



Welcome to another edition of Linear Reserves Grasslands News.

This season has seen significantly higher than average rainfall and emergency flood events across the region as a result of the La Nina weather pattern.

While increased moisture will benefit some species and habitats, it will have negative impacts on others. Our roadside weed control program has been delayed due to sites being too wet and the number of appropriate spraying days significantly reduced. Higher moisture and nutrient levels favour the introduced species. We are yet to see what impact this wet spell will have on CFA planned burn programs across native grassland sites.

Spring events in the Grasslands

There were some fantastic opportunities to get outside and get inspired about native grasslands recently. I attended the Victorian Volcanic Plains (VVP) bus tour by the GHCMA which showcased some stunning examples of native grasslands and seasonal herbaceous wetlands on private land.

Aggie Stevenson from GHCMA and Professor John Morgan from LaTrobe University led the tour and discussions around grassland/wetland management, monitoring, burning, restoration and weed control. It was a highlight to see the Button Wrinklewort planting/seed orchard.



Aggie from GHCMA with tour attendees at a grassland property near Chepstowe.

Another grassland bus tour was organised by CFA and Southern Grampians Shire to discuss the importance and challenges around planned roadside burning. The tour stopped at some high-quality grassland remnants and GHCMA's grassland restoration site at Penshurst Dunkeld Road, and highlighted the work achieved by the Linear Reserves Project in partnership with a wide range of agencies (including DEECA, CFA, Councils, DoT and CMA's).

More details can be seen here - [Dunkeld planned burn bus tour | CFA News & Media](#)



Australian Government



Energy,
Environment
and Climate Action

Threatened Flora surveys on the VVP

The Natural Temperate Grassland community supports a wide range of native flora and fauna, many of which are listed as rare and threatened under State and Commonwealth government legislation.

And while its mostly a case of further decline for rare species with diminishing habitats, there are some good news stories to come out of the threatened flora project this season.

The Pretty Hill Leek-orchid is a critically endangered species, occurring at only one known site near Orford. DEECA have been working with Parks Victoria and volunteers to monitor the orchid and manage its habitat and threats.

In spring, DEECA and representatives from the Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation inspected the results of an Autumn ecological burn and carried out the annual orchid monitoring. A record number of 95 Pretty Hill Leek-orchid plants were counted, this is the highest number since monitoring commenced in 2006. The previous year's count was just 42 plants.

The vegetation has responded particularly well to the ecological burn in Autumn and high rainfall, but so too have the introduced plants. Follow up weed control has been mapped and planned for the site.



Pretty Hill Leek-orchid, *Prasophyllum anticum*.

Annual monitoring of the Basalt Rustyhood, *Pterostylis basaltica* continued with help from Woorndoo Chatsworth Landcare Group volunteers, population count numbers were slightly higher than previous years. The Linear

Reserves Project has directed weed control on this site for several years.

Presence/ absence surveys were conducted for several other significant VVP flora species including Murnong *Microseris walteri*, Clover Glycine *Glycine latrobeana* and *Ptilotus erubescens*



Clover Glycine, *Glycine latrobeana*



Hairy Tails, *Ptilotus erubescens*

Revisiting Roadside Rapid Assessments

In the spring and summer of 2018/19, our team set out to create a spatial layer of conservation value mapping for the linear reserves.

These were designed to be rapid, rather than detailed assessments and ranked roadside reserves as low, medium or high value and provided us with some valuable information on which areas to include in our project, and which were unsuitable.

Fast forward to this spring/summer period and again with help from our friends at the Corangamite and Glenelg Hopkins CMA's, we are reassessing the sites to determine the degree of change over time. And while it's been enjoyable to see our high-quality sites during their peak flowering period, it's been disheartening to see the decline in other sites that haven't received any burning or weed management. The high rainfall this season has promoted the growth of many species and increased biomass.

We'll continue to work closely with CFA to identify roads that are a priority for burning and support brigades to achieve them.



An example of a high conservation value themeda grassland we assessed. This roadside has had regular burning and weed control and, as a result, is low in biomass and relatively weed-free.

Woorndoo Grassland Surveys

The Woorndoo Chatsworth Landcare Group (WCLG) have been collecting botanical data on a range of grassland sites for several years. This is valuable information for that will form a comprehensive species list for several linear reserves in the Woorndoo region.

This spring season WCLG coordinated a number of community field days to conduct flora surveys. Events were held early and late in the season to ensure a wide variety of species could be observed at different flowering times. Each day was well attended, and we were fortunate to have the considerable expertise of botanists from the National Herbarium of Victoria - Neville Walsh, Keith McDougall, Graham Lorimer and Andre Messina.

These surveys were made possible by the amazing work of WCLG and Herbarium volunteers and funding from a GHGMA Landcare Victoria grant.

Flora records have been entered into iNaturalist and the VBA.



Grassland flora survey on Woorndoo-Streatham Rd in September.



Billy Buttons, *Craspedia basaltica*.



Early Nancy, *Wurmbea dioica*.



Grassland Sundew, *Drosera hookeri*



Murnong, *Microseris walteri*

Spiny Rice Flower – Draft Recovery Plan

The draft National Spiny Rice-flower (*Pimelea spinescens subsp. spinescens*) Recovery Plan is now open for public comment.

The plan has been prepared by the Australian Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, in consultation with the Recovery. The public comment period closes on 11 February 2023.

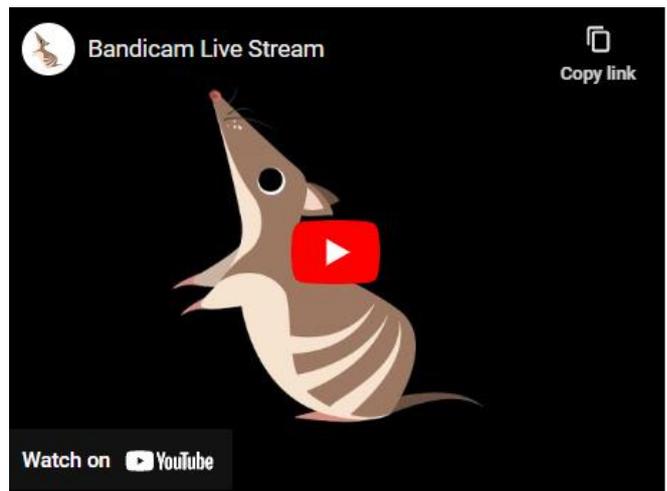
For all the details and document links, visit - [Draft National Recovery Plan for the Spiny Rice-flower \(Pimelea spinescens subspecies spinescens\) - DCCEEW](#)

Bandicam is LIVE!

You may have heard of “Platycam”, now there’s Bandicam!

The world’s first livestream of Eastern Barred Bandicoots is now live online, streaming from Gunditjmarra Country in Hamilton where the recovery of the species began more than 30 years ago.

For details head to - www.bandicam.com.au



Something went missing:

CSIRO published a paper in September this year titled “Something went missing: cessation of Traditional Owner land management and rapid mammalian population collapses in the semi-arid region of the Murray–Darling Basin, southeastern Australia”

This paper explores the ideas that with the cessation of Traditional Owner land management (TOLM), including patch burning of grasslands, came the rapid decline of biodiversity.

While native mammal population collapses have been blamed on the introduction of exotic predators and grazers, it fails to take into account the decline in habitat that was taking place with the interruption of TOLM.

A productivity pulse (of fungi, tubers, invertebrates, mammals) occurs one to five years post-fire. Without fire, we not only have an increased fire risk, but we also see a senescence in productivity.

TOLM used fire repeatedly to create this productivity pulse in grassland ecosystems as a means of providing predictable food resources.

Read the full paper here - [CSIRO PUBLISHING | Proceedings of the Royal Society of Victoria](#)

How flower-filled grasslands are finding their way into Melbourne's CBD

Melbourne University researcher, Katherine Horsfall established an experiment in 2020 to determine the success of seeding grassland species into an assortment of different pre-treatments in garden beds in Parkville.

All the plantings are faring well and flowing, but the experiment found that the treatment using an application of free-draining, nutrient-poor sharp sand worked best.

Horsfall and others are hoping that similar grassland plantings could be replicated throughout Melbourne instead of the more common-place introduced or monoculture landscaped plantings. The potential to utilise waste sub-soils or recycled crushed concrete might make urban grassland plantings more sustainable.



Native Grassland planting just 3km from the CBD.

See the full article here - [Katherine Horsfall's Parkville experiment: grasslands find their way into CBD \(theage.com.au\)](https://theage.com.au)

Corangamite's VVP news

Get the latest news from the Corangamite CMA's Summer edition of "Plains Facts".

Featuring –

- Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation
- Friends of the Forgotten Woodlands
- The Golden Sun Moth

And more.....

[PLAINFACTS-NEWSLETTER_summer.pdf \(ccma.vic.gov.au\)](https://ccma.vic.gov.au)

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