

Beechworth Urban Landcare and Sustainability

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Dear Landcare Lovers

*I don't speak magpie
But I hear your story
In uprushing wing
And harmony
Hanging visible on frosty air.*

JP 2011

The young magpies which visited us every morning to warble for food and fun have been warned off by the local enforcer, their dad. They spend their time now in the paddock over the road, well away from the new season's nest. We miss them, but from the large bird-hide (aka our house) we are audience to the springtime activities of wrens changing their plumage, bower birds selecting grasses for the bower, fairy martins performing aerobatics, and crescent honeyeaters joining spinebills to feast among the banksias.

We have not seen crescent honeyeaters in our garden before but John Hawker tells us that they are migratory birds which usually winter away from the mountains, following the Ovens River down as far as Bright. Since the 2006 fires they have been seen farther afield, and we can expect their company for a few more weeks, especially while the banksias are blooming.

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Beechworth Urban Landcare and Sustainability news

Here are the headlines!

Skatepark project bowls along

The Skatepark project is almost completed. On Sunday 3 September we're planting some much needed shade trees and other plants, and running a BBQ. Come along at 10am to lend a hand and enjoy a sausage sizzle brekky!

Banner for BULS!

Beechworth Urban Landcare and Sustainability: we will soon have a banner, letterheads and other publicity material with our new name and logo. These will be ready for our AGM on 1 October.

BULS wins more funding!

Donna recently (ie in April) put in an expression of interest for funding for weed control and planting on properties in the Three Mile area. We've been informed that we have won a grant of \$8 000. We'll have more information for you in the next newsletter when we have worked out a work plan.

New BULS website now live!

Gabrielle has launched the new website www.buls.org.au, with links to the Beechworth Sustainability site to ease transition from the old to the new. Check out the site - Gabrielle has done a fantastic job.

Incorporation for BULS?

We no longer receive base funding for our activities, and must apply for grants, largely in competition with other small groups. Many funding bodies require applicant groups to be incorporated, and find that we are at a disadvantage by not being incorporated. We're investigating this process so that we can present it to the AGM for members' consideration.

BULS activities up for Indigo Sustainability Awards

BULS has nominated two activities for the 2011 Indigo Sustainability Awards. Charlie and Fay Robinson's productive garden workshop series was nominated in the education category, and Gabrielle's website in the community category. We congratulate Charlie, Fay and Gabrielle for their outstanding work, and wish them well in the competition.

BULS puts local spin on National Food Plan

Charlie Robinson, Peter Matthews and Joy Phillips recently wrote a response to the call for submissions to the National Food Plan. We will put this on the website for your information.

National Tree Day planting assists Spring Creek project

Twelve hardy souls came out on a wet and miserable morning in July to plant trees along Spring Creek where willows have been removed. If you are walking along the creek, on Rotary Walk at the Mellish Street end, you'll see hundreds of plants, placed to protect the banks, and provide habitat for our native birds and animals. We are grateful for the ongoing support of Indigo Shire in the project.

We were fortified by fresh hot coffee and chocolate donated, and made on a wonderful mobile coffee machine, by Sue Mathieson, a new BULS member. Thank you Sue! (And Donna for the fruit cake!)

Beechworth Urban Landcare and Sustainability Annual General Meeting

Notice of meeting Saturday 1 October 2011
7pm at the Beechworth Neighbourhood Centre

This is our big event for the year! Come along to renew your membership, elect the committee for 2011-12 and enjoy the company of other sustainable landcarers.

Format for the evening includes the AGM at 7pm, followed by a pot-luck dinner (bring a plate and drinks to share) and a wildlife documentary 'Climbing the Redwoods'.

Get Back to Nature this September for Biodiversity Month

Spring into action and get back to nature by joining one or more of the forty fantastic community events celebrating Biodiversity Month this September. The Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (CMA) in partnership with the Department of Sustainability & Environment (DSE) have brought together a range of activities offering a great opportunity for people to learn about and enjoy the flora and fauna across the Northern Victoria.

Biodiversity Month is held each spring and celebrates Australia's rich plant, animal and landscape diversity. It showcases the fantastic work in biodiversity conservation by both community and agency in our region over the past year. The events are offered to all age groups and include a variety of fun, interactive and educational events such as wildflower and wetland walks, bird watching, field days, bush walks, habitat restoration, and presentations by local experts all highlighting the diverse and unique animals, plants and habitats across North East Victoria.

Kate Hill, Biodiversity Month coordinator for Goulburn Broken CMA encouraged everyone to attend at least one event, saying 'There are a lot of committed and passionate people about biodiversity, including experts, volunteers and local gurus that are inviting you to attend their local event. These groups include Conservation Management Networks, Landcare groups and networks, various environmental groups and government agencies'.

For a full list of activities or more information, please go to

http://www.gbcma.vic.gov.au/default.asp?ID=news_events to download the full program of events on offer for Biodiversity Month or their home page www.gbcma.vic.gov.au or phone Goulburn Broken CMA on 03 5820 1100.

BULS events for the rest of 2011
Mark on your calendar!

September

Saturday 3 September: BULS Landcare trailer and stall at the Beechworth Farmers Market, Christ Church grounds 8.30am - 12 noon

Sunday 4 September: Skatepark planting and BBQ; Beechworth Skatepark, near the Beechworth Youth Centre (Railway Station) at 10am.

October

Saturday 1 October: **Annual General Meeting**

7pm at the Beechworth Neighbourhood Centre

This is our big event for the year! Come along to renew your membership, elect the committee for 2011-12 and enjoy the company of other sustainable landcarers.

Date TBA: third food workshop at Charlie and fay's

November

Saturday 5 November 9-11.30am: seed swap outside Beechworth Neighbourhood Centre

December

Saturday 5 December: break up event and launch of the Beechworth Community Garden.

Hands on food production workshops a success

Fay and Charlie Robinson presented another successful workshop in the 'Grow Your Own Food' series with thirty people attending. This second workshop followed up on the soil improvement strategies begun at the first workshop to see how the broad beans had fared in the test bed. Participants were given 'hands on' pruning experience and strategies to get a head start on Spring vegetables. They heard about reducing curly leaf in peaches and nectarines; thinning strawberry beds and what to plant now for a productive Spring/Summer.

Participants also saw the new grass reduction strategy (geese), and checked out the new chicken coop which forms part of the holistic fruit fly and pear and cherry slug eradication program.

We'll be planting tomatoes at the third workshop and eating them at the fourth! We are promoting the concept of 'free food' and easy gardening, and from the attendance, it seems there is plenty of interest in both!

Charlie

Feature article: Do positive messages lead to more positive outcomes?

The most recent ad campaign to encourage Australians to quit smoking focuses on the health benefits which start to accrue as soon as you quit. The ["Stop smoking, start repairing"](#) campaign is a noticeable departure from the usual ads which try to terrorise smokers with graphic images of the damage they are doing to themselves. Which begs the question - are messages about the positive outcomes of action more effective than messages about the negative outcomes of inaction?

When this topic comes up in conversation, there is almost universal support for the effectiveness of positive messages. But it is possible that this is simply because we want it to be true - it would be nice to think that our fellow humans beings are driven more by inspiration than fear. Let's look at what the research says.

One interesting article called ["Change or Die"](#) examines the reluctance of people to change their lifestyle, even when faced with the threat of death. In fact, less than 10% of bypass patients make a change of lifestyle two years after surgery, even though they could greatly reduce their pain and likely prognosis by doing so. One program which had succeeded in turning this around used a number of tactics, including emphasising the positive effects of changing and the "joy of living", rather than the fear of dying, as a motivator.

[Another study](#) found that people were more concerned and motivated to change their environmentally-related behaviour when they were told of the benefits of acting, rather than just the seriousness of pollution and energy

problems. This effect was only pronounced for those older than 55 and younger than 35. Those in the middle were not swayed by either message.

On the other hand, there is a well-known phenomenon called "[loss-aversion bias](#)", whereby we will make more effort to avoid a loss than we will to gain something of a similar size. If we fear that we will lose something through our inaction, we are more motivated to make an effort to preserve the status quo. However, if we are told we can gain a similar value through doing something extra, we are less likely to act. This has led many to conclude that a more successful approach is to describe the negative consequences of climate change, rather than the potential gains of living a more eco-friendly life.

One study which explored this area in more depth was conducted by [Carl Obermiller](#). Obermiller suggests that the effectiveness of positive and negative messages depends on how much we know and care about the relevant issue (the "salience" of the issue). His work concludes that, for issues of low salience, an approach which highlights the seriousness of the situation is needed to get our attention and begin to raise our concern. For issues about which we already know and care a lot, Obermiller's work suggests that further negative messages may turn us off, and we are instead more receptive to an approach which shows us the possibilities and benefits of action. This is based on the idea that two of the precursors to action are concern and control. If we care, but can't do anything about it, we don't act, and are potentially frustrated by further efforts to make us care more. Conversely, if we are given information and resources to act, but the issue is not on our radar, we are unlikely to use those resources.

Therefore, the choice of message depends somewhat on the aim of the communication. Are we primarily trying to draw attention to the issue, or get already-concerned people into action? If we apply Obermiller's observations to the bypass patients mentioned earlier, it is clear that the people in question were already painfully aware of the seriousness of the issues. So the positive approach to getting them into action was successful because it worked on motivating and supporting them to act. The smoking campaign also may have been based on a realisation that most smokers are well aware of the harm they are doing to themselves, so a new approach focusing on the benefits of change could have its merits.

These findings also highlight the importance of doing sound research before committing effort and resources to behaviour change initiatives. If the level of knowledge of an issue is low in the target audience, then raising awareness is a good first step. However, where concern is high but action is low, other interventions are likely to be more successful, such as removing barriers to action and providing resources and support.

This article is re-printed from the e-newsletter *Awake: wake up call August 2011 Applying Psychology to Sustainability*
Awake provides psychology-based services to support the development of sustainable behaviour in individuals, groups and organisations. Visit www.awake.com.au for more info.

We hope to see you at a BULS community event soon. Don't forget that membership applications/renewals are due in September. There is an application form included on page 9 of this newsletter.

With best wishes for your 'leap into spring'

Joy

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BEECHWORTH URBAN LANDCARE
AND SUSTAINABILITY
Membership Application/Renewal
September 2011 – September 2012

Name/s

Postal Address

Residential Address.....

Phone (H)..... (W).....(M).....

E-mail

Are you happy to receive the *Cypress Express* via e-mail? Yes ⇐ No ⇐

Full year's membership fees: \$20 per individual/family / \$15 concession

Please forward this application/renewal, with your membership fee to

The Treasurer
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Beechworth 3747

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