



April to June 2008



Caring for our Country

Open Grants 2008/09 Announced

The federal government have just announced the first round of grants in their Caring for Our Country program. These Open Grants are a transitional component of the Australian Government's new \$2.25 billion Caring for our Country initiative. Applications are being sought now for funding in 2008-2009

These grants are primarily focused on three of the six priority areas identified and are for \$80,000 to \$400,000.

- To protect, enhance or restore Australia's biodiversity and natural icons
- To improve the water quality of our critical aquatic habitats
- To Achieve greater take up of sustainable farm practices

We will be applying for funds for projects to carry out across the region, strongly focusing on sustainable farm practices. We would welcome any ideas and suggestions. The government are looking for projects where there are partnerships between key stakeholders — for example, the community, landcare groups and industry. If you have any questions or suggestions please get in touch with Dene or Lizzie.

There is much more information available on the website <http://www.nrm.gov.au/funding/open.html>

Lottery West Funding secured for planting Broombush seedlings

The YYCMG have been fortunate enough to secure funding through Lottery West to cover the cost of planting 127,500 Broombush seedlings throughout the region over the coming weeks. So far our team of willing workers have planted 30,000 Melaleuca Hamata seedlings just South of Morawa. Over half of these have been planted by hand, so a big thanks to all involved. The remaining seedlings are due to be planted around the Jibberding area with the work starting next week.

Broombush is a native species, and the seed was all sourced locally. We are planting a mixture of Melaleuca Hamata (which is most suited to heavier soils) and Melaleuca Atroviridis (most suited to lighter soils).

The main commercial uses for Broombush are for brushwood fencing and there is also research going on into the potential of extracting oil from the leaves. Aside from this, they can provide excellent ground cover, helping prevent wind erosion and reducing groundwater recharge, they are also tolerant to dry and saline conditions.

The seedlings have been purchased through the "Brushwood Industry Development on Saline Land Project", which is funded by NACC, and has allowed us to purchase the seedlings at 4 cents each. The project has been running for three years in the NACC region, and Georgie Troup is the project manager. For more information about Broombush or this project, please contact Georgie Troup on 0408 675 787 or by email to georgie.troup@bigpond.com



University of WA undertake an Aquatic Survey in the Yarra Yarra Lakes

The fieldwork component for a survey of aquatic invertebrates in the Yarra Yarra catchment area has recently been completed. It involved 25 study sites - mostly small lakes and flooded claypans on the uncleared fringes of the main saltlake chain. Several environmental features, such as pH, salinity, oxidation potential, and water temperature, were measured on site; samples were collected for detailed chemical analyses; there were observations of vegetation - both aquatic, such as waterweeds and algae, and terrestrial, such as the surrounding samphire or shrubland. Finally, a short transect in each waterbody was swept with fine-mesh nets to retrieve invertebrate specimens for identification and counting. These specimens included crustaceans of many kinds (e.g. the shield shrimp shown below), and insects (e.g. mosquitoes, midges). Some of the more brackish waterbodies, topped up with relatively fresh water after recent rain, were teeming with plants and animals of many kinds. The bigger lakes, where the water and sediments tended to be more saline, contained a similarly large quantity of living



material, but much less variety. The fauna of some lakes was overwhelmingly dominated by a single species of brine shrimp. Some of the waterbodies immediately downstream from hypersaline and highly acidic drains appeared to contain little or no forms of life. The survey is being carried out by a University of Western Australia team led by Dr Andrew Storey, with funding from the WA Department of Water. The photo above shows netting in a flooded claypan near the southern end of Mongers Lake. Work is continuing now with sample sorting, identifications and analyses. A report, which will be available later in the year, will be a snapshot description of invertebrate fauna in Yarra Yarra lakes, and will outline possible impacts of agricultural activities such as groundwater discharge.



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LAND FOR WILDLIFE-celebrating a quarter of a million hectares

*On 30 August Land For Wildlife will be celebrating a milestone - 250 thousand (or quarter of a million) hectares of private land registered as *Land For Wildlife* sites and being managed primarily for nature conservation in the South-West agricultural area of Western Australia.*

*Land For Wildlife is a **voluntary nature conservation scheme** that was launched by the then Department of Conservation and Land Management (now the Department of Environment and Conservation) in 1997 with the aim of providing **accurate, voluntary, non-binding, on-site conservation advice** to landholders interested in managing their land more effectively for biodiversity conservation. Almost 2000 properties are now registered with the scheme throughout the South-West agricultural area of Western Australia. The remnant vegetation on these properties is precious, it represents what is left of the forests, woodlands, wetlands and heath that once made up an unbroken expanse in pre-European landscapes. These remnants hold the key to survival of many plant and animal species and complement Conservation Reserves on public land.*

Join Land for Wildlife at the "Hallswood Park" property of Pam Roster and Peter Phillips on Coalara Road, Dandaragan to celebrate a quarter of a million hectares of Land For Wildlife sites. There will be a morning bushwalk led by noted naturalist, Eric McCrum and Penny Hussey (Senior Project Officer, Land For Wildlife) followed by lunch and the opportunity to hear and talk to Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) and Northern Agricultural Catchment Council (NACC) staff about nature conservation programs in the northern wheatbelt. Hope to see you there!

For more information about the field day and /or the Land For Wildlife Scheme please contact: Fiona Falconer, Land For Wildlife Officer Box 34, Coorow, WA 6515

Ph: (08) 9952 1074, Fax: (08) 9952 1286, [Email: fiona.falconer@dec.wa.gov.au](mailto:fiona.falconer@dec.wa.gov.au)



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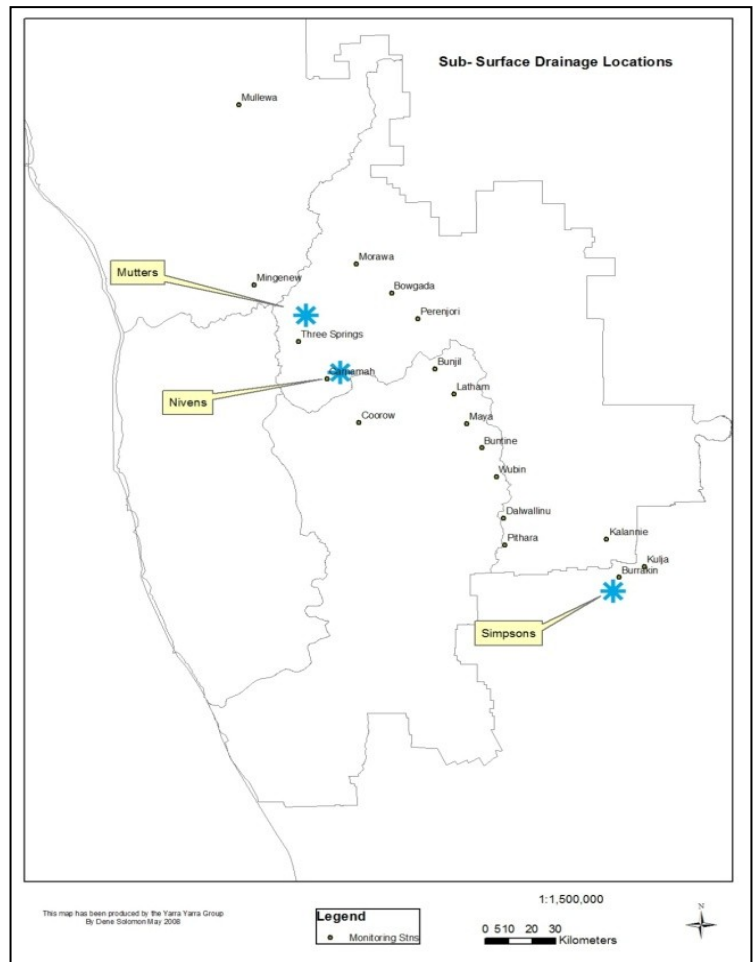
We currently have Eucalyptus Oil for sale that has been harvested from the Oil Mallees that are growing around the Yarra Yarra region. If you would like to purchase any oil, we sell it in all sizes up to 5Litres. For information on prices, contact kalanniedistillers@bigpond.com. The Eucalyptus Oil is also available through the Kalannie telecentre.

Completion of the Sub Surface Drainage Project

This project was carried out to establish if Sub surface drainage was feasible in the Northern Agricultural region. Three sites were chosen to carry out this engineering alternative, shown on the map to the right. The sites are all within the Yarra Yarra Catchment (Basin 618) and were chosen as the best options available to allow a positive outcome. I.e. to enable the lowering of the water table through infiltration into perforated pipe buried strategically for best possible effect.

They represent different scenarios over the region, but highlight 3 different landscapes that are common within the Northern Agricultural Region.

The project is now complete and monitoring will be downgraded to a minimum and left in the hands of the landholders. The project has not been a huge success with only the Three Springs project producing any reasonable volumes of water.



Project locations

Barry Thompson has recently taken on the position of CEO of the Yarra Yarra Catchment Regional Council (YYCRC). Barry will be a familiar face to a lot of you from a previous job as the CEO for the Shire of Perenjori. He returns from a recent job in Laverton after turning the mining industry around to now be in a buoyant position!!!!

The YYCRC has been set up to ensure the long term maintenance and governance of regional projects. Barry will coordinate and nurture current funding partnerships while fossicking out new opportunities to assist the group in its future operations.

He also keeps the council informed of the groups activities so they are able to make informed decisions. Welcome aboard Barry

If you would like to join our mailing list, please send an email to yycmg.dene@bbnet.com.au

