



2018 NATIONAL LANDCARE AWARDS

11 October
Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre

Nominee: Angela Jeffery, VIC

Category: Rio Tinto Indigenous Land Management Award

When Wadawurrung people, Traditional Owners of western Victoria, and Aboriginal community members expressed aspirations to practice traditional burning the Corangamite Catchment Management Authorities (CCMA) Indigenous NRM Facilitator Angela Jeffery began an initiative to enable and empower Aboriginal people to re-introduce the practice of traditional burning of Country. Through the CCMA Indigenous Participation Program, funded by the National Landcare Program (NLP), Angela led a joint project that included eight partners called Wiyn-murrup Yangarramela, 'meaning fire spirit comes back' in Wadawurrung language.

The project gave participants the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge in contemporary and traditional fire management practices. Through formal training in fire, flora and fauna identification, biodiversity monitoring techniques, experiential delivery of traditional burning practices, and knowledge exchange between participants. In her role as Indigenous facilitator, Angela recognised the needs of strong socio-cultural links for Traditional Owners and Aboriginal people in Victoria to connect with Country through fire practice.

After completing a degree in marine science and management, Angela Jeffery contacted Fisheries Victoria about its Aboriginal Fishing Strategy, subsequently becoming the first trainee in its Aboriginal trainee program, based at Fisheries Victoria's Marine and Freshwater Discovery Centre at Queenscliff.

Over the past four years, Angela has coordinated and led numerous community educational and engagement events in collaboration with the Corangamite Landcare Program. These events have incorporated learning educational activities centred on cultural heritage practices and land management with landholders, Landcare groups, and Landcare staff. In particular, Angela has also coordinated and participated in a number of Corangamite Rural Women Network events incorporating local Wadawurrung Traditional Owner, Tammy Gilson, to welcome women at the events and speak about the important role of woman in Aboriginal families including traditional tasks women would have undertaken such as digging for yams and collecting seeds to mill for bread, and weaving items from native plants.

Through extensive engagement, the project fostered strong cross-organisation relationships to fulfil outcomes under numerous Aboriginal program initiatives. The main objective of this project was to assist Wadawurrung people, and the broader Aboriginal community in the CCMA region, to participate in traditional fire practices for the health of Country and People. This project also worked towards a better understanding of Aboriginal cultural and social benefits derived from traditional fire practice. It has helped create a strong evidence base for the continued application of traditional burning by Aboriginal Victorians. To ensure broad benefit, the project was delivered in collaboration with several government partners to help improve the wellbeing of Aboriginal Victorians. The project ran from August 2015 to June 2018.

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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In April 2017, over 60 stakeholders came together at the Bakers Lane Grassland Reserve in Teesdale to participate in demonstrations and discussions of both traditional and Country Fire Authority (CFA) burning techniques. Under the leadership of Uncle Rod Mason, a large number of partners including Traditional Owners, Aboriginal community members, Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-Op, Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority, Golden Plains Shire Council, Department Environment, Land, Water and Planning Grampians, Parks Victoria, CFA South West, joined in the burn. In summing up the initiative, Wadawurrung-Wathaurong Aboriginal Corporation elder Uncle Byron Powell said, "We are breaking new ground, to see first-hand so many groups coming together to manage this land and heal Country together."

Moving to the Corangamite region meant Angela had to build networks and contacts, and navigate through some of the challenges faced when working with Traditional Owner groups. The time and commitment required to build trust and understanding for such projects has highlighted Angela's clear understanding of the importance of relationships. The fire project required several years of planning and working together with diverse groups. The time and effort Angela devoted to the relationships has resulted in projects with positive outcomes for all stakeholders.

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 2016 National Landcare finalists, visit www.landcareaustralia.org.au

Ends

For further information, photographs or interviews contact:

Naomi Straw
Landcare Australia
naomi.straw@landcareaustralia.com.au
02 8440 8823

Angela Jeffery
a.jeffery@ghcma.vic.gov.au
0429 176 640

Web Summary

Over the past four years, Angela Jeffery has coordinated and led numerous community educational and engagement events in collaboration with the Corangamite Landcare Program. These events have incorporated learning educational activities centred on cultural heritage practices and land management with landholders, Landcare groups and Landcare staff. The time and commitment required to build trust and understanding for such projects has highlighted Angela's clear understanding of the importance of relationships. The 'Wiyin-murrup Yangarramela' initiative required several years of planning and working together with diverse groups. The time and effort Angela devoted to the relationships has resulted in projects with positive outcomes for all stakeholders.

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