



## Ginninderra Catchment Group 2020 - A year in review

### Convenor's Report



I have been in the Convenor role for now five years and want to express my appreciation to you all for all our achievements. It has been a great season with the significant rainfall and massive

growth and flowering in our reserves and urban parkland. This has in turn meant significant increase in aquatic fauna water, including turtles, bugs, frogs, fish and birds. The easing of COVID restrictions have meant Landcare groups have been able to conduct a range of events.

The groups have been busy in this period, leading walks (for example the Friends of Aranda Bushland orchid walk) and conducting working bees (for example vegetation plantings and weeding).

Thanks to Landcare ACT, and our recent communications effort, we were able to secure on-going funding. The new ACT Labor/Greens Government will ensure ongoing funding to Catchment group,

Waterwatch and FrogWatch. As per the policy announcement, "ACT Labor is also reaffirming our commitment to local catchment groups and Waterwatch with \$215,000 funding each year, along with

\$75,000 for the much-loved frog watch program."

Other funding opportunities include the Emu Creek feasibility study (a major initiative to improve water quality and flow into Lake Ginninderra), EPA/Caltex and the Mental health grant (with Landcare ACT).

Currently the GCG budget is very positive, with the recent funding commitments and additional COVID stimulus funding. This will be reflected in the Treasurer's Report, in particular our level of Reserves.

**Sandy Lolicato**  
**Outgoing Chair**

### Coordinator's Report



Despite the hardships of 2020, we have managed to come through as a stronger and more connected Landcare community.

Thank you to all our hard-working Ginninderra

Catchment Group (GCG) volunteers, convenors and executives for your tireless efforts supporting the Landcare movement in the ACT.

Thank you to our staff for ensuring GCG continues to undertake our core community activities, including projects, Waterwatch and FrogWatch.

GCG would not exist without the grass-roots environmental conservation that you, our members, champion each and every day.



And thanks to our partners and supporters, including our peak body Landcare ACT, the ACT Government, including NRM, the Commonwealth Government, Waterwatch, Frogwatch and others, for supporting our work.

May everyone have a safe and happy holiday season and I look forward to seeing you in 2021.

### **Farewell Sandy Lolicato**

At this year's Annual General Meeting our dedicated GCG Chair, Sandy Lolicato, stepped down from his role. For the last five years Sandy has dedicated his time and effort to supporting the GCG and advocating for the broader Landcare movement in the ACT and region.

Sandy's expertise in governance and management, as well as his personal passion for Landcare, has made him invaluable and highly successful in raising the GCG profile with state and Commonwealth Government as well as within the community.

We wish Sandy all very best not only in his role as Landcare ACT treasurer, but in pursuing his own personal passions.

Thank you, Sandy, for everything you have given to GCG over the last five years, you will be sorely missed!



### **Member Groups Support**

Discussions have continued about the role of catchment groups in supporting urban Landcare groups. A draft document detailing roles and responsibilities is close to being finalised.

Catchment assistance for Parkcare groups has been an increasing focus. The need for this support has been identified through discussions with groups raising issues for discussion regarding ACT Parks and Conservation procedures and communication.

### **New Groups formed in 2020**

- Emu Creek Landcare
- Flea Bog Flat Landcare
- Friends of Gossan Hill
- Friends of Wangara Parks
- Lions Croke Place Landcare
- Kuringa Woodlands Landcare

Welcome all and thanks for joining the Landcare community!

We also have several additional groups in the pipeline - Friends of Franklin Grasslands, West Belconnen Landcare, Gungahlin and Yerrabi Ponds Landcare, Lake Ginninderra Landcare and Melba Wetlands Landcare. We are looking forward to having you on board!

### **ACT Government contract 2019/20**

We have achieved every output required, albeit with some delays thanks to COVID 19, focused on encouraging community engagement at Healthy Waterways sites and on Transport Canberra and City Services land.

We are finalising next year's objectives which will be largely focussed on increasing community stewardship.

### **Community Engagement in Waterways 2020/21**

In August 2020, GCG was awarded a contract with ACT Government Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate for \$125,000.

This contract is to provide community-driven education activities aimed to increase community stewardship of urban waterways, improve community 'stormwater literacy', reduce stormwater pollution and encourage behaviour change and increase community resilience and nature-connection. It

sounds like a mouthful but we are really looking forward to getting stuck in with your help!

We're already on the job, planning and strategising about how we can meet these goals.

Looking forward to a fantastic 2021 - have a brilliant holiday season and stay safe.

See you in the new year!

**Kat McGilp**  
**Catchment Coordinator**

## Project News



### **Aboriginal Land Management**

We've taken steps towards the GCG 2018/19 work plan for Aboriginal land management. This includes projects ***Restoration of Gubur Dhaura*** and ***Restoration of Umbagong***.

A cultural burn has taken place at Gubur Dhaura and is planned for Umbagong, following Mulanggang Aboriginal Landcare Group highlighting the importance of burning the area. We've also done additional weeding with more planned for early 2021.

### **Communities Environment Program Grants**

Due to COVID these grants were all extended to make sure we had the time to do them to the best of our ability. Events have been held at the following sites:

- West Belconnen Ponds
- Yerrabi Ponds
- Gungahlin Ponds
- Lake Ginninderra
- Croke Place wetlands
- Melba Wetlands
- Lawson Ponds

We assisted with the Lawson Grasslands open day and the Franklin Grasslands open day. There have also been events at the Bruce Flea Bog site, Kuringa Drive

and at the Croke Place Native Grassland Restoration site.

We also have a grant to try to tackle the woody weeds along the Ginninderra Creek. Groups have been asked to identify areas of concern and we will use much of this grant to treat those Woodies, especially Box Elder. Talk to your convenor about getting involved in the discussion.

### **ACT Environment Grants**

GCG was successful in receiving two ACT Environment Grants for the 2020-2021 year, one to focus on the box elders along the Ginninderra Creek and the other to assist with some habitat restoration by the new Emu Creek Landcare group.

The Emu Creek Landcare group has been proactive with regular working bees and several volunteer days with a local Scouts group and corporate volunteering group.



### **Adopt-a-Park Gants**

Kaleen BioBlitz and Wangara Park are nearing completion, with two others, lower Ginninderra Creek and Giralang Ponds still to be completed. GCG has an AAP grant for promotional material which are available for volunteer groups if they need them for activities.

### **Events Summary**

We held Wetland events at Croke Place and Melba wetlands. They were VERY successful with over 50 people attending across the two days.

Gungahlin, Yerrabi, West Belconnen Ponds and Lake Ginninderra walks were attended people in total, with further events planned for 2021.

The Lawson Grasslands Open Day was a HUGE SUCCESS and garnered lots of support for the community, with more than 50 people coming along.

Kuringa Woodlands Open Day was really well received by local residents with more than 35 people attending and a new Landcare group formed.



It's been a tough year for many and our thoughts have been with those most affected. We hope you've enjoyed working on the projects we have going at the moment and that you'll be back to join us for a better year next year!

**Fiona Spier**  
**Project Officer**

## FrogWatch News



Spring has always been the busiest time for us, but this year it has been simply crazy-but good crazy!

October 2020 was the second month-long FrogCensus in history.

Ponds are full or nearly full, creeks have had a good flush out and the vegetation is going wild.

Well experienced and new FrogWatch volunteers alike signed up for the big 2020

frog hunt and pretty much all the 250 FrogWatch sites were adopted for monitoring.

This should result in 400 to 500 submitted surveys – a great achievement and I am looking forward to listening to every one of them!

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, 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!!!

**Anke Maria Hoeffler**  
**FrogWatch ACT and Region**  
**Coordinator**

## Waterwatch News



Thanks to all Waterwatch volunteers for sampling in such extreme conditions this year, we had drought, fires

and smoke early in January and February, then floods, following a few months of coronavirus lockdown and no sampling, then back to more floods with the influence of La Niña.

We have seen several changes in our sampling sites and how the water quality had varied under the influence of drier and wetter conditions. Looking forward to writing the next Catchment Health Indicator Program report!



Waterwatch and FrogWatch have joined forces this year to deliver the 'ACT Frogs and Turtles' project,

with funding from the Commonwealth Environment Projects grants. It has been great to work with all the new volunteers and hope you are having fun in the turtle trapping and nest checking.

**Bruno Ferronato**  
**Waterwatch Coordinator**

## Storytelling



It's been great to join the team and meet so many of you in the last few months.

We've had a few stories to tell and we've had great success in raising our profile in the press and

in social media.

Of course, these stories are easy to tell with such a fantastic and committed group of volunteers and supporters.

I'm looking forward to the next 12 months with the launch of a new feature series 'My Place' due to drop in January and plenty more yarns hidden under rocks and logs.

Drop me a line if you come across anything you think might be worth writing about – either in the media or on our website.

Have a wonderful Christmas and New Year and see you January!

**Jane Ryan**  
**Communications Officer**



## Friends of Aranda Bushland Celebrate 30 Years



Friends of Aranda Bushland Landcare Group celebrated its 30 year anniversary

this month with a working bee and a delicious spread.

It was attended by more than 30 people, some of whom were newcomers, others old timers who have been putting in since the very beginning.

The sense of place is sacred to many. They feel a passionate connection to the bushland and are proud of the work that's been done.

## We saw one! Monotreme ahoy at annual platypus count



With rain falling and evidence of the recent floods writ large along the banks of the

Molonglo, 12 volunteers were among those who braved chilly mornings this month to take part in the annual Waterwatch platypus count.

## Turtle Time! Not one but 41!



As a citizen scientist you have to be prepared for those days when you go out to monitor

waterways for signs of life and don't find a thing. And then there are the days when you discover 41 Eastern long-necked turtles across four sites in an urban setting.

Forty-one turtles in McGregor with houses less than a hundred metres away.

## Landcare ACT



It was an absolute pleasure to be part of the GCG Christmas party recently. Almost a year has passed since I moved from my role as Executive Officer with GCG to the CEO of Landcare ACT (LACT).

I'm grateful to be able to maintain connection with Landcarers and the GCG team – it was great to catch up.

As we talked about at the Christmas party, there are more than 60 Landcare groups in the ACT region and thousands of individuals, including citizen scientists, who contribute to improving and maintaining rural, urban, reserve and cultural landscapes.

The purpose of LACT is to represent, support and promote community Landcarers in the ACT. It's one of our key goals to improve and maintain healthy, productive and resilient landscapes and people.

We've had a few key achievements over the last 12 months.

### Representation and Influence:

- Gaining a pre-election commitment for Catchment Group funding from all three major parties

- Updating the LACT Issues Register, which includes 90 actions for us to prioritise and tackle – all raised by members
- Re-establishing the Weeds Working Group in response to the increased funding for weed management. Watch this space.
- Providing input into national policies and proposals through relationships with the National Landcare Network, including the Conservation Stimulus Package

### Support:

We provided as much funding as possible to members.

- *Bushfire recovery* - LACT was awarded two grants to support the nearly 1,000 people who expressed interest in bushfire recovery projects delivered with Southern ACT Catchment Group and ACT Government
- *Rural Landcare* - LACT has supported the rural Landcare community through a Smart Farms grant (more below) and participation in the National Landcare Farming Program roundtable event
- *Junior Landcare* - LACT has received a small grant to develop a Junior Landcare Pilot program across the ACT, which will include schools engagement
- *Mental health* - LACT has been exploring options for Landcare and nature broadly to play a role in mental health recovery and wellbeing, particularly in response to COVID
- *Aboriginal Landcare* - LACT has been exploring options for increasing support for Aboriginal Landcare, including working with Buru Ngunnawal Aboriginal Corporation in submitting an application for Aboriginal fire and land management workshops.

### Promotion and knowledge sharing:

LACT has been working to increase awareness of Landcare and its value as

well as innovative and best practice land management practices

- ABC Radio Canberra Landcare Champions Series, a weekly radio series that has profiled 24 local Landcare champions on the ABC Saturday Breakfast Program
- Development of virtual farm tour videos that feature seven innovative farmers in the ACT region. The farms tours were undertaken virtually in response to COVID and funded as part of a National Landcare Program Smart Farms Small Grants Program. Look out for more information in the Canberra Times in the early new year.
- Media – LACT has developed a [Facebook page](#) and [Instagram account](#) and there has been increased media activity around Landcarers including ABC TV News and the front page of the Canberra Times
- Website upgrade – LACT is in the process of upgrading the website

I wish you all a happy and safe holiday period and look forward to continuing to work together in 2021.

**Karissa Preuss**  
CEO Landcare ACT

## In the news

[How climate change has impacted frogs in Canberra](#)

Canberra Times  
September 21

[Frog census calls for citizen scientists to hop on board](#)

ABC Canberra Radio  
September 17

[The citizen scientists tracking Canberra's frogs](#)

Canberra Times  
October 27

[ACT residents hop to it to help save local frogs](#)

Canberra Weekly  
September 20

41 turtles found  
Win TV News  
October 2020

[Landcare Week recognising thousands of volunteers](#)

Canberra Weekly  
August 6 2020

 [facebook.com/GinninderraCatchmentGroup](https://www.facebook.com/GinninderraCatchmentGroup)

*Ginninderra Catchment Group gratefully receives funding from a range of sources including the Australian Government and the ACT Government and is a member of Landcare ACT*

