



Brisbane Ranges Landcare Group

Newsletter

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Visit our website: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~brlg/>



Number 38

December 2013

Brisbane Ranges Landcare Christmas Party!

Friday, 20th December, 2013 @ 1930h,
Staughton Vale Homestead
Staughton Vale Rd (near Murphy's Rd)

Free for Members and families!
(or \$25 to join if you are not a member yet)

James and Susan Bufton have kindly offered their beautiful historic homestead as the location for this year's Christmas Barbeque. The Landcare Group supplies all food: visitors are requested to bring their own drinks.

If you are a recent arrival to our district, the annual Christmas party is a great way to get to know about the local district and meet your friendly neighbours. Joining the Landcare group gives you access to lots of support: advice on maintaining and developing your property, funding for vermin and weed control (up to \$300 per member per year), but mostly a chance to be involved in the active life of your local community.

Living in a country community means you aren't very likely to meet new neighbours or bump into friends while walking the dog. On the other hand, there are several local organizations that do support a very active community life: Landcare is one, and a great way to really make yourself feel at home in our lovely locality. The Christmas Party is a chance to meet people from a wide range of backgrounds: experienced farmers committed to prudent land management, people who choose a country life-style for family reasons, busy folks who commute to work, in fact every one who chooses to live in our beautiful rural area.

For members the party is a great way to say "Merry Christmas" to friends and neighbours whom you may not have seen through the year, catch up on all the news and generally have a great time enjoying the festive season.

Community Environment Grants

Thanks to all those who proposed activities for the \$50,000 Community Environment Grant. The Executive is presently reviewing the proposals and commented on the range and quality of suggested activities. The Community Environment Grant will cover the costs of many projects. Additionally, the Executive are seeking to increase the available funding and have been encouraged by other organizations to request additional support so that we can increase the range of works undertaken..

Gorse Project

The BRLG is working with the Geelong and Moorabool Landcare networks to apply for assistance from the Victorian Gorse Taskforce and also involves the Geelong and Moorabool Councils and Parks Victoria. The plan is to target an area between Brisbane Road and Pringles Road in the south, extending approximately 2km East of the Brisbane Ranges. Your Landcare group is in discussion about obtaining funding to undertake weed control along the Stony Creek as part of this project.

Chilean Needle Grass

This weed, *Nassella neesiana*, is related to the Serrated Tussock we all know and love, has been spotted locally. Several infestations have been sprayed and controlled using Roundup (approx. 15ml per litre) followed up by regular inspections because the plant is very difficult to eradicate. It is extremely hardy and leaves thousands of persistent seeds.

It can be tricky to identify and looks very similar to several native grasses (the good guys!). If you want to reduce the collateral damage by accurately identifying the plant click on the following link

<http://www.weeds.org.au/cgi-bin/weedident.cgi?tpl=plant.tpl&ibra=all&card=G12>.

We may invite one specimen to attend the Christmas party secured in a stout plastic bag to restrict seeding!

Farm Plan course: FarmPlan 21

This course, targeted at properties larger than 40ha, will combine the latest computer mapping software with traditional whole farm planning and up to date information on climate, soils, pastures, vegetation and water delivered by expert speakers. Six weekly sessions will run from 1000-1500h every Thursday 13/2/14 to 20/3/14 at Ballan Hall. A fee is payable. Contact Heather.field@depi.vic.gov.au 0438 391 210 for information.

Grasslands Project extended

Several members were generously funded through this project in 2013. It fully funds various activities specified in a note from our Coordinator Elissa Ashton-Smith at the end of the email version of this newsletter. (if you receive the posted version, please contact the Secretary, details at the top of this Newsletter).

All landholders with areas of grassland or grassy woodland over 1 hectare (approximately 2.5 acres) in size, and of varying quality are encouraged to apply for funding through the program. Works that can be funded include **weed control, pest animal control, stock exclusion fencing and fuel reduction burns**. Funding is capped at a **maximum of \$10,000 per property**.

Please note that applications for funding close on December 20. Contact Rebecca Kootstra: rkootstra@geelongcity.vic.gov.au for further information

Grasslands Project Details

The City of Greater Geelong has received funding from the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority through the Commonwealth's Caring for Our Country Grant Program, to implement a grassland and grassy woodland protection program. This is part of a larger project which extends into other municipalities, including Melton and Hume.

This is the second year of the program which provides assistance to landholders to help protect and enhance threatened native grassland and grassy woodland species and communities on the Victorian Volcanic Plain. Last year a few member of the Brisbane Ranges Landcare Group were successful in securing funding for a range of land management activities.

All landholders with areas of grassland or grassy woodland over 1 hectare (approximately 2.5 acres) in size, and of varying quality are encouraged to apply for funding through the program. Works that can be funded include **weed control, pest animal control, stock exclusion fencing and fuel reduction burns**. Funding is capped at **a maximum of \$10,000 per property** You may be eligible for funding if your property is:

- within the Victorian Volcanic Plain region
- within the City of Greater Geelong in the Little River Catchment
- contains locally indigenous plants from a Plains Grassland or Plains Grassy Woodland ecosystems. As a guide these ecosystems can exist in areas that have not been improved for pasture or cropping and/or still contain surface rocks.

All applications will be considered in relation to the criteria below. While it is hoped that all eligible projects will be funded, funding is limited and projects will be selected based on their performance against the following selection criteria:

1. The *size and quality* of the *native grassland vegetation* being protected as a result of the works.
2. How well the vegetation *connects* to other remnant vegetation in the area.
3. The presence of *Victorian Rare Or Threatened* (VROT) species.
4. The level of *in-kind contribution* (time and/or monetary contribution) by the landholder.
5. The expected *long-term biodiversity outcomes* of the project (i.e. how well the project will improve habitat for native animals).

If you are interested in participating or would like to discuss the program further please contact Rebecca Kootstra on 5272 4897 or rkootstra@geelongcity.vic.gov.au by Friday 20th December 2013.

Areas of remnant grassland on a river/stream bank or escarpment are not eligible for this program but may be eligible for funding through Melbourne Waters Stream Frontage Program at www.melbournewater.com.au