

VICTORIAN

# LANDCARE

Spring/Summer 2011 Issue 53

& CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT

## LANDCARE AWARDS FEATURE

---

Gecko CLaN pasture success

---

Cate Barham – a young achiever

---

Elizabeth Balderstone – top primary producer





# From the Minister

This issue is a testament to the achievers of Landcare – some named and others acknowledged for their behind-the-scenes work. Congratulations to the 24 winners, the highly commended entrants and all of the individuals and groups who were nominated in the 2011 State Landcare Awards.

It was a great pleasure for me to meet the award winners at the recent ceremony held at Government House in Melbourne, as the awards have special significance this year because we celebrate the 25th anniversary of Landcare in Victoria. I would like to personally commend all those volunteers who do so much for Landcare and the environment. Congratulations on your efforts and achievements in the past 25 years. I look forward to the next 25 years alongside future generations of Landcarers.

In this important milestone year, I was pleased to announce grants of \$600,000

to enable Landcare groups and networks throughout the state to mark this milestone. Each of Victoria's ten CMA regions received \$60,000 to distribute to groups for small projects. The Victorian Government is committed to supporting and resourcing Landcare to help achieve real differences to our environment and community.

I have been encouraging groups and networks to apply for one of the 60 Landcare facilitator positions that are part of the Government's \$12 million commitment over the next four years to support Landcare co-ordinators and help local community volunteers to protect and restore Victoria's environment.

The Growing Sustainable Communities Landcare conference at the MCG was another highlight event for me this year. It was a chance for Landcarers to mix with those who shared their common goals and focus, as well as giving us the chance to

reflect on the past and plan for the future. Thank you to the conference organisers, it was an amazing event.

Congratulations are also due to the winners of the Landcare photography competition whose beautiful images are featured in this issue. The photographs really demonstrate the diversity of Landcare.

As the next issue will come out in the new year, I'd like to wish you all a happy and safe holiday. I hope you have a great festive season and I'm certain Landcare 2012 will be just as successful as this year!

Ryan Smith  
Minister for Environment and  
Climate Change



The winners of the 2011 Victorian Landcare Awards with Minister for Environment and Climate Change Ryan Smith, and Governor Chernov (centre), at Government House.

# Australian Government Coastcare Award



CARING  
FOR  
OUR  
COUNTRY

## Friends of the Great South West Walk

For the last 30 years a dedicated band of volunteers has been maintaining a 250-kilometre walking track along the capes, bays and beaches of the south west coast.

According to Friends of the Great South West Walk Works Co-ordinator Gordon Page the group concentrates on reducing the effects of water runoff from the track, controlling weeds and general erosion works.

"We have a membership base of around 150 and there is an associated walking group with 40 members. We send a crew of volunteers out to the track three days a week – rain, hail or shine!

"I head out with a crew every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday and it's a great day. It's mainly retirees. We have people from all walks of life – a wool manager, a chippy, a lab technician – even a retired headmaster."

The coastal erosion along the walk is due to the extreme elements. The cliffs and dunes are continually being pounded by the relentless winds and surf coming off the Southern Ocean. The walking track reduces the impact of foot traffic by keeping walkers on a defined path. A range of water bars has also been installed to minimise gouging and to disperse the water over a broader area.

The group's technical abilities at controlling and mitigating coastal erosion have been recognised by local agencies. Their methods have been trialled and assessed over a 30-year period.

Friends of the Great South West Walk run regular guided walks along different sections of the track as well as one supported walk every year where walkers can tackle the whole 250-kilometre track.



*Friends of the Great South West Walk work with students from Wesley College spreading Coast Wattle to help stop erosion.*



Gordon says the group is motivated by a love of the bush and a sense that they are doing something important. He has walked the track eight times and is now a support driver for the two-week walk.

"Last year one of the walkers recorded 110 different species of birds along the track. People come from all over Australia and even overseas to do the walk. While the friends group maintains the track they are able to enjoy the environment without damaging it."

The friends group has forged many partnerships with the community. They have links with two Portland Rotary clubs, the Lions club, schools, field naturalists, Parks Victoria, DSE, the Point Danger Committee of Management, Birds Australia and many local Landcare groups. An association with Business and Community Links sees a local business donate a worker for a day.

The Friends of the Great South West Walk are a skilled group of volunteers who show outstanding dedication to protecting and conserving the environment of the south west coast.