

Mitta Valley Landcare Annual Report to Annual General Meeting 5 December 2021

Mitta Valley Landcare Group has achieved many great initiatives over the last 18 months despite the presence of covid 19 and the need to postpone meetings and activities.

In March this year, our Group facilitated the “Camping on Licenced Frontages” meeting at Eskdale which led to the establishment of a community task group which assisted many of our members and other landholders throughout Victoria to respond to the Victorian Government in a meaningful way. This community group, led by our Landcare President, successfully brought about some changes to their proposed regulations, and kept campers away from our licenced frontages in the Mitta Valley in the short term. The Victorian Farmers Federation is closely monitoring activities of the Victorian Government and is the official reference group to the Government on this issue.

In June 2021, Mitta Valley Landcare became incorporated, which will allow us to apply for grants under our own auspice in the future, rather than having to rely on other organisations to auspice our projects. This project was undertaken in conjunction with Soil Land Water.

We had a new logo designed by Laura Younger Designs and organised signage which will promote our organisation to existing and new members and other organisations. We have a very up to date web site and an active Facebook page where we can further advertise and promote our activities. This has led to an increase in membership from an all-time low membership of 20 people in 2019 to 47 members in 2021.

A large new sign has been erected at Tallandoon to promote our group to visitors to the area.

In June 2020, Klaus Bloeke resigned as our facilitator, and Simon Feillafe was appointed as the new Landcare Facilitator. Simon has made a concerted effort to visit other Landcare groups in the network and has encouraged interaction between groups as we work on joint projects.

Several successful grants have been applied for across our network of Landcare Groups including the “Doing it with Dung Project” which Mitta Valley Landcare Group are managing on behalf of 13 breeders. “The Healthy Rivers Project” Round 1 has been successful through the Mitta to Murray Landcare Network, which will see wetland and stream rehabilitation projects take place across the region, including 3 projects in the Mitta Valley. Mitta Valley Landcare Inc. has applied for Round 2 of Healthy Rivers Project which will see another 3 local projects completed if we are successful.

A two year Soil Extension Project in cooperation with Kiewa Valley Landcare Network will enable us to offer educational workshops and field days on soil health, regenerative and carbon farming. Kiewa Valley Landcare Network has invited us to participate in the Carbon Bash over the next year and anyone interested will find information on the display board.

A smaller Victorian Landcare Grant will offer subsidised soil tests to members with workshops to help landholders interpret the soil tests. This will set landholders up to participate in the carbon and soil health projects in 2022 if we are successful.

In September 2021, Mitta Valley Landcare delivered ACUP training at Eskdale which will help in controlling pest weeds and animals in our Valley. These workshops were very well attended, and we were able to run the courses in a covid safe way. We hope to continue working on wild dog control in the next 12 months with DELWP staff.

Over the last 12 months we have developed a great referral process with the Weed Eradication Program being run by DELWP, To date this season, over \$30,000 worth of English Broome spraying has occurred on public land and absentee landholders have been contacted and encouraged to spray their weeds.

Blackberry spraying will now commence on public land and members are encouraged to contact the department to report infestations. in public areas especially around the boundaries of private property.

We have continued to lead in Wild Deer Control with more landholders adopting the deer harvesting strategy in the last 12 months. We have also become members of the Victorian Deer Control Community Network and continue to participate in the Victorian Deer Strategy.

The Towong Shire Council has recently appointed an Agricultural Officer, who will work with Mitta Valley Landcare Group. and other farming groups to deliver educational programs across the Shire. The first of these workshops will be held at Noorongong on 14th December on Carbon farming. The Officer will work to the Towong Shire Agricultural Strategy.

We have recently been asked by DELWP to liaise with them on the revegetation of the new camp groups on the Mitta River and look forward to on going cooperation and liaise with them on a range of issues. It is reassuring that government departments see our group as an important referral group for decision making on a local level.

We have a representative on the Mitta Valley Bike Park Committee managed by Mitta valley Inc.

I would like to thank the Executive and Committee of Mitta Valley Landcare Inc. I look forward to working with the newly elected committee for the next 12 months as we work our way through the meaning of climate change, emissions reduction and carbon farming , and what this all means for us as a farming community in the beautiful Mitta Valley.

Robyn Scales

Vice President