



# Mid Murray Landcare SA

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## Activity Update February 2022

This activity update is for the month of February 2022. If you would like to be on our mailing list and receive this free update, please email Aimee Linke on the above email address or view on webpage. These projects are from varied sources of funding including Grassroots Grants, the Iron Grass Grassland Project, Healthy Rivers Grant plus other small grants and contract work.

## Meldanda

1. Managed the volunteers, camp bookings, provision of materials and equipment and all necessary administrations including invoicing and banking for Meldanda. Kept neighbors informed of any camp bookings.
2. Volunteers Wayne, Sheralee and Paul have been continuing with ongoing maintenance at Meldanda including irrigation repairs, watering, seed collection, weeding, spraying, and cleaning facilities for campers. Posted on social media the firepit the volunteers bricked up. Volunteers also fixed up the volleyball net and installed fixed posts.
3. Campers- over February we have had three different lots of campers, most seem to be travelers.
4. Volunteer Greg Kirk started making up a frame for the back shed so we can put a door in under the carport.
5. Met with Webpage designer John Kobes to start working on the booking site for Meldanda, this will help to reduce the need for Aimee to be on call each day to receive bookings. The site will also have frequently asked questions to also help alleviate the number of calls or messages to respond to. Had enquiries about wheelchair access for upcoming campers, something we could include in the FAQ page.
6. Cambrai School teachers held a staff meeting at Meldanda.

## Community Nursery

7. Volunteers Brenton, Cryss, David and Mick have been potting on *Callitris gracilis*, *Callistemon rugulosus* and *Acacia retinodes*.
8. Mick and Brenton added more sprinklers to the nursery to help cover some of the dry sections. Mick repaired the shade over the seating area in the nursery, which is great as it protects us from the hundreds of Corellas that are in the tree above our nursery, especially while we eat lunch.
9. Identified weed species for Mark Metcalf with the help of Alex Emmins, it was *Reseda luteola*, Cut-leaf mignonette.

10. Put together some plant orders for Sally G, Nikita Davidson, Tim McGowan, Sam Stewart for GRG project at Ngaut Ngaut
11. Sent Andrew Fairney sandy sites list of plants for the Mid Murray region and dug out suitable seed from our seed bank for a revegetation project he is doing in the area.

## Committee & other

12. Managed the office, volunteers and all necessary administrations including monthly payment of bills, reports, managing webpages and social media posts, scanned all receipts and reconciled monthly accounts in XERO. The back window on the ute decided to drop out and smashed, have chased up insurance and a replacement window.
13. Sent out agenda, minutes, correspondence list, and financial report for December and January to the Committee, we held our monthly meeting at the Cambrai Institute and were joined by new members Alex Emmins from Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board and Minindi Coote from Cambrai School Governing Council.
14. Both of our progress report for Grassroots Grants “Landcare in the Murray” and “Landcare in the Mallee” were approved and have sent off final invoices which have been paid. The next GRG have been announced, we will start working on those applications.
15. ‘Native Vegetation of the Murray Region’ has been reprinted and is available for sale for \$25 per copy including GST.
16. Spoke to Sarah Barrett who is the new chairperson for Landcare Association of SA, she was looking for some ideas instead of a conference, we spoke about a roadshow idea so each region could showcase a project.
17. Spoke to landholder Sally Neuman, a new landholder from Punyelroo, she had some grant queries.
18. Support letter for MMC ‘Submission to the Building Better Regions Fund Round 6 Community Investment Stream Mid Murray Climate Adaption Plan’
19. Support letter for MMC to support the proposal from Regional Councils seeking to address the Little Corella issue. Their proposal requests grant funding assistance through the Regional Growth Fund - Strategic Project
20. **Microbats** – Analysed the bat calls and provided a report to Paul Martin, he had four distinct species recorded, his property is near Meldanda.
21. Analysed the bat calls and provided a report to Mick Lowe, he had seven distinct species recorded, his property is near Black Hill.



22. **Carpet Pythons** – Was sent an email and photograph of a MD Carpet Python from Lee Kingma taken near Tumut NSW on 05/12/21, he believes they are rare in their area as ‘very few of the older farmers report having ever seen them’.
23. Sent Mel Burford a link to the Carpet Python project folder, she is interested in doing a project with the pythons



*Figure 1 Carpet Python NSW sighting*

24. **Seed production Areas - Rowena Danks** - Seed is currently being dried and processed for storing from collections made in January. Rowena will also be collecting seed again in early March.
25. Rowena has priced materials for the erection of netting at Whytes Well to protect fruit and seed from birds. This will be bought using a separate grant from the Landscapes Board to cover the costs and some time



**Regent Parrots** – Aimee Linke and Rowena attended Regent Parrot Recovery Team meeting in Berri, Rowena Danks was on Microsoft Teams (8/02/22).

**Project updates from meeting:**

**Whole of river nest survey:**

Chris Hedger gave an illustrated summary of the findings from the 2021 nest survey. Points of interest and comments from the survey included:

- a) The only nest sites upstream of Renmark are located around the Chowilla Creek/River junction
- b) Katarapko, Beldora, Pyap area has a range of nest sites, and many birds were seen in this area.
- c) All known nests near Cobdogla/Loch Luna were in drowned trees and are not occupied now.
- d) A small group of nests are limited to the area from Ball Island to Banrock Bend.
- e) Island Reach – Good Hope Landing constitutes another “group” of nests
- f) From Lock 2 downstream to Morgan has a range of nest sites.

- g) A complex arrangement of many sites where nesting appears to vary between these sites from one year to another. Camping and associated activities could influence the birds' selection of nest site each year.
- h) Downstream of Morgan there are several sites where Regents were reported near known nest sites. One new colony was located near Blanchetown.

**General Business:**

- i) Water in mallee areas – dams on Taylorville are to be closed. Regents have been utilizing water points in mallee areas for a long time. Should we be looking at getting water points established like Gluepot? Rebecca Arnold is investigating.
- j) The planting of tube stock along Cal Lal Road is to be facilitated by Trees for Life.
- k) Grace Hodder is planning a fine scale tracking project on Chowilla.
- l) Luke Ireland has been engaged to write a paper using the tracking information.

- 26. Chris hedger has had parrot boxes made that will be trialled as a nesting boxes on some drowned River red gums
- 27. Mid Murray Landcare now manages the Facebook Page for Regent Parrot Recovery Team.
- 28. Made edits to a Grassroots Grant that Mid Murray Landcare will be delivering titled 'Natural vs Horticultural – Regent Parrot use of the landscape'. This project will include the purchase of some GPS trackers, setting up some decoy crops and monitoring of the crop interactions.
- 29. Graham Frahn handed over some camera equipment from Riverland West Landcare that was used for the RP project. Volunteer Trevor Carmichael drew up an inventory of the equipment, I sent a copy to the chair of the RP Recovery Team.
- 30. **Regent Parrots - MD Healthy Rivers Grant** – Put together a Services Agreement for Rowena to deliver the revegetation component of the healthy rivers project which is due to be completed before the end of June. The landholders will be targeted from the mapping work that came out of the RP river census.
- 31. The maps and spreadsheet of landholders was put together by Chris Hedger and has been sent to Rowena to get started on the project.



*Figure 2 Regent Parrot nest box*

## River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve

- 32. The RM Dark Reserve Committee meetings were held via Zoom in February, Aimee took the minutes
- 33. Aimee sent the light pollution brochure pdf to John Kobes to add to the website
- 34. Chris had a meeting with Dawn Stewart at Council re Dark Sky arts festival funding
- 35. Chris had a Zoom meeting with Peter Graves & David Kay (Design Faculty, Melbourne) re Torrens University internships, application successful, first to start in Term 2
- 36. Chris was a guest panellist for International Space University (Overcrowding of the Night Sky), recording available online
- 37. Chris had a 70th Birthday tour with Kelly Kuhn; Dark Side of the Moon wine developed by

Swan Reach Hotel

- 38. Chris had a meeting with Costa Bros, Henry Elebra (lighting expert) and Martin Lewicki
- 39. Chris had a Yalumba tour with Kelly Kuhn (hosting visiting UK staff)
- 40. 2021 Meldanda darkness readings now collated (Andrew Cool & David Bennett)
- 41. Chris was approached from the ASSA President & the Elder Conservatorium about a possible music in the dark project.

## Irongrass Grasslands Project

- 42. **Field Days** – Prepared a Field Days flyer for upcoming grassland field days presented by Anne Brown, and Nicola Barnes with landholders on the trials.
- 43. Flyers have been promoted through the Landscape Board, LASA, BIGG, Mid Murray Landcare email list and FB Page.
- 44. Spoke to the Landscapes Board regarding any COVID restrictions for holding these events, Wendy Stubbs sent through some information which I shared with Anne Brown.
- 45. **SPA** – Cryss and Sheralee have been collecting seed from *Crysocephalum apiculatum*, *Whalenbergia sp.* *Goodenia pinnatifida*, *Glycine rubiginosa*, *Arthropodium fimbriatum*
- 46. **Wicking bed trial** – Brenton, Aimee and Royce topped up the water reservoir, it took a full barrel of water, 200 litres, we watered the plants as well (22/02/22). They seem to need to be filled up in these dry conditions probably once a month.

## NATIVE GRASSLAND PROJECT

### Presenting two Field Days

#### Field Day 1

#### Grassland Seeding Sites and Grazing Management Trials.

Come along and see these exciting trials. Meet the landowners and project team to discuss the different grassland revegetation and grazing methods being implemented on these two properties.

**30 March 2022, Wednesday**  
**Terowie and Ullooloo**  
**3-6pm BBQ Dinner Included**  
[register here for this event](#)



#### Field Day 2

#### Grassland Seeding Sites and Grazing Management Trials.

Come along and see this trial site. This is your opportunity to discuss the value of irongrass grasslands with the land owners and learn how they manage these systems.

**31 March 2022, Thursday**  
**Truro**  
**4-6pm BBQ Dinner Included**  
[register here for this event](#)

For more information and location maps contact Anne Brown 0409 684 312  
annebrown@westnet.com.au or Aimee Linke 0427 590 344

"Have you recently spotted a plant you don't recognise? Bring a photo with you and we'll help you identify it!"



The project is supported by the Murrumbidgee and Riverland Landscape Board and the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare program and the landscape levies.

Figure 3 Field Day Flyer



Figure 4 Topping up wicking beds

## Western Pygmy Possums

47. Sent an endoscope camera up to Morgan for Lyn Raggett to inspect her possum boxes at Pelican Point, she had no sign of activity.
48. Rowena and Aimee went through all the box data and Rowena fixed up the coordinates that were in correct. We now have some accurate mapping data which is great.
49. Sent out an email to project participants to update them on the project and see if anyone wanted to borrow an endoscope camera.
50. Tim Pascoe from Gluepot inspected the boxes they have and there was a beetle, cricket and scats, scats which look like microbat or wp possum, gecko that was identified as Tree Dtella (*Gehyra Versicolor*) and a spider (very large and hairy). Posted about this on social media
51. Don Lester and Aimee Linke visited Brenton Mosey at Tothill Ranges and inspected his 15 boxes, there were 2 geckos and their scats, spiders, and cockroaches (18/02/22). Posted about this on social media on the WPP Page.
52. Don Lester and Aimee Linke visited John Neals property where the Lavender Federation Trail meets the Heysen Trail. We inspected the nine boxes and found in four boxes loads of earwigs, a big hairy spider, cockroaches, and scats which we collected for future genetics testing. Posted about this on social media on the WPP Page.
53. Rowena organised for an endoscope camera to be collected for Donna Prusa. Donna near Strathalbyn and they have found a drowned WPP before in a bucket.
54. John Bouilly borrowed an Endoscope camera, he has property out near Bunday, there were no signs of WPP. John also borrowed some remote cameras and a bat detector.
55. Bec Gould saw two WPP in an old, abandoned letter box at Meningie, we shared the images on the WPP Social Media page.
56. Linda Boucher borrowed an endoscope camera to check her possum boxes at Cooltong and had no possums.
57. Have started organising the April Waterhouse workshop that will be held at Gluepot. This will be the last box making workshop we will be doing for the possums.



Figure 5 WPP in letterbox photo Bec Gould



Figure 6 Don Lester inspecting WPP box in the Tothill Ranges