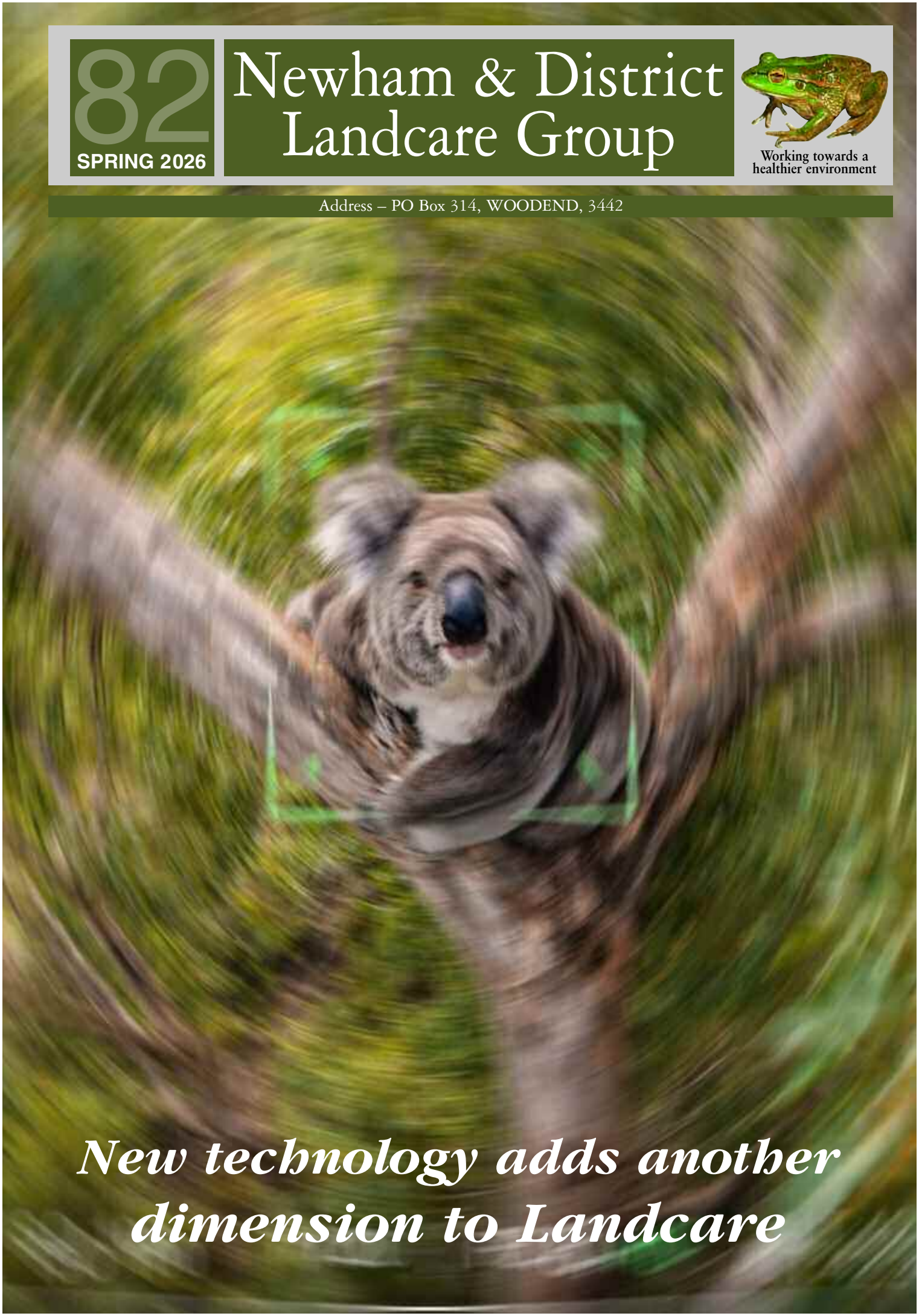
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SPRING 2026

Newham & District Landcare Group

Working towards a healthier environment

Address – PO Box 314, WOODEND, 3442



New technology adds another dimension to Landcare

Coming events

It is time to ***renew your membership*** for 2026–27, $20 per family per annum, unchanged since 2004. Use the membership form on the website or pay electronically (include your name in the transaction) at *BSB:**013706** Account No.**4992 33654.***

Friday 27 November.

N&DLG AGM at Newham Hall. 6.45 for 7pm. Followed by Ammie Jackson's presentation about the Cobaw Biolink Project.

Saturday 12 December.

Christmas party BBQ at Wesley Park with the usual great food, fun and egg and gumboot tosses, and some free plants.

Roadsides: The Weedies celebrate 21 years

On Sunday 8 November the Roadside Management Group held a Spring wildflower extravaganza, a wildflower and weed identification walk along high value Shelton's roadside between 10am and 12, followed by lunch at Korora.

It was accompanied by the launch of a Special 21 years Edition about the group with some history and testimonials, online at https://newhamlandcare.info/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/Weedies-turn-21.pdf

A reminder of the video we made in 2020 to celebrate the variety of Wildflowers of Newham rural roadsides and Woodend reserves https://vimeo.com/493968826

Getting Fire Ready

There are still opportunities to learn about being prepared for the upcoming fire season; Newham's neighbouring brigade in Woodend is having their Open Day on Sunday the 15 November. For more info see https://www.woodendcfa.org/woodend-cfa-open-day-sunday-nov-15/

Of special interest is information about firewise gardening. You can also download the official Country Fire Authority 68-pages guide at Landscaping for Bushfire PDF.

Group contacts

Committee for 2025–26

President: Karl Kny. karl@kolora.com, 0409 543 061
Treasurer: Howard Stirling, howardjanine01@gmail.com, 0432 809 314.
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Bruce Hedge, bruceahedge@gmail.com, 0427 888 122 (rainfall).
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Jane Trikojus, trikojus_j@fastmail.com, 0413 499 252 (Wesley Park and Jim Road).

Other Contacts
Roadside Management Group (the Weedies): Sue Massie, 0407 029 392.
Dugan (formally The Triangle), Anderson Road: Karen Hunt 0408 135 243.
Spray trailer and cameras: Howard Stirling, 0432 809 314.
Website: https://newhamlancare.info

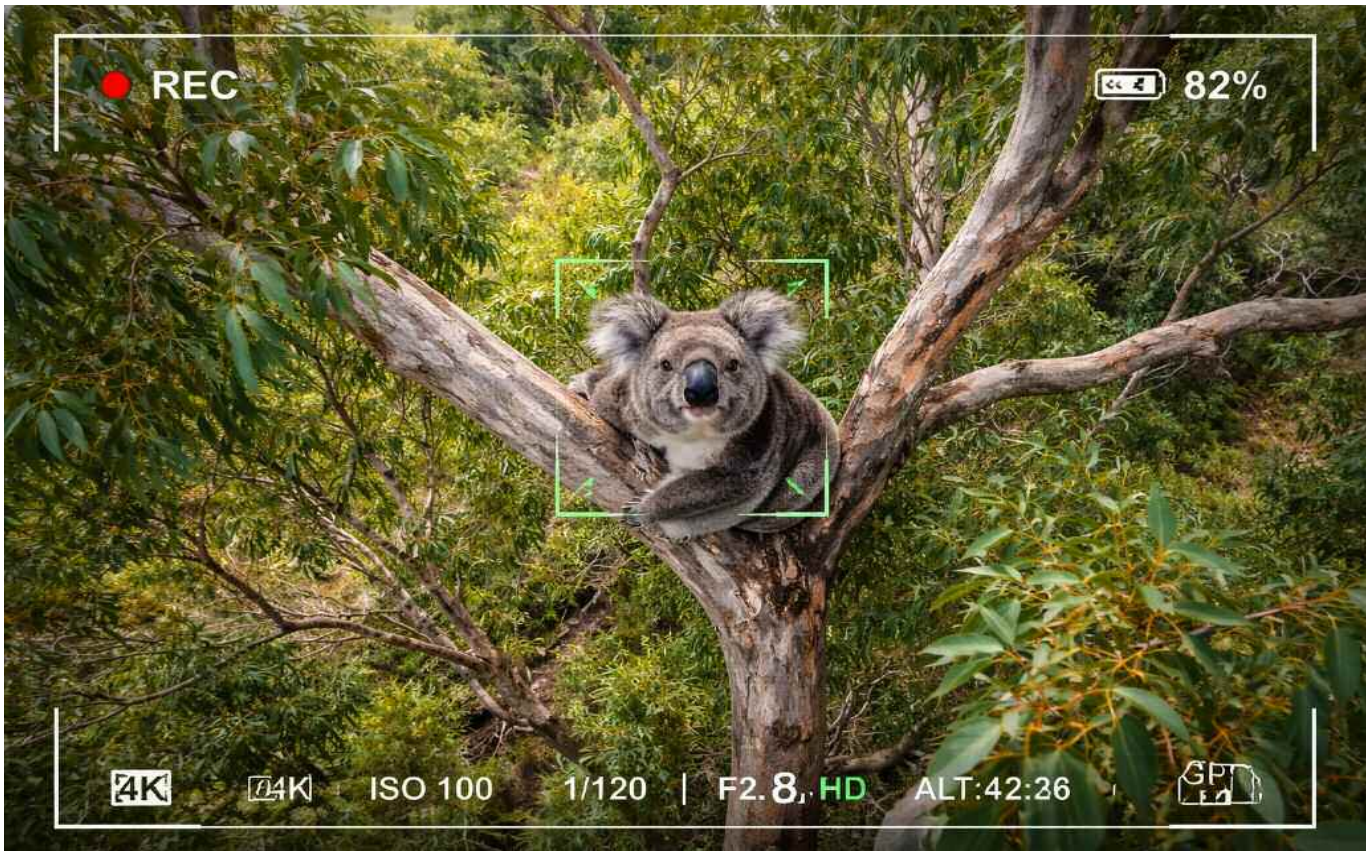
The committee meets on the first Tuesday of each month (February to November) between 7.30–9pm at the Newham Hall. All members are welcome to attend, be become more involved or raise specific matters. If you do wish to attend, please advise a committee member.

Any articles you wish to submit to the newsletter, or even suggestions for articles, please email our interim editors Helen Scott orseda@outlook.com or Brigitte Kny at bkny@bigpond.com

Eyes on Habitat:

Using drone imagery to understand habitat connectivity and Biolinks.

Extract from Rebekah Ritchies's presentation September 2026 at Newham Hall.



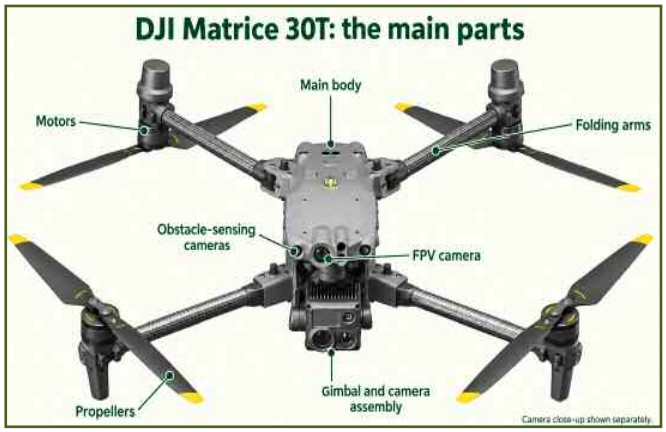
The *Eyes on Habitat* project explores how drone imagery can help Landcare groups see familiar landscapes in a new way, better understand habitat connections and identify opportunities to improve biodiversity across the Upper Campaspe region. By combining an aerial perspective with local knowledge and on-ground observations, the project aims to help communities make more informed decisions about where and how to focus their conservation efforts.

The Upper Campaspe Landcare Network (UCLN) has engaged Alex Faulkner, Principal Ecologist and drone operator from Modern Ecology, to support the project using a DJI Matrice 30T drone. Equipped with wide-angle and zoom cameras, thermal imaging and a laser rangefinder, the drone offers several ways to explore the landscape, notice interesting features and identify places that may deserve a closer look.

For Landcare, the real value of this technology is not simply taking impressive aerial photographs. It is about seeing how individual features fit together across the broader landscape. From the ground, we might focus on a particular tree, creek, revegetation site or patch of weeds. From above, we can begin to see the bigger picture: where vegetation connects, where gaps occur, how waterways link different areas and where habitat may be becoming fragmented.

A major focus of *Eyes on Habitat* is exploring biolinks and how wildlife moves through the landscape. Connectivity does not always mean a continuous corridor of native vegetation. Small patches of regeneration, roadside vegetation, paddock trees, shelterbelts and waterways can all play a role in helping wildlife move between larger areas of habitat.

Importantly, different animals experience the same landscape in different ways. A gap between trees that challenges a small glider may be less significant for a larger gliding species, while a wombat faces an entirely different set of challenges moving across





the ground. Aerial imagery can help identify possible connections and barriers, but further investigation is needed to understand whether these features are actually being used by wildlife.



The project follows a practical process: observe the landscape from above, identify patterns and questions, and then return to the ground to investigate. This is where the knowledge of Landcare members becomes invaluable. Local observations, ecological assessments, fauna records, wildlife cameras, acoustic monitoring, iNaturalist observations and Waterwatch data can all help build a clearer picture of what the imagery is showing us.

The aim is to turn those observations into useful action. Perhaps a small gap between two habitat patches could be restored, a degraded section of waterway improved, or a few mature paddock trees protected and supported by additional planting. Sometimes, strategic weed control or encouraging natural regeneration may be just as valuable as planting new vegetation. The challenge is identifying where limited time, funding and volunteer effort can make the greatest difference.

Another exciting opportunity is the ability to return to the same sites over time. Repeat imagery could help document canopy growth, revegetation progress, natural regeneration, erosion and changes in weed distribution. While greener imagery does not automatically mean healthier habitat or greater biodiversity, it provides a useful record that can be combined with ecological monitoring to assess progress.

Over time, individual Landcare projects could also contribute to a broader understanding of habitat connectivity and landscape change throughout the Upper Campaspe region and across the Cobaw Biolink into the Maribyrnong headwaters. Consistent observations across different sites may help reveal how waterways, roadsides, remnant vegetation and restoration areas contribute to the wider ecological network.

Ultimately, *Eyes on Habitat* is not a drone project for its own sake. It is an opportunity to use a different perspective to ask better ecological questions, combine new observations with established local knowledge, and make more strategic decisions about habitat conservation and restoration. Its guiding principle is simple: **See, Understand, Act, Return**. By treating aerial imagery as the beginning of an investigation rather than its conclusion, the project aims to help Landcare groups understand how their landscapes function, identify opportunities to strengthen ecological connectivity, and evaluate whether their actions make a lasting difference.

(Newham Landcare members have formed an action Group to explore the promotion opportunity within the various groups in the Campaspe and Maribyrnong headwaters. Plus maybe also engage Junior Landcare members with this new technology. Stay tuned)

Newham's Bushtucker

Currently it's hard not to notice the abundance of wildflowers like milkmaids (*Burchardia umbellata*) yam daisy or murnong (*Microseris sp*) and bulbine lilies (*Bulbine bulbosa*) plus many more creating a spectacular display of our native wildflowers.

For the First Nations traditional owners those wildflowers were an important food source due to their edible corms. When roasted they are sweet, starchy and nutritious and provide carbohydrates, calcium and iron. Corms were usually harvested after flowering season and seeds have dropped.

The corms were harvested using a sustainable system categorised by three generations of growth:

- **The Mother Tuber:** This is the mature, plump centrepiece of the root system. This tuber was specifically targeted for roasting and eating.
- **The Daughter Tuber:** These are the younger, smaller offshoots attached to the plant. They were deliberately left intact or replanted into the freshly loosened soil to grow and ensure future generations of crops
- **The Grandmother Tuber:** The oldest, woody part of the root system. Instead of being consumed, the grandmother tuber was replanted back into the earth to maintain the plant's ancestral root system and continue producing new offshoots

In the early years of Newham Landcare around 2005, Penny and Marie ran workshops for us enthusiastic new members wanting to learn how to propagate eucalypts and flowers. The bulbine lily was our favourite. It was very easy to grow and looks spectacular.



Corms of murnong (yam daisy) Image: Green Olive at Red Hill.



*Left to right: Yam daisy (*microseris scapigera*), true dandelion (*taraxacum officinale*) and cat's ear (*hypochaeris radicata*). Image: Canberra Permaculture Design.*

They also explained to us the difference between a murnong (yam daisy) and dandelions. Murnong buds droop down before opening while Dandelion buds remain upright the whole time. The stem of murnong is thin and solid while the dandelion is hollow and contains a milky white sap.



Yam daisy or murnong (Microseris lanceolata). *Image: Australian National Botanic Gardens.*



Bulbine lily. Image: Yarra Ranges Council.

On Saturday, 10 October 2026 I attended the Connect with Country at Yaluk Barring Park cultural learning and restoration event. The event was hosted by Brimbank City Council Park Ranger Ben Weber and Habitat Warriors and Yorta Yorta Barapa Barapa ecologist Kai Lane at Yaluk Barring Park (formerly Sydenham Park) in Keilor North, Victoria. Yaluk Barring means 'river trail' in the Woi-wurrung language.

By Emma Stevens. Junior Landcare Facilitator Upper Deep Creek Landcare Network.

Kai shared how to observe and read Country using First Peoples Traditional Knowledge on a bushwalk through the magnificent Yaluk Barring Park. Ben explained how the knowledge was being incorporated into the day-to-day management of the park. The 2–3 hour tour of Yaluk Barring included:

- Yedabila (meaning animal in Yorta Yorta) habitat pod (fish hotel) installation into Jacksons Creek to provide safe refuge for native fish.
- Use of yedabila for multiple purposes including installation at specific height to provide important nesting sites for Superb Blue Wrens in Royal Park, Parkville
- Cultural heritage session exploring First Nations knowledge and connection to Country.
- A guided walk of approximately 1.5-2 km return along the escarpment down to Jacksons Creek

For a video of the yedabila pods and their function please click on the link below which takes you to the Eco Warriors Facebook page: Yedabila Pods construction and use. Or check out their website https://ecowarriorsaustralia.org

I first met Kai at the Australian Citizen Science Association's CitiSciOz25 conference in October 2025, where he presented his education programs and habitat projects. His presentation was a conference highlight for me, and this workshop was even better! Kai is an engaging, knowledgeable and inspiring teacher and guide. I left feeling motivated, informed and full of purpose. His presentation provided clear instruction and know-how on how to create better in-stream habitat for our aquatic species, particularly with the practical demonstration of fish trap installation.



Yedabila Pod construction.

This experience would be valuable for Junior Landcare teachers and students, as well as anyone interested in biodiversity, habitat conservation and cultural learning.

I strongly recommend engaging with Habitat Warriors and Yorta Yorta Barapa Barapa ecologist Kai Lane for events in the future, or to partner with for future planned projects. On a local level, Kai's offerings have enormous potential for the Biolink projects that are expanding in the UDCLN and UCLN areas.

One of the highlights for me was learning about the effect of light pollution on pollinator plant species such as Pigface (*Carpobrotus sp*). These plants provide important shelter for pollinators species, closing overnight creating homes for insects to shelter in and re-opening when the daylight returns. Light pollution in and around Melbourne is affecting this cycle, resulting in loss of important habitat for our pollinators.





Pigface (Carpobrotus sp) plants provide important shelter.



After reading the article by Junior Landcare facilitator Emma Stevens about her visit at Yaluk Barring Park, I was absolutely fascinated about her observation of light pollution on plants. And that some plants provide overnight shelter for various pollinator species. Of course I immediately thought of May Gibb's adorable little gumnut babies Snugglepot and Cuddlepie.



Little Ragged Blossom. Image from May Gipps book Mother of the Gumnuts.

I had never heard of the effect of light pollution on plants, only really on insects, we all probably have seen lots of moths flying around streetlights instead doing their nightly pollinating stuff. Oh by the way it's Bogong Moth season and they could theoretically be in our Newham area. For more info. check out the Zoo Victoria website. Lots of info. there plus a link to a moth-tracker: https://www.zoo.org.au/moth-tracker/

Back to effect of light pollution on plants. I asked our pollinator expert John Walter from Upper Campaspe Landcare network about this. John confirmed that many of our male native bees use blossoms for overnight shelter, while the females have a nest to return to at night. Our small Lasioglossum bees have been observed cuddling up in small groups in buttercups, daisies and poppies, while the slightly plump blue-banded bee tucks itself into deep tubular flowers during cold weather and rain.

A few examples of our native flowering plants that close their blossoms overnight are our native daisies, swamp everlasting, tall bluebells, sun-orchids, succulent ground covers as well as some boronias.

There are many articles about the effect of light pollution on plants on the internet, especially the effect in big cities. A good starting article is from the Australian Government https://www.dcceew.gov.au/campaign/light-pollution/ecological-communities Basically what artificial light does is disrupts the natural cycle of the plant. And this can result in earlier growing and blossoming time, when insects are not yet around for pollination. This in turn results in lower pollen transfer, fewer fruit and weak seeds.

Christmas is coming up and while my bright glaring Christmas lights in the casuarina do look spectacular – I might replace all with new 'warm light' globes so that Snugglebee, Cuddle-apian and Little Ragged Pollinator continue to have their snug warm beds overnight.



*Male Teddy Bear bees (*Amegilla albiceps*) trying to take cover on grass stems.*
Male Lasioglossum native bees waking up in the morning on non-native Calendula flower. Images John Walter.



Did you know . . .

Cobaw Conservation Park

As of 5 October 2026 the Cobaw Conservation Park has been created. Formerly Cobaw State Forest, this woodland landscape provides habitat for woodland birds and threatened species while supporting low-impact recreation opportunities https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/places-to-see/parks/cobaw-conservation-park

Hanging Rock

Macedon Ranges Shire Council is to continue as Committee of Management for the East Paddock until 31 December 2027. Our article on Hanging Rock in the previous issue highlighted that no progress had been made to implement the 2023 Hanging Rock Precinct Master Plan. We very much hope that progress will happen at last to give the Rock a pathway to a sustainable future.

Woodend Landcare

Victorian Landcare Magazine's Special edition of 40 years of Landcare, Winter 2026, features Woodend Landcare as 'A slow and steady story of change', p22-23. It is available for free download at https://www.landcarevic.org.au/landcare-magazine/landcare-magazine-winter-2026/

Stay in the Loop

A reminder to everyone of some useful local email lists worth signing up to, and keep you up to date with environmental local news and events:

Landcare eNews from Upper Deep Creek Landcare Network and Jacksons Creek EcoNetwork.Compiled monthly by our local Landcare Facilitator, Ammie Jackson.

Sign up or read back copies at https://www.upperdeepcreeklandcare.org.au/newsletter

MRSC Environment eNews from Macedon Ranges Shire Council. Monthly, sign up or read back issues at https://www.mrsc.vic.gov.au/Live-Work/Environment/Environment-eNews

Healthy Landscapes eNews https://www.mrsc.vic.gov.au/Live-Work/Environment/Land-Management/Healthy-Landscapes

MMM Landcare– Macedon and Mt Macedon Landcare Group, sign up at https://www.mmmlandcare.org.au/

Bruce's Rainfall Report

July—September 2026

Up, up, DOWN, up. Wheeooo… at the end of September, after only 20mm of rain, I thought we were at the start of the drought brought on by a worsening El Nino. But happiness is a full dam at the start of what might be a bad bushfire season. Anyway, as I keep reporting, the only thing absolutely certain about climate change is total uncertainty.

July and August here at Newham, were both quite wet, with 115mm and 125mm respectively which filled the dam and finally topped up the dwindling subsoil moisture. Then, in September, the 20mm came in dribs and drabs on ten days, making a Year To Date of 694mm, close to average over the 30 years I've been recording. October is usually the wettest month, so the 102mm wasn't all that surprising, topping up the dam, with a YTD of nearly 800mm, and making my spring planting very happy! Other than parroting all the usual predictions of a bad El Nino, I'll just wish everyone a frost free late spring, and a benign fire season. ***The grass in the paddocks is getting very dense!***

The wonderful world of fungi



Judging by the number of local Facebook posts in the Macedon Ranges over the past few months, fungi are attracting a lot of attention. We are only now learning how important they are for soil and plant health. Over the years we have been fortunate to have expert mycologist Alson Pouliot visit N&DLG. Some of us remember a great day with Alison foraging for fungi on Mt Macedon and cooking some to eat in April 2007: https://newhamlandcare.info/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/14-NLG-Newsletter-Jun-07.pdf p2

Again in March 2023 at Newham Hall Alison launched her latest book Underground Lovers and talked of her fungi adventures around the world: https://newhamlandcare.info/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/NDLG_69-Summer-2023.pdf p6

Steve Murphy of Recreating Country has waxed lyrical with this very informative poem, and photos:

Fabulous Fungi

(numbers[1] indicate a word definition in the glossary)

As you tiptoe across a woodland or a forest floor,
You may see a cluster of Fairies Bonnets, but there's so much more
Leaves, logs and fallen branches litter the ground,
and with careful exploration more wonders can be found.

A hidden field of mushrooms with colours quite diverse,
Flame Fungus, Earth Stars and Puffballs – ooops! spores disperse,
Mycenas, Gold Tuffs, Lepistas, Laccarias and Pin-pong Bats,
Little Bells, Shaggy Parasols, Waxy Gills and Funnel Caps.

These splendours are just a glimpse of the diversity hidden beneath,
truffles and tiny fruiting bodies whose spores, digging marsupials release.
Ectomycorrhizal[3b] mycelium[2], reaching out with a network of fine threads,
in symbiosis[6] with woody plants, bonding & bartering with roots, it invisibly spreads.

Yet, only a small picture of fungi, primordial and still working for the greater good;
Saprotrophs[5] like bracket fungus, making humus from tough heartwood,
Tiny arbuscular mycorrhizas[3a], inside roots deliver information and nutrient,
Grasses and native herbs grow stronger, healthier and more drought tolerant.

One thousand seven hundred native orchid species could not exist,
their minute seeds need specialised fungi to germinate and to persist.
Native Heath plants depend on their own dedicated ericoid mycorrhizas,
remember the plant microbiome[4] and the vast carbon stores in the Microbial Necromass[1].

So next time you plant a tree, a shrub, a grass or a flowering herb,
Give thought to their fungal partners living in the soil you will disturb.
Though, now mostly lost through toil to make the land more arable,
Yet a crucial alliance for plants, if revegetation is to become ecologically sustainable.

Glossary:

1 **Microbial Necromass** – deep in the soil below the oxygen zone is the graveyard for dead fungi, bacteria and decomposed roots. It is the largest land-based carbon storage on the planet, and it can be increased by planting deep-rooted perennial plants.

2 **Mycelium** – the very fine network of interconnected fungal filaments consisting of millions of individual threads called hyphae.

3 **Mycorrhiza** – fungi that bond with living roots:

3a **Arbuscular Mycorrhiza** (Endomycorrhiza) – tiny tree shaped fungi that live inside roots and root-cells of many plants, particularly legumes, grasses and native herbs.

3b **Ectomycorrhiza** – mushroom and truffle forming fungi that promote healthy growth of trees and shrubs. These fungi form a 'sock' around roots and exchange nitrogen, phosphorus, and minerals for sugars and water provided by plants.

4 **Plant microbiome** – from germination, the seed has life supporting fungi and bacteria passed on from its parent's. Thes microbes lie dormant in the seed and spread through the roots, stem, branches and leaves as the plant grows.

5 **Saprotrophs** – fungi that break-down dead stuff, like wood, leaves, insects and animals, converting them into humus which enriches soil. It literally means 'rotten feeder'.

6 **Symbiosis** – a supportive relationship that benefits both fungi and plant.



Nargan's Bonnet (Mycena nargan).



Earthstar (Gaestrum triplex).



Just for fun take a look at this Boletes Mushroom that Ian and I with Milo the hound found on a walk behind our place in Macedon North Park – great colours and apparently edible which was inspiration for Ian's painting.

by Helen Scott





MISTLETOES

a keystone species

Our friend Steve Murphy of Recreating the Country, in his September blog encourages us this Spring to look up and search the surrounding trees for mistletoes while we comb our grasslands and grassy woodlands and roadsides for fantastic wildflowers, having made sure there are no trip hazards.

He has posted a definitive guide to the most common local mistletoes as you walk – ***Mistletoes of Victoria - their importance, ten common species, plus a propagation guide*** at https://www.recreatingthecountry.com.au/blog/mistletoes-of-victoria-their-importance-ten-species-described-plus-propagation

Quoted here are a few teasers:

The 97 species of mistletoe native to Australia are typically well tolerated by their hosts and provide an important source of food for two thirds of our bird species and 28 species of butterfly. They are a vital part of the web-of-life in our native ecosystems.

Ecologists are now using the 'One-Third Rule' – losing native mistletoe from an area will result in the bird population falling by up to one third.

An approximate measure of mistletoes in balance would be less than 20% of a healthy tree's leafy canopy.

Excessive mistletoe growth is more common on roadside trees, isolated paddock trees and planted street trees, because the usual checks and balances provided by a diverse woodland or forest ecology are missing.

The presence of mistletoes increases the number of insectivorous birds in an area, and insect numbers are then kept in check.



Fleshy Mistletoe (Amyema miraculosa) *Photo: M. Fagg.*



The ecology of Mistletoe in a single image – from floral bling to berry to bird to bottom to branch to bud burst to beautiful mistletoe.
Image: Surf Coast Nature Search.

Victoria's 10 most common species of mistletoes are all from the 'Showy Mistletoes' family, Loranthaceae, which includes the largest genus, *Amyema* and two other genera, *Muellerina* and *Lysiana.* These are photographed in the article with details of location, preferred hosts etc.

The blog article links to another from July called ***Mistletoes - magical, mysterious, misunderstood and quintessentially Australian***

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples appreciated mistletoe for its food and medicinal values.

In 1904, native mistletoes were declared a noxious weed and for 50 years we tried to exterminate them from our woodlands and forests. Thankfully, we didn't succeed, largely because of the dedicated work of a little Aussie battler, the tiny Mistletoebird and his career partner, the Painted Honeyeater.

There is lots more information in these articles, like how to propagate, the Regent Honeyeater project near Benalla, flora and fauna associations with mistletoe.

Helen Scott, with acknowledgements to Recreating the Country

Wesley Park — Newham's little gem

Jane Trikojus





There are three ancient Swamp Gums (*Eucalyptus ovata*) in Wesley Park, Newham, and two in the adjoining property, which all pre-date the land-clearing of the 1840s. Estimated to be approximately 300 years old, they have provided food and shelter for a large number of native birds, marsupials, fungi and insects over the years, and have witnessed the transition from a natural low-lying creek-scape to the present-day children's playground, lawn and fenced beds of indigenous plantings. The Park is maintained by Council and volunteers from the Newham and District Landcare Group.

When 'unsettlers' moved to the district in the late 1830s, the land was cleared and drained for potatoes and orchards; two or three cypress trees were planted and grew to a large size beside Jim Road before being cut down. A timber Wesleyan church was built in 1860. It was dismantled after many years of service and relocated to Macedon as an artist's studio.

The nearby Newham Mechanics Institute Hall was erected in 1905 and extended in 2009. It continues as a vibrant community hub.

Residents planted trees in 1984 and erected a bluestone monument and native garden beds were established and fenced. Until recently, when some Eucalypt trees were removed from roadsides and neighbouring properties, the park was on a koala track to Hanging Rock. There were annual sightings.

Echidnas visit and magpies nest in the tallest branches; Tawny frogmouth owls frequent the Blackwood wattles (*Acacia mellanoxolyn*) which is the most regenerative species. In addition, Kangaroo Apples (*Solanum laciniatum*), Hop Goodenia (*Goodenia ovata*), Flax Lily (*Dianella*), Clematis C. (*Microphylla*), Poa P. (*labillardierei*) and Bluebell (*Wahlenbergia sp*) are self-sowing.

N&DLG's bird monitoring songmeter was placed in the park for a week in March 2026 and detected 77 species of native birds including Yellow Tailed Black Cockatoos, King Parrots, nocturnal predators like Barn Owls, Barking Owls, Southern Boobook Owls and Tawny frogmouth.

Of interest is the analysis of the various Guilds. Hardly any aerial insectivore or bark foragers (except whitethroated treecreeper) were detected. Canopy foragers (e.g. Rufous whistler), carnivores (e.g. Grey shrikethrush), nectarivores (e.g. Yellow-faced honeyeater) and seed-eaters close to ground (e.g. Red-browed firetail) had up to 10 different species each.

Books to Read – *Editor's pick*

- ***The Secret Life of Wombats***

by James Woodford. Follows the pioneering research of wombats of Peter Nicholson, who as a schoolboy crawled into wombat burrows and studied them (Thankyou Jane).

- ***Tracks, Scats and other Traces***

by Barbara Triggs. Fabulous reference book to identify footprints and tracks, scats and pellets as well as feeding signs, markings and shelters of our native wildlife.