



SOUTHERN NEWS

ISSUE 4

From the Office

As the year winds down and everyone starts planning a week or two of relaxation, the SACTCG would like to wish all of their members, partners and friends a safe and relaxed holiday period with their families.

The office will be closed from 22nd December to Monday 2 January.



Strategic Planning and Future Funding

Martine, Miranda and Wendy have been busy working on the strategic plan, writing a document to go with the plan on an page that was circulate to members a few months ago.

Martine has also been very busy working on submissions and ideas for the funding of the SACTCG after July 2018.

More detail in the months to come.

2017 ACT Landcare Awards

The ACT Landcare Awards were held on the 23rd November at Pialligo Estate.

The catchment groups did well from the night, with our own Miranda Gardner taking out Young Landcare Leader Award and the SACTCG having a very big hand in the Catchment Groups Green Army program , winning the Partnerships for Landcare Award. And we can't forget the Water watch program winning the Citizen Science Award.

There were some great nominations, all contributing to the environmental health of the ACT, and making the ACT Landcare community as wonderful as it is. We congratulate all of the winners, as well as other nominations for their hard work and dedication to ensuring future generations can love the land as much as we do.



Miranda Gardner accepting the Young Leader Award



Kathy Eyles, Martine Franco, Karissa Preuss (GCG), and Brian Butler (CVA) accepting the Partnerships Award



Dave Boorman accepting the Sustainable Practices Award



All of the winners of the 2017 ACT Landcare Awards

The full list of winners was:

- **Australian Government Excellence in Sustainable Farm Practices Award:** Dave Boorman, “Cypress Springs”, Tharwa
- **Australian Government Partnerships for Landcare Award:** Green Army Program Partnership 2015-2017
- **Australian Government Innovation in Agricultural Land Management Award:** John Ive, “Talaheni” Canberra and Yass
- **Junior Landcare Team Award:** Lake Tuggeranong College 'Sustainability Unit'
- **ACT Government Environment Community Support Award:** Anke Maria Hoefer, ACT and Region Frogwatch Program
- **ACT Government Citizen Science Award:** Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch
- **Australian Government Individual Landcarer Award:** Lenore Hodgkinson North Belconnen Landcare Group
- **Rio Tinto Indigenous Land Management Award:** Sally Moylan, ACT Parks and Conservation Service
- **Austcover Young Landcare Leader Award:** Miranda Gardener, Southern ACT Catchment Group and the National Landcare Network
- **Fairfax Landcare Community Group Award:** Ginninderra Catchment Group

A New National Landcare Organisation

The Boards of the National Landcare Network (NLN) and Landcare Australia (LAL) met in Canberra on 23 November to agree formally to merge the two organisations to form a new entity which will give the Landcare movement a single national organisation working on its behalf, which will combine and build on the representative capacity and voice of the NLN and the marketing, education, fundraising and program delivery skills of Landcare Australia.

Both organisations are committed to doing what is best for community Landcare, and recognise that they will have a greater impact together. The NLN, the National representative body for Landcare, also met in Canberra last week for the AGM and a series of meetings. Representatives from each State and Territory flew in for the event. Dr Peter Bridgewater (Landcare ACT) was elected Chair of the NLN Board while Karissa Preuss (GCG) was elected Chair of the NLN Members Council, the representative component of the NLN. Martine is on the Members Council, so any issues which members would like raised at this level can be discussed with her on 62966400.

ACT Heritage Grants

SACTCG were successful in getting \$9,000 for a project with ACT Historic Places for a project for the Conservation and Protection of the Lanyon Canoe Trees.

ACT Environment Grants

SACTCG were successful in obtaining funds for 2 projects,

- Invasive weed control in the Murrumbidgee River Corridor - \$50,000. This project will reduce blackberry and invasive willow infestations along the Upper Murrumbidgee River Corridor.
- Habitat connectivity improvements on Urambi Hills - \$3,635
This project will restore previously cleared, grazed landscapes to rehabilitate a Wildlife corridor in the Urambi Hills Reserve.

November update: Southern Australia Seasonal Bushfire Outlook 2017-18

According to the Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC, the outlook for southern Australia is for an above normal fire season.

‘Due to drier and warmer than average conditions since autumn 2017, the bushfire seasonal outlook for 2017-18 has been re-examined for southern Australia.

Most states are warning of an above normal fire season. While there is potential of a late-forming, weak La Nina, it brings little prospect of high rainfall due to competing climate drivers from the Indian Ocean. Weak

and late-developing La Nina events have had a variable impact on Australian rainfall in the past.

These conditions have resulted in an update to the *Southern Australia Seasonal Bushfire Outlook*. This updated *Southern Australia Seasonal Bushfire Outlook*, released as *Hazard Note 43*, replaces the previous Outlook, published as *Hazard Note 38* in September 2017.

Download the full report from the [Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC website](#).

Snakes Alive! – 15 to 21 January 2018 at the Botanic Gardens

Snakes Alive!, the annual exhibition of Australian Reptiles and Amphibians is back at the Botanic Gardens again this summer. Organised by the ACT Herpetological Association, it is open 10 am to 4 pm daily. Each day several feeding sessions are on show as well as interesting talks about herpetological facts. Kids and adults simply love this event and it is a fantastic activity for the school holidays.

Weed Alert - Alligator Weed

Alligator Weed has been found in Isabella Weir, Yerrabi Pond, Ginninderra Creek and Lake Burley Griffin. This is an aquatic plant that is a prohibited Weed of National Significance and is notifiable under ACT legislation. If you think you have spotted Alligator Weed at the edge of a waterway, do not try to remove it, as it can grow from a piece of stalk, and report sightings to Access Canberra and Canberra Nature Map://canberra.naturemapr.org/ with a close up photograph. An automatic alert will be sent to the High Risk Invasive Plants Team.



Weed Alert – Coolatai Grass

Also on the radar as a possible new incursion into the ACT is Coolatai Grass. This is already a major concern in NSW, it is highly invasive of all vegetation types, and is drought, fire and herbicide resistant. Infestations have been discovered to the north and south of the ACT. Coolatai grass is capable of invading undisturbed natural ecosystems and is a major threat to biodiversity in nature reserves and national parks. It is also a threat to grazing productivity due to low levels of protein and digestibility.

The tufted, tall (1.5m) plant looks similar to Kangaroo Grass or native barbed wire grass, but is distinguished by white hairs visible at the base of the paired spikelets. One of the spikelets is stalked, the other is unstalked. Bristles or awns are also present at the end of the spikelets. When actively growing the leaves are a waxy blue green colour. In winter, leaves cure and turn brown.

If you see it report sightings to Canberra Nature Map://canberra.naturemapr.org/ with a close up photograph. An automatic alert will be sent to the High Risk Invasive Plants Team.



Check out a fact sheet from Greening Australia of what to plant to attract native birds to your garden https://www.greeningaustralia.org.au/uploads/knowledge-portal/Planting_for_birds_brochure.pdf and the new [National Heritage Places map](#) produced by the Department of Environment and Energy

SACTCG WATERWATCH NEWS: NOVEMBER 2017

Upper Murrumbidgee Water watch won the ACT Landcare Citizen Science award on Thursday (23rd) night. This award was made possible by all the fabulous efforts of our volunteers. In addition the students at Lake Tuggeranong College along with their power house of a teacher, Nikey Mylordi took home the Junior Landcare Award.

I have included some notes from Woo O'Reilly's nomination as I think it is a great reminder of the work our volunteers do to ensure 'citizen science' is a valuable corner stone to our knowledge of ecological health at the local, regional, national and ultimately global, scale.



“In recent years, the Water watch team has worked hard to review methods & processes & increase confidence their data. These efforts have seen Water watch data go from being an underutilised dataset on the fringe, to one that sits within an integrated monitoring framework for the ACT region. The data is used in the community Catchment Group strategies, provides evidence in environmental grant applications, forms part of several ACT Government monitoring plans and is currently being looked at for the next ACT State of Environment report. “

Lake Tuggeranong College's Rachel, Nikey and Eliza

“Upper Murrumbidgee Water watch (Waterwatch) engages with the community to monitor & raise awareness of our local waterways. Currently funded through the ACT Government (ACT Healthy Waterways Project) & Icon Water, Water watch has been running in the ACT region since 1995 & covers the Murrumbidgee catchment upstream of Burrinjuck Dam near Yass, with the exception of the Goodradigbee catchment. The total area monitored by Water watch is more than 11,400km².”

“The Water watch program could not exist without the effort & commitment from volunteers. Long-term monitoring is a time consuming (& an often under-valued) activity & to obtain water quality data from over 200 sites across the ACT region on a monthly basis, is simply unaffordable in a formal monitoring scenario. In the 2015/16 CHIP report, Water watch used 1,973 water quality surveys to calculate the catchment health scores & 2,377 surveys in total when combined with the water bug & riparian assessments. Such a high resolution increases confidence in the results & helps creates a comprehensive picture on a whole-of-catchment scale - something not achieved by any other program in the upper Murrumbidgee catchment.” From left: Clarissa, Minister Gentleman, Woo, Deb, Tim Wong, Professor Bridgewater, Bruno and Professor Ian Falconer (Photo by me.)



A huge thank you to all those groups and individuals involved in collecting data. To view Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch data go to <http://www.act.waterwatch.org.au>. For more information contact the SACTCG Waterwatch Coordinator on 62966400 or at waterwatch@sactcg.org.au .

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