



# 2018 NATIONAL LANDCARE AWARDS

11 October  
Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre

**Nominee: Woody Yaloak Catchment Group, VIC**

**Category: Australian Government Excellence in Sustainable Farm Practices Award**

Over the last 25 years, the Woody Yaloak Catchment Group has worked to improve vegetation, soil condition, groundcover management and waterway health across 120,000 hectares. The Group began in 1993, combatting growing land salinity and wind erosion by increasing areas under perennial pasture. With the Group's support, more than 80 landholders established 3,500 hectares of perennial pasture, with a further 35,000 hectares added in the next decade. 5,600 hectares of saline land were treated and fenced to manage grazing.

Traditional Landcare activities, such as revegetation, weed control, and waterway enhancement, have also been undertaken. Since its inception, the Group has supported the planting of 960,000 trees and 694 kilometres of fencing, and thousands of hours have been spent on erosion and rabbit control.

Every project has been mapped and recorded, some with time-lapse images. In partnership with Federation University and the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority, the Group developed geographic information system recording technology that has given landholders paddock-specific information about soil condition since 1993, using data collected from roughly 1400 soil tests conducted over that period. Trends connected to pH, fertility and organic carbon levels have been recognised and shared, and minimal or zero-till farming systems have been encouraged.

In addition to its ongoing relationship with Federation University's Centre for eResearch and Digital Innovation (CeRDI), the Group has also established a partnership with PrecisionAg. This collaboration has helped to clarify the economic and productivity benefits of highly targeted fertiliser, lime and gypsum use.

The Group has also overseen two outcome audits, first in 2003 and again in 2012, demonstrating the improvements in farm productivity and land condition that have occurred as a result of sustainable techniques. More recently the Group has conducted local testing of alternative fertiliser and biological products and hosted nine lime trials in partnership with Southern Farming Systems. The Group has also spearheaded a successful 'Women on Farms' Program, helping women in farming to increase their knowledge of soils, climate, cropping, and livestock decision-making.

To test the potential of cover cropping to improve soil health, the Group has sponsored study tours and trials across catchment properties. Always eager to share their knowledge, members of the Group have hosted 158 tours as well as 114 information sessions over the last quarter-century and presented at 70 events. The Group has devoted almost a third of the \$11 million it has expended on projects since 1993 to information sessions, local trials, and support for individuals to implement sustainable practices.

This program is supported by Landcare Australia and the National Landcare Network, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.





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Landcare is a grassroots movement that harnesses individuals and groups to protect, restore and sustainably manage Australia's natural environment and its productivity. Groups that fall under the Landcare umbrella work on a diverse range of environmental projects and include farmers embracing sustainable farm management and any community group that partakes in volunteer environmental activities. To find out how you can become a Landcare volunteer and for full details on all 2018 National Landcare finalists, visit [www.landcareaustralia.org.au](http://www.landcareaustralia.org.au)

## Ends

For further information, photographs or interviews contact:

Naomi Straw  
Landcare Australia  
[naomi.straw@landcareaustralia.com.au](mailto:naomi.straw@landcareaustralia.com.au)  
02 8440 8823

Cam Nicholson  
Woody Yaloak Catchment Group  
[nicon@pipeline.com.au](mailto:nicon@pipeline.com.au)  
0417 311 098

## Web Summary

Over the last 25 years, the Woody Yaloak Catchment Group has worked to improve vegetation, soil condition, groundcover management and waterway health across 120,000 hectares. The Group began in 1993, combatting growing land salinity and wind erosion by increasing areas under perennial pasture. Since then 5,600 hectares of saline land has been treated and fenced to manage grazing, 960,000 trees have been planted, and thousands of hours have been spent on erosion and rabbit control. The Group has conducted testing of alternative fertiliser and biological products and hosted nine lime trials in partnership with Southern Farming Systems. Woody Yaloak Catchment Group has also spearheaded a successful 'Women on Farms' Program, helping women in farming to increase their knowledge of soils, climate, cropping, and livestock decision-making.

## Pull-quote:

The Group developed GIS recording technology that has given landholders paddock-specific information about soil condition since 1993, using data collected from roughly 1400 soil tests conducted over that period.

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