



Farewell to a Friend of the Grasslands

The NRM community was shocked and saddened to learn of the tragic loss of Don Fortescue in a workplace accident on November 17.

Many of you would know Don as the owner/manager of Goldfields Weed Management, based in Ballarat.

Don held a wealth of knowledge and experience in conservation, in particular the native grasslands of the VVP. He had a genuine passion for doing as much as he could to protect and conserve these precious ecosystems.

Don, and the whole team at Goldfields Weed Management, have achieved a power of work on the Linear Reserves Project over the years. On behalf of DELWP and the Linear Reserve Project, I'd like to express my condolences to everyone who had the privilege of knowing and working alongside Don.

Collector App - A smarter way of reporting

This year we introduced the use of "Collector" to record weed control locations, photos and details. We had already been using this platform to collect other Linear Reserves project data and thought it would be a quicker and simpler way for weed control contractors to submit their reports and photos.

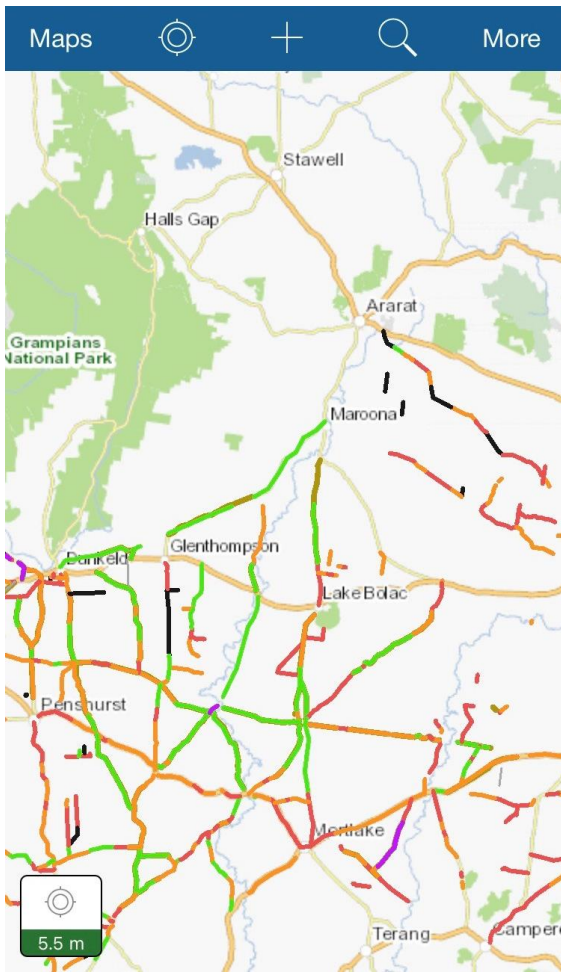
The Collector page has been set up with all the relevant fields for the user to easily save the location and details of weed control whilst in the field.

The new and improved paper-less system allows us to access the records instantly. We can also view photos and comments of previous reports/records whilst in the field and compare changes over time.

Weed control spatial data is uploaded to the VVP Planning Portal each financial year to display areas treated over multiple years of the project.



Photo of linear reserve weed control, taken by the contractor and stored as a Collector record.



Example of Collector App map view.

cultural burn at Blacks Creek Nature Conservation Reserve near Skipton, in partnership with Glenelg Hopkins CMA, Parks Victoria and Forest Fire Management Vic. (Planning a preparations are complete and the burn has been rescheduled for the coming Autumn due to unseasonably wet weather.)

- Initial and follow up surveys and mapping of “New Invaders” in the Golden Plains Shire – Chilean Needle Grass and Serrated Tussock.



Spraying Serrated Tussock

Biodiversity Response Planning 1 Update

The Biodiversity Response Planning (BRP1) project – “Addressing key threats to Native Grassland Linear Reserves on the Victorian Volcanic Plains” has almost been completed.

The project commenced in the 2018-19 financial year, with objectives including weed control, burning and weed mapping, in partnership with Golden Plains Shire and Glenelg Hopkins CMA.

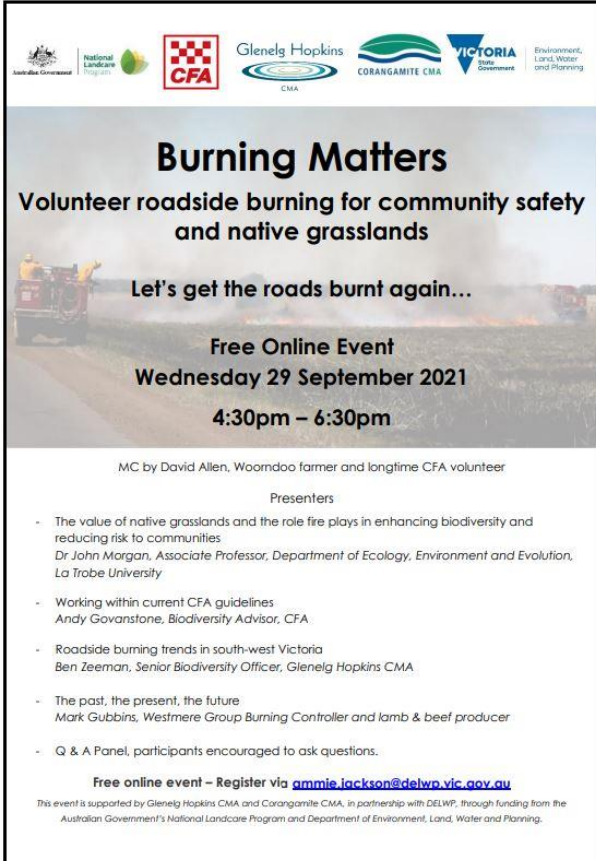
The project achievements include –

- 1,210ha of weed control in native grasslands on Council and Department of Transport managed roads
- Supporting CFA with over 300ha of roadside burning on priority grasslands sites
- Supporting Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (WTOAC) to lead a



High quality grasslands roadside burnt by the CFA.

“Burning Matters” – Roadside Burning and Native Grasslands forum



The poster features logos for the Australian Government, National Landcare Program, CFA, Glenelg Hopkins CMA, Corangamite CMA, and the Victorian Government. The main text reads: "Burning Matters: Volunteer roadside burning for community safety and native grasslands. Let's get the roads burnt again... Free Online Event Wednesday 29 September 2021 4:30pm – 6:30pm". It lists presenters: David Allen (MC), Dr John Morgan, Andy Govanstone, Ben Zeeman, and Mark Gubbins. Registration is via ammie.jackson@delwp.vic.gov.au. A small note at the bottom states: "This event is supported by Glenelg Hopkins CMA and Corangamite CMA, in partnership with DELWP, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program and Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning."

The online forum “Burning Matters” was held in September, with over 100 participants joining for the live event and many more accessing the event recording.

The working group, with representatives from DELWP, CFA, Glenelg Hopkins CMA and Corangamite CMA, have been discussing issues around declining roadside burning and ways to support CFA brigades to continue burning roads with native grassland values.

The forum featured presentations from CFA representatives and grassland experts – Andy Govanstone, Mark Gubbins, John Morgan and Ben Zeeman, to provide a range of views on the topic.

Guest presenter Prof. John Morgan said, "The great work that volunteer brigades do each summer, burning for fire protection, actually allows these grasslands to retain their natural values. As a result, an amazing array of little plants and animals now survive on roadsides and, for some, it's the only place we now find them".

You can access the event recording here - <https://youtu.be/fKyGs2GX9Sk>

Grassland Field Days on the VVP

There haven't been many field days or in-person events this year, but in November I was lucky enough to attend two!

November is usually packed with outings and events and it's the best time to view the grasslands in flower. Usually the sun is shining, but this spring it's been noticeably wetter and cooler than usual, and it was strange to be looking at wildflowers with an umbrella and wet weather gear.



Woorndoo Common

On November 12, the Woorndoo Chatsworth Landcare Group (WCLG) organised an event which included a visit to the Woorndoo Common, the Woorndoo Cemetery and the grassland restoration site at Woorndoo-Streatham Road. John Delpratt talked about the restoration work being coordinated by WCLG, which is soon to be expanded to the west end of Woorndoo-Dundonnell Road.

We heard from guest speakers, Stuart McCallum and Elia Pirtle from the VVP Biosphere. This was a great opportunity to learn more about what a “biosphere” is, and the process involved in having the VVP Biosphere declared under the United Nation's Biosphere Program.

The aim is to build a unified approach to conserving biodiversity, whilst incorporating sustainable social and economic opportunities for local communities. Participants joined in on the discussion on what they think the aspirations of such a group should be. Some of the ideas thrown into the mix included regenerative agriculture, grassland tourism, traditional land management practices, grassland restoration and large-scale seed production.

More info can be found here- [Home - Victorian Volcanic Plain Biosphere Inc. \(vvpb.com.au\)](http://Home - Victorian Volcanic Plain Biosphere Inc. (vvpb.com.au))



Bulbine Lilies at Woorndoo Cemetery



Fairies Aprons



Featherheads



John Morgan pointing out the "inch flora"

On Saturday November 13, the GHCMA held a field day at Penshurst-Dunkeld Road to explain the grassland restoration project that they have undertaken in partnership with Regional Roads Victoria and La Trobe University.

The aim of this restoration project is to connect high quality remnants with a more simplistic grassland structure, so that it can be replicated on a large-scale. To do this, the site is assessed to identify degraded patches within a grassland site, the patch is then scalped of topsoil and sprayed to control introduced species. When favourable weather conditions allow, the area is sown with a simplistic mix of native grassland seed.

Professor John Morgan guided the participants through a section of natural high-quality grassland to demonstrate what a restored area may look like in future.



Aggie Stevenson explains the restoration project on the Penshurst-Dunkeld Road

South West Biodiversity Forums

DELWP's Natural Environment Program team organises a South West Biodiversity Forum roughly every two years. This year we brought two forums to you with an online format.

The sessions for Eastern Maar Country and Gunditj Mirring Country were split over two days with presentations on diverse biodiversity projects relevant to each landscape.

Presentations included VVP projects, threatened species projects, wildlife monitoring and research, affects of bushfire and planned burning, plastic pollution on beaches and much more! Participants also got to hear from representatives of Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation and Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation.

The sessions were well attended, and although we didn't get to network face to face, there was a lot contact sharing and discussion about further detailed catchups offline. This is why its so important to hear about other work that's happening across the region!

For those who didn't get a chance to tune in live, the recordings are available to view and share on the SWIFFT website.

[SWIFFT website \(click here\)](#)

[Session 1, Gunditj Mirring Country](#)

[Session 2 Eastern Maar Country](#)



SWIFFT website

Merry Christmas. See you next year!

Wishing you all a safe and relaxing break over the holiday season. I hope you have some time to enjoy some amazing food, great company and the wonders of the natural world around us.



Nodding Greenhood



Running Postman