



Newham & District Landcare Group

Presidents Report 2020/21

Our vision is to enhance biodiversity and natural ecosystems within the local environment.

Your Committee again this year continued to be highly active in our local area, as well as being Committee members of the Upper Deep Creek Landcare Network (UDCLN) and Upper Campaspe Landcare Network (UCLN).

Our very big thank you to all our Committee members for their hard work in all things NDLG.

Our NDLG membership levels have remained steady with well over 100 member households, having welcomed several new families. This high membership level gives us a very strong member base for our continued local activities.

Activities have again been heavily curtailed due to the ongoing Covid19 situation. This unfortunately meant we had to again cancel several educational and social events.

Even with these challenges the group held successful educational and social events during the last year:

- Newham Roadsides Biodiversity Monitoring Project. Fauna spotlighting evenings with Karl Just, and report launch jointly with MRSC.
- Roadside spotlight session for parents and children.
- AGM held in December 2020 in conjunction with our annual Christmas BBQ social event.
- Habitat assessment workshop with Sam Harrison held on site.
- Welcome to new members dinner held in the Newham Hall with Biolink video launch.
- Biochar workshop.

We have been able to continue with:

- Provision of services to members (auger, tools, plants, sprayers, tree guards, wildlife cameras, library etc.).
- Quarterly newsletters with reports covering events, projects, reviews, and special interest articles.

Our participation in the Upper Deep Creek and Upper Campaspe Landcare Networks provides members with access to additional relevant events, education opportunities and their newsletters.

Members of the Committee have again applied for financial grants throughout the year to assist in our group's funding and for projects. It is due to their hard work that we have been successful in several applications. A big thank you to those folk involved.

Congratulations and well done to Helen Scott for facilitating, energising and bringing together two wonderful video productions for NDLG - *Linking the Landscape – The Cobaw Biolink*, and *Wildflowers of Woodend and Newham*. We further acknowledge the financial and other support provided by MRSC and Melbourne Water.

We continue to use funding received to further develop the Cobaw Biolink. The Biolink contains high quality remnant vegetation on public and private land. It also provides habitat connectivity for native species between Mount Macedon and the Cobaw State Forest. Currently the main focus is on Monument Creek (Deep Creek in sections) and eastern riverine systems. The group has acquired additional nesting boxes for Brush-tailed Phascogales along with providing a pole camera for monitoring nest boxes and a motion-sensor camera for use by members wishing to record wildlife on their property.

Special Interest Groups

Roadside Management Group

The Roadside Management Group has continued their great work this year, albeit reduced due to the impacts of the restrictions and weather. Specific roadsides have been allocated to our Landcare Group by the MRSC for the removal of gorse, blackberry, broom etc. We also received further financial assistance from a Council grant for the purchase of equipment and herbicides.

Of course this cannot be done without enormous volunteer labour. The very invasive Chilean Needle Grass remains a focus of attention around our patch. The group continues to be instrumental in improving the Shire's contribution to roadside management with contributions to the MRSC Roadsides Conservation Management Plan recently released for comment. We are always looking for additional members to this group. Please put your hand up, come along to join us and receive some fine plant education. We see some fabulous wildflowers when in season too.

Pest Control

Our animal pest control coordinator is Sue Barker. Local landholders can arrange contact via the committee who can assist with organising programmes.

Water Watch

Newham Primary School is continuing the programme. In addition Karl Kny monitors Garden Hut Creek and provides results to Melbourne Water.

Clean Up Australia

The contribution by members to Clean Up Australia day continues, retaining a strong memory of our dear friend Nick Massie. The baton has been handed over and wonderfully organised by Stephen Mahon. A substantial amount of rubbish was collected again this year. We encourage all our members to pick up rubbish at every opportunity to reduce the litter in the Newham area and contribute to the health of our environment.

Plant orders

Penny Roberts continues to organise annual plant orders for members, obtaining plants from commercial suppliers at a heavily discounted price to members. Get in early with your orders to ensure the plants will be available to you.

Wesley Park

NDLG provides ongoing support for plantings and park maintenance – thanks to Jane Trikojus for managing this.

Educational

Several events have been held this year (see above list) to impart knowledge to our members and guests. Most are held at the Newham Mechanics Institute. Our seminars endeavour to be relevant to our broad membership and to provide a reference point for members to establish long term plans for the enhancement of their properties and our surrounding environments.

Lobbying

The Committee on behalf of NDLG makes submissions to Macedon Ranges Shire Council and to various Government bodies. Examples this year include the Victorian Parliament's Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria, to the MRSC Roadsides Conservation Management Plan, and continued partnership with MRSC in the Newham Roadsides Fauna Monitoring Project.

The committee continues to be engaged actively on Roadsides and Hanging Rock, along with encouraging the Council to maximise their environmental focus. We are seeing some success with greater cooperation with Council.

Future Directions

Update-

As reported last year, we continue to work on and formulate long term strategies for our Newham and District Landcare Group. An ongoing action plan is established based around the key priorities that members have previously identified. We are currently working more closely with our neighbour Landcare Groups and Landcare Networks.

- Activism/political involvement, media.
- Creation of a MAP or PLAN of biolinks and habitat corridors.
- Renewable energy technology.
- Education, creating awareness.
- Other interests such as on-property working bees, group activities, land use planning and coordination with like-minded groups.

Committee

A huge thankyou to our dedicated and hardworking Committee. The commitment of your valuable time, input and dedication to maintaining the group's direction is truly appreciated by all.

(Helen Scott, Secretary and website; Rob Lawrence, Treasurer; Karl Kny V.P.; Doug Dagleish, Natasha Gayfer, Stephen Mahon). Penny Roberts thankfully continues to attend! We also acknowledge the contribution of David Bonsall who is production editor for our wonderful newsletter publication.

In closing:

Please remember that your committee is focused on the needs and interests of all our members. Your requirements of the committee can be communicated by telephoning a committee member, attending a committee meeting or at one of our many events. Please also check the group's website (<https://newhamlandcare.info/>) which has been extensively and continuously upgraded by the hard work of our Secretary, Helen Scott. Copies of minutes of meetings are available should you like to receive them.

We encourage all members who feel the motivation, to set up a project activity within the context of our Landcare objectives. Please feel confident of our support. We believe strongly in community building - we want our members to feel that they belong and to become more involved in broader community Landcare issues.

Thank you to our members for their participation, feedback and involvement in all things Landcare. Be proud of all that has and will be achieved.

Howard Stirling
President
July 2021