



President: Michael Peck
Vice President: Lisa Fowler

Secretary: Sarah Biggs
Treasurer: Michael Peck

Committee Meetings for 2021:

Next meeting: Friday December 3rd 7pm
Venue to be advised

ALG Noticeboard

Some photos from our members



President's Update



PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

After the horrors of the June storm and the aftermath, Spring is struggling to emerge. Hopefully, with a high-water table and warmer weather, we could be in for a good season.

Winter and Covid restrictions have prevented us from having member gatherings and events, however we have been able to hold some small project meetings at the Woodend Neighbourhood House. We gratefully acknowledge those involved in the management and operation of this excellent community facility.

Since the last newsletter we have been successful in securing some very significant grants totalling close to \$70,000 and we await news on another submission about to be announced.

The rabbit control grant program funded by the Victorian Rabbit Action Network has been disrupted by the storm event and we are seeking a time extension. If you are interested in this Program, you should contact Sarah Biggs at sarah.biggs1610@gmail.com

The 2021 Gorse Program funded by Victorian Gorse Taskforce is underway with on groundwork to take place between November and next April.

The first meeting of the participants in our 2021/22 Gorse Program was held at the Woodend Neighbourhood House on Saturday 18 September.

The meeting was preceded by a presentation given by Airpac Drone Solutions on gorse control using very sophisticated drone technology.



There are eleven landholders participating in this year's program and each will receive financial assistance from grant funding provided by the Victorian Gorse Taskforce. Some participants are considering forming a group to negotiate a cost-effective package deal for Airpac to spray their gorse infestations, please contact me for more information

The next three months is the ideal time to control gorse on your property.

The ALG has high pressure trailed spray units available for members to hire at the ridiculously low rate of \$30/day – for a 600lt unit contact Jane Holth on 0400191404 or for a 300lt unit contact me on 0428172993.

Elsewhere in this newsletter you can read about the Biolink Program which is a very important initiative for our Landcare group. As you will see this program addresses the core ALG objective of fostering a sustainable natural and agricultural environment in our district. I urge all members to get involved because it will encompass a wide range of activities and events relating to our unique terrain, flora and fauna at the headwater of the Campaspe River catchment.

As I mentioned in our last Newsletter I have had a few members express an interest in the ALG establishing a Farming Group. The idea is that this group would meet informally two or three times per year to share information about farming in this

environment. It would be very informal. The purpose would be to share experience and information while having a drink and a chat. Can I please have expressions of interest and I will arrange a meeting as soon as the Restrictions permit.

Finally this newsletter will reach you in time to put the Ashbourne Reserve Working BEE, at 9.30 am on Sunday 24 October, into your diary. This public Reserve, located where Ashbourne Road fords the Campaspe River, is a pristine riparian environment which our Landcare group has maintained for over two decades. Jane Holth has been primarily responsible for this great work. Jane has organised Martin Roberts from the Macedon Ranges Shire Council to give a brief introduction to this unique place and as always we will enjoy a special morning tea. All this and our gathering is permissible under the current Restrictions, but you must RSVP to Jane ASAP - 0400191404.

Michael Peck

President

mpeck2@telstra.com

0428172993





Bio-link Work Group -

Grants and Project News

As with all groups, the 2021 lockdowns have disrupted plans for getting on with ALG member connections and activities. Biolink work group has continued to develop our Masterplan, and plan for future projects, by meetings via zoom, emails and with one session at the Woodend Neighbourhood House.

The workshop held earlier in the year at Marsh Court Reserve discussed the ALG Masterplan vision.

Out of this workshop too, came various requests for assistance regarding suitable plant species for members to plant, interest in nest boxes, interest in combatting the intrusion of Indian minor birds within the district, assistance with master planning, offers to photographically document ALG project work to date. Covid lockdowns and restrictions have made it difficult to visit individual properties and in person provide the ongoing advice and assistance which we promised to give. Please don't despair - we plan to pick up all these individual requests and interest as soon as life returns to "normality".

The workshop also enabled us to write up two submissions for grant applications. Finally, DELWP has just lifted its embargo on the outcome of one of these grants. We have been successful in gaining funding for the Jocks Gully Biolink. And finally, we can now pass this excellent news onto all ALG members.

Just to refresh -

1. 2021 Community and Volunteer Action Grant - On ground Action and Stewardship.

Jocks Gully Biolink budget: \$49,485.00. As previously reported, this project proposes to create a 2km biolink running south along Jocks Gully, from Einsporns Road, continuing south beyond Ashbourne Road.

Landowner participants, Mark Duggan, Mark Iliff and Julian Myers have agreed to stock proof their sections of Jocks Gully by fencing off and planting their sections of Jocks gully, and each have now signed a Landholder Project Agreement with ALG. We very much appreciate their commitment to this project which arose from the February workshop, and MRSC Krista Patterson-Majoors' foresight and enthusiasm.

Whilst under embargo, we began the detailed planning for the project, and met with the 3 landowners' in-between lockdowns. A project tasks schedule is in place. Alan Denehey has plotted with the owners and documented all the stock proof fencing (including access) of the sites. This is now out to tender to fencing contractors. Plant orders have been placed with Western Plains Flora; and terrific "before" photos taken by Mark Lamble for recording project progress. Noxious weed spraying will commence soon, and fencing is to be completed by March 2022. Community events, and planting, will happen during Autumn 2022 - and it is here that wide ALG membership contribution and participation will be most important - to deliver a successful project, to learn and to have fun. A Smoking Ceremony is planned. Speakers have been invited to these community events, and students from Woodend Primary School and the Melbourne Grammar camp are on board; and morning and afternoon "smokos", and a barbeque. More on this later.

2. Victorian Landcare Grants, North Central CMA

Ashbourne Natural Connections -

submitted 16 June 2021. Again, the departmental embargo has withheld our submission's result - but we are hopeful! Project cost: \$14,373.20

A four pronged approach which seeks to inform, involve, educate ALG community about our master planning objectives. Includes production of a DL 6 page coloured brochure setting out Biolink objectives; development of a Living Document template to record all Biolink projects and activities; production of a short video to communicate to ALG members and wider

community benefits and examples of biodiversity projects; Ecological assessments of 12 landholder's smaller properties to highlight their natural attributes.

As soon as we hear, we will let the ALG group know, and particularly participants.

Nest Boxes

This MRSC initiative is on hold, due to MRSC storm reparations and covid restrictions. They have offered ALG 20 nest boxes for installation on member's properties.

MRSC Snow Gum project

Ian Temby is representing the Ashbourne Landcare Group and has attended the first meeting of local participants and authorities. This project is a MRSC initiative for which they have been given grant funding. The study will evaluate the Snow gum population with the Ranges, including health, density, location of these beautiful species. Snow gums are a sensitive indicator of climate change. An ecologist is be appointed to carry out field work.

We would love to hear from any member on any biodiversity issues in our district. And we hope for face to face time, next year, and real progress with projects.

Libby Peck

Convenor, Biolink work group

Group members: Alan Denehey, Ian Temby, Ralf Thesing, Linda Healy

26 September 2021

Powerful Owls – Donate to Birdlife Aust

Have you ever spotted a Powerful Owl? This majestic bird takes my breath away, with its striking yellow eyes and huge orange feet with extraordinary talons. It really is a picture of power.

But there's a sad, dark truth I must urgently tell you. Although impressive birds like the Powerful Owl are right at the top of the food chain and can appear strong and healthy from the outside,

they may be tragically suffering beneath the surface. They need your help.

Just as we are experiencing vulnerability to the COVID-19 pandemic, birds face ongoing threats to their survival. [Your donation today can help save them.](#)



[*Birds of prey, like this Powerful Owl, are important for healthy ecosystem balance. They provide natural pest control and keep populations of smaller carnivores in check.*](#)

Birds like diurnal raptors and owls are apex predators. But sadly, this means they're at high risk of secondary poisoning by lethal rodenticides when they feed on poisoned prey, like rats and mice.

Please don't let this become a silent spring for threatened birds. Without your help, we might not hear bird calls like the Powerful Owl's distinctive 'who-hoo' in the future.

Heartbreakingly, when birds like owls and raptors unknowingly feed on poisoned pests, the rodenticides can build up in their tissues, causing a slow and excruciating death through uncontrollable internal bleeding.

Second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs) contain highly toxic chemicals, like bromadiolone, which has been likened to

napalm. Yet Australia has little regulation on the use of SGARs, and these potent chemical cocktails can be purchased over the counter.

Because SGARs build up and can stay in body tissues for months or even years, and act more slowly than other rodenticides, rodents can consume a more-than-lethal amount and still be wandering around - like ticking timebombs. Predators like raptors and owls can feed on multiple poisoned rodents, ingesting a deadly dose of toxins themselves.



[Owls and raptors are also facing the impacts of ever-shrinking habitats, as humans destroy the homes they need to survive. Can you help save Powerful Owls, like this fluffy fledgling?](#)

Many birds, including Powerful Owls, rely on old-growth trees like large eucalypts to raise their families. **It takes at least 150 years for these trees to develop suitable nesting hollows - they can't be replaced overnight.** As critical trees are cut down to make way for city sprawl and development, birds like Powerful Owls struggle to find safe places to nest.

The dangerous combination of habitat destruction and a contaminated food chain threatens to wipe out entire generations of bird species.

[Will you act now to protect birds like our stunning raptors and owls?](#)

If you've already given, thank you so much. [Your urgent donation can help protect vital remaining nest trees, campaign for stricter regulation of insidious SGARs, and plan for life-giving green corridors in urban](#)

[areas.](#) You can give birds like the Powerful Owl safer environments to successfully hunt and raise their chicks.

[With your support, we can help raptors and owls survive into the future.](#) Recently, we've successfully campaigned to stop highly lethal bromadiolone being approved for widescale use in NSW. If it had gone ahead, the flow-on effects to our native wildlife, as well as pets and livestock, would have been horrific.

But, our birds are still at risk. With you by our side, the fight goes on. Your support today is critical to continue this work - if we stop, threatened birds will quickly hurtle towards extinction, with devastating consequences for our natural world.

Yours sincerely,



Paul Sullivan

Paul Sullivan, CEO, BirdLife Australia

Membership Fees

New members are always welcome – a way of belonging to a local community group, and together achieving more for our Landcare.

Annual subscription \$30.00 per household. Members can pay via direct bank transfer:

Account name Ashbourne Landcare Group Inc.

BSB 313 140 **Account no.** 19221339

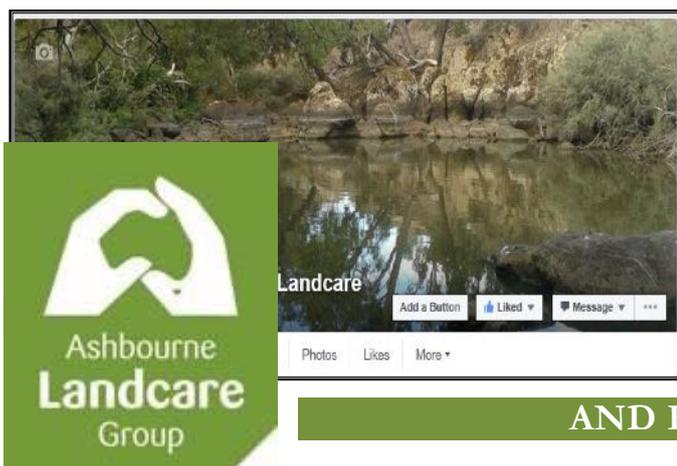
Go to www.ashbournelandcare.com and tap the **Join** button.

Don't forget to write MF (Member Fee) followed by your surname for description. Please notify the secretary of any change in your contact details.

ALG FACEBOOK PAGE

The ALG Facebook page is constantly being updated with interesting information, videos and photos.

To access ALG Facebook, type in Ashbourne Landcare Facebook in your Web browser.



ASHBOURNE LANDCARE DETAILS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

Ashbourne Landcare Group

PO Box 1013 Woodend, Vic. 3442

ABN 78088 581 851

Account name Ashbourne Landcare Group Inc.

BSB 313 140 **Account no.** 19221339

<http://ashbournelandcare.com>

Contacts

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