

NOVEMBER 2019

Website: <https://ginninderralandcare.org.au/>



# THE GINNINDERRA CATCH-UP

## Ginninderra Catchment Group Newsletter



Members of GCG & Friends of Grasslands at teabreak during work at Hall Cemetery woodland, 5 October (Ken, Leon, John, John, Jenny and Graeme). *Photo: Andrew Zelnik.*

### ----- *News from the Convenor*

Welcome to another edition of our Newsletter. I am amazed at all the different activities we are involved in – including Waterwatch and Frogwatch monitoring, Bushblitz monitoring, weeding, watering recent plantings, and meetings with keynote speakers. I was particularly impressed with our Junior landcarers at North Belconnen Landcare in their recent visit to the Morshead Nursing Home where they were able to promote the importance of Landcare and also provide some enjoyment to the elderly people with their singing. I recently attended the Ginninderra Opening and the Conservation Council Spring Mingle. Landcare ACT (LACT) has been instrumental in lifting the profile of Landcare, and in providing a community voice to Government and Business. We will be attending a meeting with Minister Gentleman in early December to discuss the future work of Landcare. LACT has recently advertised for a new CEO (see <https://landcareact.org.au/vacancy-chief-executive-officer-part-time/>). We have a number of activities coming up, including several nominations for the ACT Landcare Awards on 17 November. Good luck to the nominees! We should hear shortly on the outcomes of the Community Environment Program and Adopt-a-Park proposals. This has already resulted in the establishment of two GCG groups, Friends of Wangara Parks (Aranda) and Maribyrnong Community

Climate Action Group. Thank you to Anke Maria for the recent media presence promoting Frogwatch and Waterwatch. The **GCG AGM and Christmas party will be held on Monday 2 December** – I hope to see you all there. The Secretary position remains vacant, please contact Karissa or me if you wish to put in a nomination.

*Santo Lolicato, Convenor*

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## *News from the Executive Officer*

### **WELCOME TO TWO NEW GCG GROUPS!**

At the last GCG General Meeting in early October, Friends of Wangara Parks (Aranda) and Maribyrnong Community Climate Action Group (Kaleen) formally became members of Ginninderra Catchment Group. We are looking forward to working together with these groups to improve their local environments.

### **ADOPT A PARK GRANTS**

A number of the GCG applications submitted in the ACT Government Adopt a Park Grant Program have been shortlisted. These projects have now entered a co-design phase with TCCS staff over the next couple of months. More information to come.

### **WORLD BANK FIELD TRIP TO GINNINDERRA CREEK**

GCG will be hosting a field trip focused on community stewardship and environmental values of water for the World Bank Group Water Global Practice staff and council members on Friday 22 November. This is part of a broader forum being organised by Dept of Foreign Affairs & Trade to provide the World Bank water experts with a deeper understanding of the Murray-Darling Basin water reforms over the last 100 years and the lessons learnt in managing water in Australia.

### **FUNDING FOR NEXT FINANCIAL YEAR**

There is still no assurance of GCG funding for next financial year. GCG is working with Landcare ACT to follow up on this through a number of avenues including:

- Meetings with decision makers (meetings planned with EPSDD, Minister Mick Gentleman and Minister Chris Steel).
- Budget submission – the LACT budget submission has been distributed. GCG also submitted a submission.
- Positive media – Frogwatch has generated positive media recently (see below). More to come....

*Karissa Preuss, Executive Officer*

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# Waterwatch – Ginninderra & Yass



## IN OUR CATCHMENT – June to August (Winter) 2019

The dry conditions continued to affect our waterways this winter (Figure 1). Rainfall was below average in every month, with July receiving only 8.7 mm of rain (42 mm less than the average). The highest daily amounts of rain for June, July and August were 11 mm, 4 mm and 8.4 mm, respectively. We also had a mild winter, with mean maximum temperatures in June, July and August higher than the average (by 1.2°C, 1.9°C and 2.1°C, respectively; Figure 2). I have included some pictures of the large dam in Mulligans Flat Nature Reserve in this newsletter, to demonstrate the changes in water levels and vegetation in northern Canberra (*see below*).

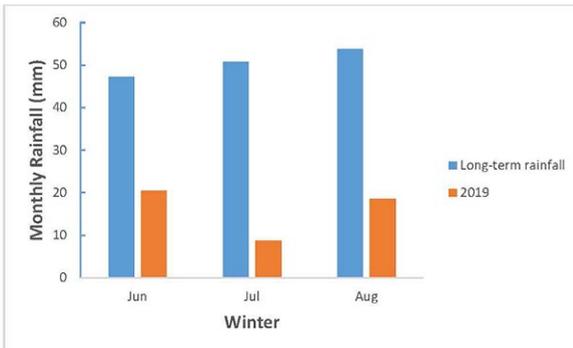


Fig 1. Monthly rainfall in northern Canberra.

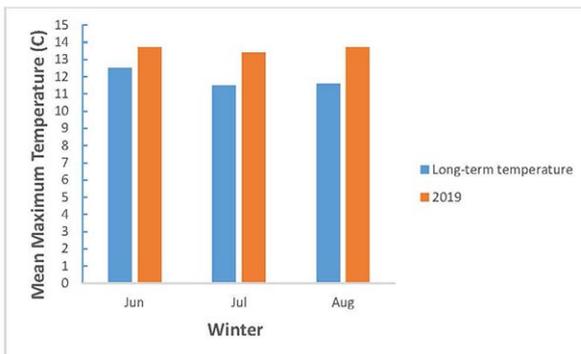


Fig 2. Mean maximum temperatures in northern Canberra

Nitrates found in the Yass River downstream of the township continue to cause the water quality there to be considered at ‘degraded’ level, with values of 7 mg/L and 5 mg/L in Hattons Corner and Chinamans Creek, respectively. We also found water quality in some urban ponds in Canberra was at ‘degraded’ level for electrical

conductivity (salinity) this winter: Yerrabi Pond inflow, 660  $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ ; Stormwater Pond at Lexcen Av., 630  $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ ; and the Valley Ponds Dam, 620  $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ . On the other hand, electrical conductivity was considered ‘excellent’ in the dam near Madre Teresa Primary School, Jaramlee Pond and McKellar Wetlands. (Figure 3 shows the standard levels we compare our samples against.)

Parameter	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Degraded
pH	6.6 – 7.8	6.1 – 6.5, 7.9 – 8.0	5.7 – 6.0, 8.1 – 8.2	5.4 – 5.6, 8.3 – 8.6	< 5.4, > 8.6
EC ( $\mu\text{S}$ )	$\leq 98$	99 – 156	157 – 212	213 – 404	> 404
Turbidity (NTU)	$\leq 10$	11 – 16	17 – 36	37 – 90	> 90
DO (mg/L)	<i>(Not included in CHIP)</i>				
DO Sat. (%)	88 – 99	84 – 87, 100	81 – 83, 101 – 106	78 – 80, 107 – 115	< 78, > 115
Phosphorus (mg/L)	< 0.02	0.02 – 0.03	0.04 – 0.05	0.06 – 0.08	> 0.08
Nitrate (mg/L)	< 1.0	1.0 – 1.3	1.4 – 1.7	1.8 – 2.6	> 2.6

Fig. 3. Threshold values for water quality in the ACT Waterwatch program (Catchment Health Indicator Program – CHIP report).



Fig 4. Drought in the ACT depicted at large dam in Mulligans Flat Nature Reserve, 2012 – 2019. *Top left*: lush, although the dam wall was leaking. *Top right and lower left*: dam wall repaired and flooded. *Lower right*: dam in October 2019. *Photos: Bruno Ferronato.*

## **PESTICIDES DETECTIVES PROJECT – RMIT**

Waterwatch is taking part in the national assessment of pesticides in waters led by the RMIT University. Waterwatch coordinators are sampling sediments in creeks in urban, rural and natural settings. For more details of this citizen science project, see: <https://www.rmit.edu.au/research/research-institutes-centres-and-groups/research-groups/aquest/pesticide-detectives>

## **NEW SPECIES DISCOVERED AT THE BUSHBLITZ IN THE ACT**

Focusing on the remote parts of Namadgi National Park via helicopter, Bushblitz surveys and collections have allowed knowledge gaps to be filled, important materials for future genetic and taxonomic studies to be collected, the known ranges of species to be extended, and several new species to be discovered. Find more details at: <https://www.earthwatch.org.au/blog/new-species-discovered-on-bush-blitz-act?>

## **THE POWER OF CITIZEN SCIENCE**

Citizen scientists in USA were able to monitor and identify a discharge source which was causing pollution in Rocky Run, Delaware. More details can be found here: <https://stroudcenter.org/news/power-of-citizen-science/?>

*Bruno Ferronato, GCG Waterwatch Coordinator*

# *Frogwatch news*

Lots has been happening in the office and in the field!

## **ANNUAL FROG CENSUS**

**STOP PRESS:** With the wonderful rain last night (3 November) the frog activity is bound to increase over the next few days – ***so if anyone is free and happy to do another survey at their site(s), that would be wonderful!!***

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This year our Frog Census ran for the entire month of October – which has proved to be very successful and effective!!

Five training events attracted around 120 NEW volunteers signing up to do frogwatching this year, and to support the efforts of so many long-term frogwatchers around town. A grand total of 300 people have helped out with this year's Census, which is a fantastic outcome!!

Another huge achievement is that all of the 250 active Frogwatch sites were booked to be monitored during October.

**Enter your surveys before 15.11.2019**

Now is the time for entering the survey data (if you have not yet done so) and submit



it with your recordings online at our data portal at the CNM <https://frogwatch-act.naturemapr.org/>. Feel free to contact me if you have trouble uploading your surveys/recordings. Find the solutions to the most common issues at the end of this newsletter and as an attachment.

Remember, the **person that enters the most surveys** for the 2019 FrogCensus month **will win a dinner with me, made by me!!**

### Request for help describing how to find sites

If you can provide me with a good description on how to access your chosen site(s) please do so, because many sites lack clear instructions on how to get to the right spot. Simply email a short instruction with the site code, to me at [frogwatch@ginninderrallandcare.org.au](mailto:frogwatch@ginninderrallandcare.org.au). Very much appreciated!!

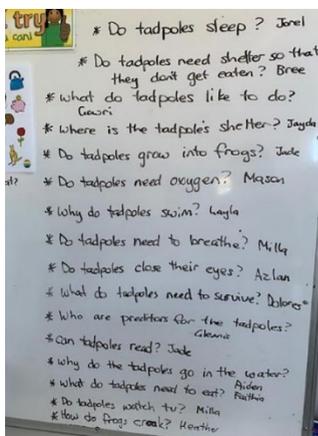
### DON'T WANT TO STOP MONITORING??

Yes, I know ... frogwatching is heaps of fun and somewhat addictive. The good news is that *you do not have to stop doing it*. Feel free to keep monitoring your favourite site(s) once a month or as often as you like to collect more data about our local frogs. Surveys can be done and submitted at any time of the year. As in October, surveys will be best done on still nights after rain.

### FROG CENSUS ON THE ABC LOCAL AND 24 NEWS

All this huffing and puffing about the FrogCensus attracted some media attention – to say the least. Just in case you missed the beautiful coverage – featuring young Darcy and his dad Nat at a pond in Duffy – check out the link below!! It was in the 7 pm ABC News on Wednesday 23 October and the next day on the ABC 24 News (Australia wide). <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=qlt7VnXC-kY>

### TADPOLE KITS FOR SCHOOLS PROGRAM ALSO IN THE NEWS



The first two days of the latest school term were 'mad as', with almost 140 Tadpole Kits, funded by Icon Water, going out through the door. It was a mammoth task to get all the equipment ready-set-go! We had tadpoles, tanks and buckets everywhere...!

Weekly group emails keep all teachers and students up to date. Students of all ages are very engaged in the program, and love the tadpoles. Teachers value the hands-on learning experience so much that the program was booked out less than 48 hours after opening.

Students around town are investigating, drawing, observing and enjoying the tadpoles and some of their amazing artwork and observations can be seen at the wonderful Icon Water blog, which has weekly updates on the wonderful learning of the students. See: <https://www.iconwater.com.au/frogwatch>,



### ***Tadpole Kits Program on the local WIN News***

The “tadpole kit madness” also attracted media attention and *WIN News* aired a great coverage of the program on 17 October, which you can watch at: <https://www.facebook.com/154161871315519/posts/2508006112597738/>

### ***AMAROO SCHOOL BIODIVERSITY CONFERENCE***

Keeping 320 year-3/4 students squeezed into a school hall engaged and focused is very tricky – unless one can tell them all about frogs and their crazy adaptations!! What a wonderful activity, organised by Liz van Papenrecht from the Actsmart Schools program.

### ***FROG HABITAT WORKSHOPS AT BUNNINGS FYSHWICK***

How to create frog-friendly habitats in your garden was a great way to engage plenty of Bunnings customers on a Saturday. Lots of interesting questions came up and many Frogwatch volunteers came up to say hello. There is definitely room for improvement in order to reach a much wider audience, but it was a good start into what might turn into a workshop series on frog-friendly habitat around town.

### ***OUR LATEST FROGWATCH PUBLICATION ACCEPTED***

Yeahhh! Finally, our dream has come through. Our paper, **The FrogPhone: A novel device for real-time frog call monitoring**, was accepted and will go to the press very soon in the journal ***Methods in Ecology and Evolution***!! It was a real team effort and many thanks go to the research team Adrian Garrido Sanchis, Lorenzo Bertolelli, Marta Yebra Alvarez and Kumudu Munasinghe. Appreciation also goes to the University of Canberra, along with the ACT Government for funding this work.

### ***SEND ME YOUR PHOTOS!***

**Reminder:** Please do send your funny or serious frogwatching action shots to me. I am always in need of great photos of volunteers in action, so please help me out and let me share with others some photos of your amazing support!!

### **A VERY BIG THANK YOU TO SO MANY PEOPLE**

A special thank you to all the **wonderful volunteers** in the field – monitoring, talking to the press, spreading the word, supporting the program; **June Hornby** for helping out in the office; **Lola-Lee-Lou Hoefer-Dunne** for assisting with the tadpole kit set up; **SACT Catchment Group** for their support for the Tadpole kit dispatch – south side; the **ACT Government** and **Icon Water** for much needed funding; the lovely **GCG team** for helping out in so many ways; and to **my family** for supporting my enthusiasm for the Frogwatch program. Could not do it without any of you!!!



### **AND NOW ... AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM FROG WEEK 8 - 17 NOVEMBER!**

'Our frogs are under threat from habitat loss, disease and climate change. Taking part in FrogID Week will help provide our scientists with valuable data for the protection and conservation of frogs.' [That's the Australian Museum speaking.]

The museum has an app ... which you can use to report frogs from anywhere, at any time. Visit <https://www.frogid.net.au/> to **download the free app** and **register now**. Remember, every call counts! <http://www.frogid.net.au/>

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Frogwatch ACT and Region is run by the Ginninderra Catchment Group through funding provided by the ACT Government.

*Anke Maria Hoefer, Frogwatch Coordinator*

## **News from GCG Member Groups**

### **UMBAGONG NOTES**

Fourteen members and friends of Friends of Grasslands Inc. (FOG) met at the Blue Devil grassland at Latham on 12 October to see how the grassland is looking this year (*photo by Geoff Robertson*). We wandered slowly over towards the 20 m-square monitoring plot where we had collected data on three occasions in 2015. The



site had been burned just over twelve months ago and the resultant inter-tussock spaces were still very visible. Apparently it had been a pretty hot burn, and not very patchy. Slashing successfully prevented the fire reaching the drainage line to the west. We saw a total of around 30 native species, of which just under half were flowering, and that included grasses and sedges. Overall there was not a lot of evidence of flowering for this season, with only some Bulbine Lily *Bulbine bulbosa* providing a little colour. We spent over an hour at the site, moving around a bit to look at further-flung perimeters. There was an impressive number of Blue Devil rosettes, and the site generally reflected the significant amount of care given to it by the local Umbagog landcarers.

*Margaret Ning, FOG*

### **SUTTON LANDCARE GROUP**

On 8 October Dr Richard Stirzaker from the CSIRO gave a very engaging presentation on the importance of measuring soil moisture so you only irrigate when needed.

When you realise that it takes something like 1 litre of water to grow one calorie of food, the need to know how often we need to irrigate, and how much water is needed, becomes even more important.

Together with the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research ([ACIAR](#)), Dr Stirzaker and his team have developed a set of low cost soil moisture sensors, linked to mobile phones, which are being used in a number of African countries.

Sensors are put in the soil on different levels and give farmers real-time information via different colours on the soil moisture sensor that indicate the moisture content of the soil. Red for dry, green for moist and blue for wet soil. This information provides patterns of soil moisture per plot of land, and farmers can determine if their soil has been too wet (leaching nutrients away), or too dry thus reducing yield. All data from every sensor currently active in Africa are transferred to a database in Canberra

It is the intention that the system will be used one day in Australia as well, but it has not yet been promoted, and on top of that the CSIRO team has no time at the moment to expand the program too much.

*If you are interested in this gadget for your own garden, the sensors can be bought on the [VIA website](#).*

*Arnold Dekker, Coordinator*

### **NORTH BELCONNEN LANDCARE**

The highlight of the last month was the visit to the Morshead Home in Lyneham with the Junior Landcare children. Lenore said a few words about Landcare and our group. The elderly residents of the nursing home loved the landcare songs and other songs accompanied by the Junior Landcare Band (mostly percussion instruments). At the conclusion of the musical items the children were led around the audience and

talked to the adults who asked their names and how old they were. It was a big success and could easily be repeated at other nursing homes or a return visit to the same one.

These home-schooled and pre-school children have done Landcare work on the grassland patch in the wired enclosure on the north side of Ginninderra creek as well as some work on the Blue Devils patch [at Evatt; not the one at Umbagog]. They have also helped re-mulch the border of the large Wildflower patch.

The Creamy Candles within the wired enclosure provided much excitement for this group who had never seen Creamy Candles in flower. They watered a “fairy ring” pegged out by bamboo stakes and then two weeks later the Creamy Candles were all in flower making a special circle of these lovely flowers (*Stackhousia monogyna*).

During the hot weather our mid-week landcarers will be meeting at 8 am on **Wednesdays** if the temperature is going to be above 26°C, and at 2 pm if the temperature is predicted to be 25°C or cooler. If the temperature is altogether too hot even at 8 am, the plan is to meet at someone’s home and practise our musical items to get ready for the Christmas Party and another nursing home visit.



Some of the great regulars at the Saturday group; wildflowers in bloom from one of our patches; our beautiful ‘site supervisor’ Mollie and her sister Charlie, who come nearly every Saturday.

*Photos: Yvette Perine.*

The Wednesday group is by arrangement and anyone interested in this group would be welcome to contact Lenore Frances Hodgkinson on her *Facebook page* or the *North Belconnen Landcare Facebook group* or on [hodgkinson12@bigpond.com](mailto:hodgkinson12@bigpond.com). It mostly meets once a week.

The Saturday Landcare Group is now meeting at 8.30 am but may start earlier as soon as the hot weather starts. Leader of this group, Yvette Perine, is keen on early starts and much work has been accomplished in recent months weeding the Betty Davis Wildflower Patch as well as the Blue Devils patch and the patch below the play park on Carlile Street, Evatt. This group has also been helpful in tidying up the landcare water bottles and other items as the sale of Lenore and Ken Hodgkinson's home at 6 Spain Place Evatt draws closer. An auction is now planned for early December and the remainder of landcare things which have been in the garage at their home since the start of this landcare group in 1995 will now have to be housed elsewhere. Much of this transition has already taken place but there are still some items remaining in the garage that have to go **within the next 2 weeks**. If anyone wishes to volunteer some space for landcare things that need to be undercover please let us know on any of the above contacts.

The Saturday group plus two dogs meets **every Saturday morning** and has achieved a huge amount in recent months.

The Betty Davis Wildflower Patch is very beautiful at present with many of the beautiful albicans daisies as well as many other native grasses, daisies and small low growing forbs (native wildflowers).

*[Why not have a look? The patch is downslope from Carlile St, beside the footbridge over the creek. Or start at the end of Spain Place and walk across the footbridge at the bottom of that slope.]*

*Lenore Hodgkinson, Convenor*

### **FRIENDS OF MOUNT PAINTER**

For Friends of Mount Painter October has been a month of weeding and planning future planting. The weeding has included spraying, mattocking, and woody weed removal. Nicki Taws showed us how to distinguish the exotic grasses that we want to spray out in the Wildflower Triangle grassland as we help its recovery after last year's hazard reduction burn. We hope that by killing the exotic grasses we will give the Kangaroo Grass, *Poa* Tussocks and other smaller species space to spread. There are signs that this strategy is working.

2019 marks 20 years since FOMP received a grant from the Natural Heritage Trust to employ a consultant to produce a vegetation plan to guide FOMP and the Parks and Conservation Service's (PCS) planting on Mount Painter. At that stage, the reserve had only recently been expanded to include the whole hill, which was largely devoid of trees. Twenty years on seemed like a good time to look back at what has been achieved and map out what more should be done. We have been very fortunate to have the author of the original plan, David Hogg, involved with the review. As part of the review process, some of us met with him, and our local ranger, and Adam Leavesley who is the PCS Bushfire Research Utilisation Manager. We walked around the upper part of the hill and talked of where more plants might be added, what

species to put where and what, ideally, the final appearance of the landscape should be many years into the future. Greening Australia's recent end of year sale was a good opportunity to acquire some of the shrubs and trees we need to begin the next phase of revegetating Mount Painter.

FOMP's next work party is in the Wildflower Triangle from 9 am to noon on **Sunday, 17 November**. We will be watering plants put in in May and weeding round them. To access where we will be working, park on Bindubi Street 800 m south of the Lyttleton/Bandjalong intersection where the bike path runs under the road. Then follow the bike path towards Mt Painter.

*Sarah Hnatiuk, Convenor*  
[friends.of.mount.painter@gmail.com](mailto:friends.of.mount.painter@gmail.com)

### **FRIENDS OF THE PINNACLE (FOTPIN)**

The Weetangera Primary School are holding their annual Spring Fete and have invited FOTPIN to hold a display stall at the event, as we usually do. The fete runs from 10 am to 2 pm on **Sunday November 17th** and it really is a lovely event with some nice food and an excellent selection of plants for sale, usually on the stall right next to ours. If you'd like to help out on our display, either reply to this email or give me a call on 0405 331 405.

Also, the latest update on everything that's been happening up at the Pinnacle NR for the last few months is now online and downloadable from [www.fotpin.org.au/newsletters.html](http://www.fotpin.org.au/newsletters.html). It includes news on the restoration work along the Molonglo pipeline construction corridor, a summary of the revegetation work under way in the Weetangera paddock, and details of upcoming events such as this Saturday's event (**9 November**) celebrating 30 years of ParkCare. (It's at the Yarramundi Cultural Centre on Lady Denman Drive, starting at 10 am and finishing with a BBQ lunch provided by the PCS rangers. Everyone is welcome. RSVP required, to [Alison.mcleod@act.gov.au](mailto:Alison.mcleod@act.gov.au).)

*John Brannan, Convenor*

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## *Opportunities around the region*

### **WILD POLLINATOR COUNT WEEK**

The spring Wild Pollinator Count starts this **Sunday November 10** and runs **until the following Sunday 17 November**. Your 10-minute count, needs to be done during the count week, and the submission form will remain open the following week for you to get all your observations submitted. You can do as many counts as you want during the count week! See <https://www.australianpollinatorweek.org.au/region/act/>.

### **HAVE YOUR SAY ABOUT TREES IN ACT**

There is an opportunity to provide input into trees in the ACT. See

<https://yoursay.act.gov.au/trees-act>.

### ***FUTURE DROUGHT FUND CONSULTATION***

The Landcare ACT CEO will be attending consultations re the Future Drought Fund. From July 2020, the Future Drought Fund will allocate \$100 million each year for projects that strengthen resilience, preparedness and response to the impacts of inevitable future droughts. If you have any comments re how the Fund can help farm businesses and communities build drought resilience, please **let Karissa know**. More information is at [haveyoursay.agriculture.gov.au/future-drought-fund](https://haveyoursay.agriculture.gov.au/future-drought-fund).

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Ginninderra Catchment Group connects, supports and leads local communities to improve the health of Ginninderra Creek and surrounding environments.

ACT and Region Frogwatch Program and the Ginninderra and Yass components of Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch operate from the GCG office.

Email [landcare@ginninderralandcare.org.au](mailto:landcare@ginninderralandcare.org.au)

Website: <https://ginninderralandcare.org.au/>

Office: Kippax Health Centre, Holt. Phone: 02 6278 3309

## ***ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS***

Ginninderra Catchment Group, Frogwatch and Waterwatch (Ginninderra Ck & Yass R) are grateful for support from the

ACT Government, Landcare ACT and  
ACT Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch



