies. This recognises the Traditional Owners' ancient connection with the Wimmera.

### Cultural awareness

Landcare events often feature cultural awareness sessions about Indigenous values in the landscape. Community environmental walks such as the Mountains 2 Mallee and Walk Back in Time emphasise rich Aboriginal heritage along the Wimmera River. Aboriginal culture and heritage presentations have also featured and will continue to feature in regional plantout weekends.

Indigenous Landcare philosophies identify a need to protect as well as restore.

### Cultural heritage and on-ground works

Wimmera Landcare is acutely aware that on ground activities can affect important Aboriginal Heritage sites. It therefore promotes 'best practice' and awareness involving heritage issues. An example is a sandy rise on private property near Jeparit in the northern Wimmera. Landcare identified the site for revegetation as part of a Hindmarsh Plantout weekend. Lunettes and sandy rises often contain Aboriginal burial sites. After consultations, the project went ahead without deep ripping of the site which minimised the risk of disturbing graves.

Wimmera Landcare continues to work with Traditional Owners to identify significant Indigenous sites that might be part of future Landcare revegetation projects.

## Project Platypus



### Who are Project Platypus?

A network of Landcare groups and other organisations primarily concerned with Landcare and environmental works in the upper Wimmera catchment. Project Platypus was established in 1994 when large-scale land and water degradation was too extensive to be managed by individual landholders and Landcare groups. Project Platypus includes 11 Landcare groups. A committee of representatives from the Landcare groups govern Project Platypus and a small team of staff based at Stawell manage the organisation.

### Why is the Grampians to Pyrenees Biolink happening?

To protect existing vegetation, reduce further degradation and to promote understorey growth that provides critical habitat for native wildlife. The biolink is establishing new vegetation in strategic locations to manage salinity while increasing the connectivity of remnant areas, allowing plant and animal species to maintain genetic diversity. The long-term goal is to create a healthy ecosystem providing a mosaic of farmland and native vegetation linking the Pyrenees Ranges and Grampians National Park.

### Project Platypus plantout weekends

Each year the Project Platypus network organises a series of weekends of community planting and fun to further the objectives of the Grampians to Pyrenees Biolink.



To become involved contact Project Platypus on (03) 5358 4410 or visit [www.platypus.org.au](http://www.platypus.org.au)

“ That’s where  
the Landcare  
groups come  
into their own,  
armed with  
picks, shovels  
and plants ”

Will Pyke

## Project Hindmarsh



### What is Project Hindmarsh?

Designed to improve management of remnant vegetation on district farms, enhance degraded areas and create new blocks, buffers and links connecting the districts network of well-vegetated roadside reserves between the Big and Little Deserts. It involves strong and well recognised community involvement.

### Why is the Big Desert to Little Desert Biolink happening?

It is designed to protect, enhance and restore native vegetation, biodiversity and tackle salinity and soil erosion. It strongly promotes an ecologically improved farming landscape. The aim is to achieve a net gain in the quality of native vegetation, providing measurable habitat for native animals across Hindmarsh Shire. Environmental work programs next to waterways and landholder support to help manage salinity problems are also important.

### Hindmarsh weekend

Two days are spent annually bringing community, Landcare groups and visitors together to achieve ongoing connectivity of the Big Desert to Little Desert during the Hindmarsh plantout weekends.



To become involved contact Hindmarsh Landcare on (0429) 006 936

“ The biggest personal benefit in all of this is that I have created a pleasing working atmosphere and environment for myself ”

Don McKenzie

# Yarrilinks



## What is Yarrilinks?

An award-winning natural-resource management project in Yarriambiack Shire, operating since 1998. Yarriambiack Shire's landscape is highly fragmented and is home to many threatened species and ecological communities. Since inception the project has worked with hundreds of landholders to protect and restore more than 2500 hectares of native vegetation, most of it important buloke woodlands. Its strength is in strong community engagement.

## Why is Yarrilinks happening?

To protect, enhance and restore native vegetation in Yarriambiack Shire, with a key focus along Yarriambiack Creek. The project has provided a foundation for management and use of native vegetation in this intensively farmed region. It has provided social interaction at a time of declining population and formed a link between city and country people.

## Yarrilinks weekend

Visitors from the city are embraced and included in the Yarrilinks two-day plantout held mid year to improve the biolink connectivity of the region.



“ You wouldn't think planting trees could bring so many people together, but it does ”

Kim Byron

## Grampians to Little Desert Biolink



### What is Grampians to Little Desert Biolink?

A community-driven project designed to recreate biodiversity and habitat biolinks on private and public land between the Grampians and Little Desert national parks. Ecosystems between both have historical connections and previously allowed plants and animals to move freely between them.

### Why is the Grampians to Little Desert Biolink happening?

Fragmentation of the natural environment, climate change, weeds and feral animals threaten remaining isolated pockets of habitat. The project evolved from a 2004 Landcare sponsored study of roadsides, private land remnants and waterways.

### Grampians to Little Desert plantout weekend

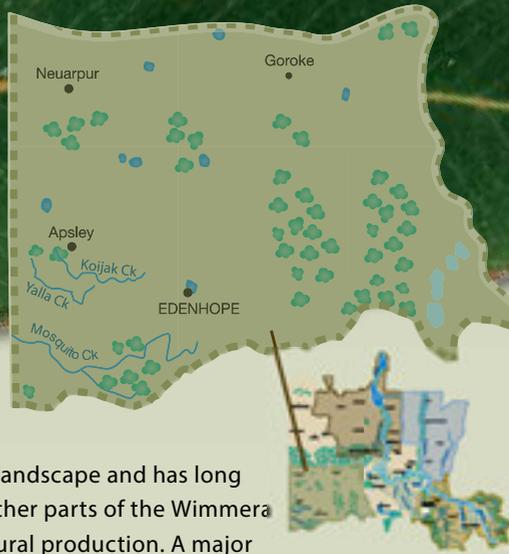
These events are organised to improve biolink connectivity between two significant parks in the region.

“ This farm is my life, so it comes naturally to improve it wherever I can ”

Alan Spiers



## West Wimmera



The west Wimmera is unique in the Australian landscape and has long attracted Landcare interest and activity. Like other parts of the Wimmera it is subject to considerable broadacre agricultural production. A major difference is that it retains a high percentage of native vegetation.

An ancient retreating sea has created chains of fresh and saline wetlands and accompanying biodiversity.

Landcare started in the region with a focus on wetland conservation through Kowree Farm Tree Group in 1986. The region is home to more than 2000 wetlands and rare and threatened species including the Red-tailed Black Cockatoo, Bush Stone Curlew and Buloke woodland.

Most local Landcarers are farmers and people with high levels of environmental awareness. A Kowree Biolink project between 1999 and 2002, linking the Little Desert and Glenelg River, involved about 70 farmers.

Local Landcare activities have included a \$120,000 World Wildlife Fund Buloke protection and enhancement project, collaboration with Melbourne University on Buloke propagation and research and vegetation of 100 hectares of Bulokes next to Little Desert National Park. Kowree Farm Tree Group also promotes the protection of specific Bush Stone Curlew habitat.

“ People in the west Wimmera appreciate the treasures they have in their own backyards ”

Rhonda Butcher



To become involved contact the West Wimmera Regional Landcare Facilitator on (03) 5585 1133



## Plantout weekends

Major community Plantout Weekends, hosted by Wimmera Landcarers each winter, link communities and vegetation corridors across the Wimmera. The first plantout weekend event occurred in 1998. Regular successful large-scale community plantouts have occurred ever since.

Plantout weekends attract hundreds of keen volunteers from within and outside the region, with many people volunteering their time at all events. They involve good food, a chance to meet new people, great scenery, entertainment and music on Saturday nights, a friendly and welcoming atmosphere and the chance to make a 'real' change to the environment.

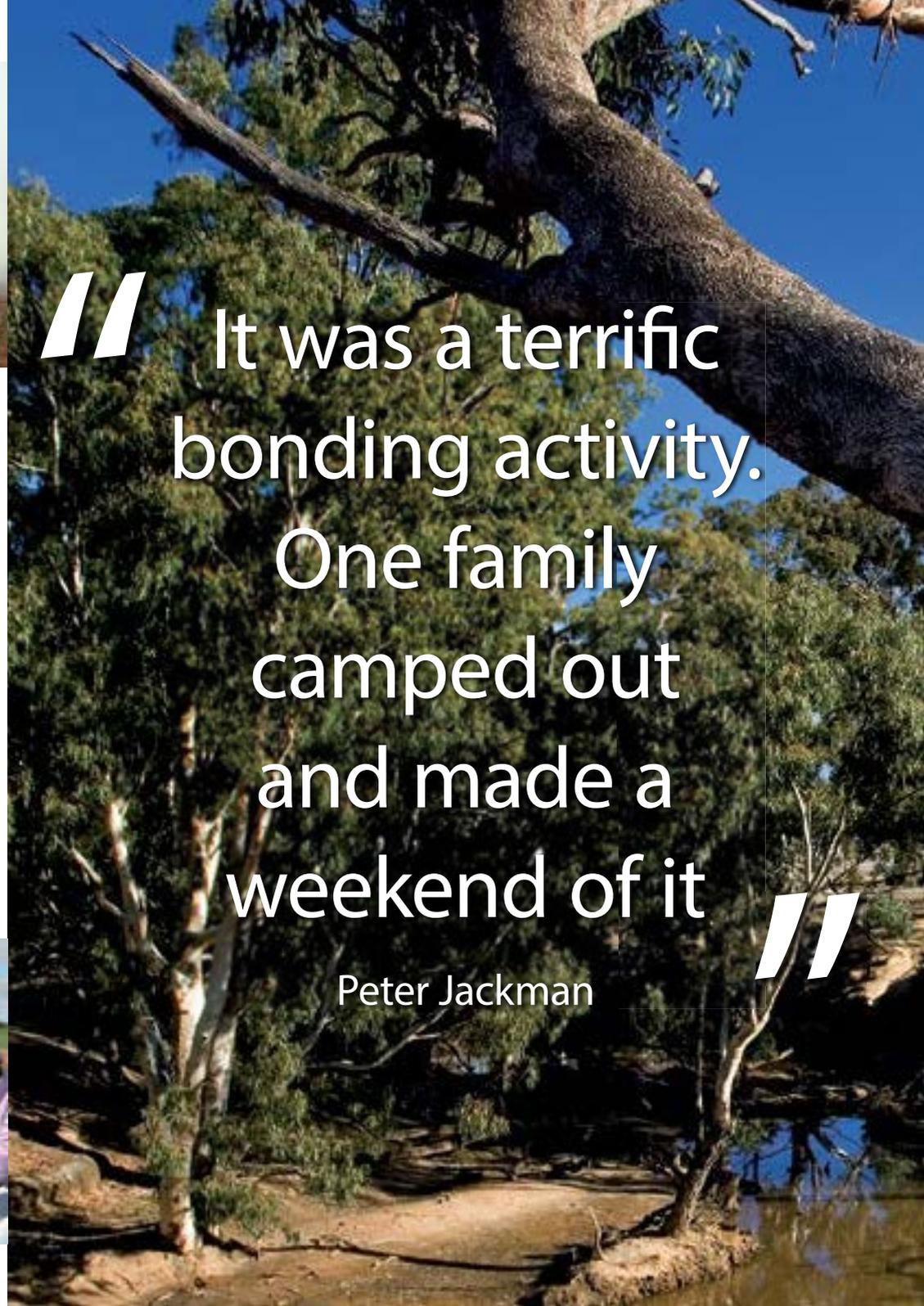
Please contact the following agencies if you are keen to be involved:

- Project Platypus Plantouts call (03) 5358 4410
- Project Hindmarsh Landcare Weekend call (0429) 006 936
- Yarrilinks Weekend call (0488) 662 199
- Grampians to Little Desert activities call (03) 5383 6220



“ It was a terrific bonding activity. One family camped out and made a weekend of it ”

Peter Jackman





# We need you!

Landcare groups are always on the lookout for new members and volunteers. Besides the obvious contribution and assistance as a labour force, volunteers often bring with them specific knowledge and skills that can greatly benefit community groups.

Interested in offering your skills to community environmental groups in country Victoria?

Landcare groups and networks in western Victoria are looking for ongoing support, expertise and skills in a number of areas:

- Design and promotions
- Photography
- Short term project management
- Submission and grant writing
- Media and marketing
- Database design and management
- Website design and management
- Report Writing
- Site Monitoring



If you would like to assist please contact the Wimmera CMA Community Delivery Manager Joel Boyd on (03) 5382 1544.

photos by: David Fletcher, Melissa Powell, Brook Turner, Murry Wilson, Michael Bradley



CONSUMER

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