



Ashbourne Landcare Group

WINTER 2023

Committee Meetings for 2023

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: SUNDAY 16 JULY, 2PM, TYLDEN HALL

President: Matthew Grant-Allen
Vice President: Lisa Fowler

Secretary: Sarah Biggs
Treasurer: Millie Gellatly

President's Update

Winter is definitely upon us. I hope you are all keeping warm as our world outside turns white with the overnight frosts.

The last few months have seen a couple of projects finalised and others planned and waiting to start.

Again, we would like to extend a huge thank you to the Biolink Working Group who undertook and successfully executed the gigantic biolink project along Jock's Gully. This grant has now been acquitted.

As part of the Ashbourne Connections project, an interactive map has been produced and is available to view on the website. Please see the column below for more detail. In addition, the finishing touches are being put on a video that will highlight the work of the ALG and its various committees. Once finished this video will also be placed on the website and used as promotional material for the ALG. We are hoping we will be able to have the premier showing at the AGM.

The AGM will be held on Sunday 16 July from 2pm at Tylden Hall. The AGM will be followed by a seedball workshop, facilitated by Rebekah Ritchie. See the column below for more details. If you haven't already, please RSVP via the website. We will be discussing a number of key topics including ALG finances, our strategic goals and upcoming projects. Most importantly, we will be announcing the committee for 2023/2024.

It is with sadness that I announce that two of our committee members, Sarah Biggs and Millie Gellatly, will not be renominating for another term. I will formally thank them for their dedication and hard

work at the AGM. For now, however, this means the committee has vacancies for two vital roles: Secretary and Treasurer. If you are interested in joining the committee, please contact Sarah Biggs at sarah.biggs1610@gmail.com ASAP. Although nominations have closed, we are willing to chat to anyone who is interested.

Finally I'd like to update you on what projects we have been working on in the background. This year was one of consolidation, making sure the ongoing projects were finished and developing a strategic vision for the next few years.

We have applied for funding to help cover the following:

- New signage for gate/fences (awarded)
- Development of tree corridors for koala habitat (awaiting outcome)
- Building a greenhouse to propagate native seedlings (awaiting outcome)
- Administration costs involved with hosting and maintaining the website (awaiting outcome)

We are optimistic that we will receive funding this year and will continue to seek support to ensure we meet the aims of the ALG.

I hope to see you all at the AGM on Sunday 16 July.

Matthew Grant-Allen

President

COMING EVENTS

- **AGM Sunday 16 July from 2pm at Tylden Hall (followed by Seed Ball Workshop)**
- **Biosecurity Event 2-5pm Sunday 20 August (TBC) at Tylden Hall. Free entry. Afternoon tea provided**

BIOSECURITY EVENT UPDATE

ALG is planning another informative event for local landholders. Biosecurity is increasingly becoming a major concern for the agriculture sector as the risk of a major incident continues. Victorian agriculture is particularly vulnerable as the majority of many products are destined for export markets. An outbreak of exotic animal disease anywhere in Australia would mean export of any affected livestock and products would cease, devastating many regional communities. While Australia's border is the first line of defence, diseases and pests still need to make it to farms to become established.

Having a biosecurity plan for your property is a good first step. Not only does it help safeguard your animals and plants, it is an important part of protecting farmers and local communities.

ALG in cooperation with MRSC and Agriculture Victoria will host a series of events that will help landholders gain a better understanding of biosecurity.

Our first event is focused on animal diseases and will include:

- Requirements for keeping farm animals and obligations if there is an outbreak
- Basic farm hygiene practices – come clean/go clean
- Introduction to some of the significant diseases for cattle, sheep, chickens and horses and what to look out for
- Developing a biosecurity plan for your property

We are planning to have guest speakers from Ag Vic, a chance to ask questions and get advice, followed by afternoon tea. This will be a great opportunity for local landholders to learn (more) about biosecurity.

GET INVOLVED

As members of the Ashbourne Landcare Group, you are already dedicated to the care of our unique landscape. However, we invite you to extend your impact even further by inviting your neighbours and local people to become members too.

As a group, we aim to foster sustainability and promote ecologically sustainable land management practices in Ashbourne. We prioritise the restoration and maintenance of native habitat and the eradication of woody weeds to support native flora and fauna along the Campaspe and its slopes.

So, how can you encourage others to join? The easiest way is to direct them to the Join Us button on our Website:

<https://www.ashbournelandcare.com/join-us>.

But, if you want to go the extra mile, here are some other ideas:

- Attend local events and talk about the work that we do at Ashbourne Landcare Group. This will give you the opportunity to share your passion for environmental sustainability and invite others to get involved.
- Reach out to your neighbours directly. You can send them an email or letter that explains what the group does and how they can join. You can also invite them to attend one of our meetings or events.
- Use social media to spread the word. Share our website and encourage your friends to "Join Us" there!

By inviting your neighbours and local people to join the Ashbourne Landcare Group, you can help make a bigger impact in caring for our environment. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to sustainability!

ALG MEMBERSHIP ADDED VALUE

If you're a member of the Ashbourne Landcare Group and are planning to control Gorse on your property, don't forget that you have access to a range of resources through the group, including equipment rental.

To control Gorse effectively, you may need to use various methods, including cutting and pasting, spraying, or biological control. The Ashbourne Landcare Group has equipment available for rent, which can help make this task more manageable. Some of the equipment available includes:

1. **Spray bottles:** These are handheld bottles that can be used to apply herbicide to individual Gorse plants.
2. **Backpack sprayers:** A backpack sprayer is a useful tool for applying herbicides to a larger area of Gorse. It allows you to carry the herbicide on your back while walking and spraying at the same time.
3. **Weed control trailers:** The Ashbourne Landcare Group has a choice of two weed control trailers available for rent. These trailers are fitted with power sprayers, allowing you to spray a herbicide mixture directly onto the Gorse.

Renting equipment from the Ashbourne Landcare Group is a cost-effective and convenient way to control Gorse on your property. It also ensures that you're using the most appropriate equipment for the job and that you're following best practices when handling and applying herbicides.

By working together as a group and utilising the resources available to us, we can make a significant impact in eradicating Gorse from our local environment. So, if you're planning to tackle Gorse on your property, consider renting equipment through the Ashbourne Landcare Group. For more information on equipment rental, contact the group or check out our website.



Image: Herbicide painting setup and cordless lopper



Image: On waterway



Image: Using chainsaw lopper

GORSE ARTICLE

An effective way to control gorse and other woody weeds is using a bypass lopper in a 'cutting and stump-painting' operation. Cutting the gorse stem at ground level, then immediately applying herbicide to the wet, sappy surface is quick and efficient, requiring no special skills or machinery, however if you have more than a handful of bushes to deal with a cordless bypass lopper is invaluable. I've found it effective for working along the banks of a waterway where a controlled brushstroke of the herbicide mixture to the cut stump is safer than spraying with its inevitable overspray. Each cut removes the whole bush which can be tossed aside, revealing the next bushes to be treated. There's also no wondering "did I do this one?" The herbicide can be applied with a small paint brush, or piece of foam attached to handle, or a pressure spray bottle. I have a 1 litre bottle of diluted herbicide, which I then use to partly fill a small plastic bottle as high as the brush bristles of the small paint brush I use to apply the mixture on to the stump. This small bottle sits inside a larger plastic container, the space in between filled with screwed up newspaper. This guards against drips. Both of these bottles sit in a square plastic bucket for stability with a few more empty bottles to take up the spare space around them. I use some vegetable dye too so as not to lose track of what I've done, and it also serves as a warning of the herbicide spreading, or being flicked, to where it shouldn't be. In extensive infestations the cutting and stump-painting can cut access tracks to be used for subsequent spraying, or simply keep it in check until more serious measures are arranged. The bushes that have outgrown the jaws of the cordless bypass lopper are ideally cut with the chain-saw lopper. This cutting and stump painting process can be effective all year round whereas effective spraying is limited to when the plant is actively growing. It's a quiet activity that allows close observation of the patch of land you're working on. Birds of prey patrol above, butterflies and dragonflies encroach and veer away, and spiders and frogs retreat below. A couple of hours spent doing this hardly seems like work!



This beautiful Grey Shrike-thrush delighted us by nesting in a planter box, under our verandah, and close to our back door. Jennie Morrison – Ashbourne

DISTRICT AND PROJECT MAP

The ALG would like to say a BIG thank you to the Biolink Working Group on their extensive work on developing a map of the Ashbourne Landcare district as part of the recent Ashbourne Connections Grant. The map can be seen [here](#) on Ashbourne Landcare Group website and includes key activities the group has worked on over the years. This map was developed to help promote work completed by the group in the past but to also aid planning of future work within our district. It can also be used to support future grant applications and as evidence of the group's commitment in working towards our Strategic Plan. The current Ashbourne Landcare Group Strategic Plan can be seen [here](#).

ALG PAST EVENTS – JANUARY 2023

On a sunny Sunday afternoon in late January a few dozen members and friends gathered at Brendan and Kate's house to enjoy a delicious Bring-a-Plate afternoon tea in the garden. After this we listened to local ecologist Karl Just give a presentation on the ecological surveys he conducted for Ashbourne Landcare as part of our Biolinks project. The project was funded in 2021 by a grant the North Central Catchment Management Authority (NCCMA).

Karl explained that the flora and fauna assessments confirmed private lands across the Ashbourne district are of very high conservation significance.

Karl's slide show illustrated his very informative talk in which we learned that across the 12 properties he identified 306 separate plant species (220 indigenous, 86 introduced) and 59 bird species. 25 of the indigenous plant species had not been previously (officially) recorded within a 10 km radius in the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas. He also identified significant tree species such as threatened Yarra Gums, Snow Gums, as well as a rare Black Gum and regionally significant Prickfoot and Tussock Sedge. Karl prepared extremely detailed, illustrated individual property reports which will inform future revegetation and conservation efforts on the 12 properties, and across the whole Ashbourne landcare patch in general. These will be available to peruse at our upcoming AGM (I'll bring mine...Please bring yours along too!) Cheers Karl and the wonderful BioLink Work Group.

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



SEED BALL WORKSHOP

Following the 16 July AGM Rebekah Ritchie will be convening a workshop to illustrate the success of the ancient technique of making seed balls. Seeds of one or a variety of plant species are rolled into a ball of clay and then laid on top of the ground requiring no digging. The clay balls protect the seeds until there is enough rain to penetrate the balls and help germinate the seeds. This will be a fascinating session from both a practical and historical perspective.



ASHBOURNE LANDCARE DETAILS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

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