

Dear Member Groups,

**FTLA NEWS: 2012 FTLA ANNUAL FORUM AND AGM + EMPLOYMENT TOOLKIT – CAUTION + GRANT OPPORTUNITIES + NEWS + RESOURCES**

Welcome back to 2012! I hope everyone had an enjoyable and rejuvenating festive break.

You or your members may be interested in the following, apologies for any cross-postings. Please forward this email to any of your members who may be interested as these emails are only sent to the group contact and to Landcare support staff where listed.

**REMINDER: 2012 FTLA ANNUAL FORUM AND AGM - Friday 24th February 2012**

Following on from the success of combining a forum with our AGM in the last two years, the date has now been set for next year! As an FTLA Member Group you are invited to send a representative to the Annual Forum and AGM. Additional members and observers are also welcome so save the date in your diary.

Speakers from both the Carbon Farming Initiative and the Biodiversity Fund will be featured at the Annual Forum.

**WHERE & WHEN?**

Friday 24th February 2012 at Level 16, Marland House, 570 Bourke St Melbourne.

**EMPLOYMENT TOOLKIT – CAUTION**

Please note that the Landcare Employment Toolkit currently available on the Landcare Gateway is not compliant with the current legislation so please do not refer to it without sourcing independent legal advice. The Public Interest Legal Clearing House (PILCH) provides free legal assistance to the community. For further information go to <http://www.pilch.org.au>, or contact PILCH directly on 03 8636 4400 or email [admin@pilch.org.au](mailto:admin@pilch.org.au).

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## OPPORTUNITIES

### **CARBON FARMING INITIATIVE - FILLING THE RESEARCH GAP**

Applications close February 3rd The first round of competitive grants funding will provide \$48 million to Australian businesses, research organisations and/or government agencies for the research of activities and practices aiming to reduce agricultural greenhouse emissions (methane and nitrous oxide), increase soil carbon and improve modelling capability. Outcomes of *Filling the Research Gap* will contribute to enhancing agricultural productivity and unlocking new opportunities for land managers to participate in carbon farming and the Carbon Farming Initiative.

Information about Filling the Research Gap, including the Filling the Research Gap round one Guidelines and application form are available at: [www.daff.gov.au/climatechange/carbonfarmingfutures/ft rg](http://www.daff.gov.au/climatechange/carbonfarmingfutures/ft rg) or by phoning 1800 108 760 or email: [ft rg@daff.gov.au](mailto:ft rg@daff.gov.au). Applications for the first funding round will close 5pm (AEST) **3 February 2012**.

### **AUSSIE FARMERS FOUNDATION GRANTS**

Funding between \$10,000 and \$50,000 is available for projects which make a difference to the health and wellbeing of rural and regional communities throughout Australia. Applications close **3 February 2012** and further information is available at [www.aussiefarmersfoundation.org.au](http://www.aussiefarmersfoundation.org.au). Eligible organisations must have Deductible Gift Recipient status.

### **GRANTS AVAILABLE FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS TO ESTABLISH DIGITAL HUBS**

NFP community organisations can apply for a share of \$13.6 million in grant funding under the Federal Government's Digital Hubs and Digital Enterprise programs.

The Digital Enterprise program provides funding for training to assist small-to-medium enterprises and NFP organisations better understand how they can take advantage of the NBN and online opportunities more generally. The Digital Hubs program provides training and support to residents in local communities to gain the skills needed to maximise the benefits of the national broadband network (NBN). Community organisations— such as public libraries, local councils, community support services, and adult learning centres—can apply to

provide the activities of a Digital Hub.

The Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Senator Stephen Conroy, announced that under the second round of funding, the government is looking for applications from local organisations in the communities of **Bacchus Marsh (VIC); Coffs Harbour (NSW);** Darwin (NT); Deloraine (TAS); George Town (TAS); Geraldton (WA); Goodna (QLD); Gungahlin (ACT); Kingston Beach (TAS); Modbury (SA); Prospect (SA); Richmond (NSW); Riverstone (NSW); South Hobart (TAS); **South Morang (VIC);** St Helens (TAS); Triabunna (TAS); Toowoomba (QLD); and Victoria Park (WA). The programs will be offered progressively in the first 40 communities to benefit from the NBN.

The closing date for applications is 2pm AEDT on **3 February 2012**. To find out more information about the Digital Hubs and Digital Enterprise programs visit: [www.dbcde.gov.au/digitalhubs](http://www.dbcde.gov.au/digitalhubs)

### **OUTCOMES AUSTRALIA - SOILS FOR LIFE PROGRAMME**

The Soils for Life Programme is an environmental organisation with the principal purpose of enhancing the natural environment through the provision of information and education on innovative leading performance in managing Australia's natural environment, with particular focus on the Australian rural landscape.

The Soils for Life Programme is seeking case studies of farmers utilising innovative land management techniques. The first round of Expressions of Interest (EOI) has closed, however the Programme is undertaking a supplementary round of EOI, targeting the following:

- Horticulture
- Tropical plantations
- Irrigated enterprises
- Arid rangelands
- Sub-tropical and temperate enterprises in coastal and hinterland regions.

The supplementary round of EOI closes on **13 February 2012**. Further information, including EOI forms can be found at <http://www.outcomesaustralia.com.au> .

### **COLES JUNIOR LANDCARE GRANTS**

101 schools around Australia will receive grants of up to \$1000 from

round 3 to assist with the development of various garden projects, not only educating children about fresh fruit and vegetables, but also the importance of looking after the environment.

Schools, kindergartens, day care centres and youth groups looking to start their own garden program can apply for a Coles Junior Landcare garden grant by registering with Junior Landcare. Visit [www.juniorlandcare.com.au](http://www.juniorlandcare.com.au) or [www.coles.com.au](http://www.coles.com.au). 2012 Grants are now open.

2012 Closing dates:

Round 1: Closes Friday 17th February, 5pm (EST)

Round 2: Closes Friday 4th May, 5pm (EST)

Round 3: Closes Friday 27th July, 5pm (EST)

### **FARM READY CLIMATE FUNDING DRAWING TO A CLOSE**

The Farm Ready-funded Climate Presentations are now drawing to a close, with funding ending April 2012. The VFF is providing up to \$500 to Landcare groups and/ or VFF Branches to run meetings focusing on the key factors that determine our weather and the implications for agriculture.

Run by Greg Smith, who has a Master's degree in Rural Science and has a thorough understanding of the vast array of climate information, the presentations will look at local weather data in your area and provide practical strategies on how to farm in a variable climate. It also provides a great opportunity for social interaction within your area.

If your Landcare group would like to receive up to \$500 to run a Climate Presentation in your local area prior to April, please contact Ailsa Gibson on (03) 9207 5563 or [agibson@vff.org.au](mailto:agibson@vff.org.au). Funding is limited so get in quick.

### **NEWS**

#### **OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY - NATIONAL HARMONISATION**

Changes to the new Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) laws have been of concern to Landcare Groups since early in 2011. While the laws were proposed to come into effect on 1 January 2012, they have not in fact come into force in Victoria.

In September 2011, the Victorian Government issued a media release confirming that it would seek to delay the introduction of the national occupational health and safety harmonisation and called on the

Commonwealth to defer its introduction for 12 months.

The State Government stated that, whilst it supports the principle of OHS harmonisation, it is seeking to assess the benefits and costs to Victoria. The Government has started work on a supplementary independent Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) and will therefore not be in a position to proceed until the RIS has been undertaken and evaluated.

## **INTRODUCTION OF THE ASSOCIATION INCORPORATION REFORM BILL 2011**

Landcare Groups will also be affected by the changes in the Incorporated Associations Act. In early December, the Association Incorporation Reform Bill 2011 (The Bill) was introduced in the Victorian Parliament. If passed, the Bill will replace the Associations Incorporation Act 1981 (Vic) in its entirety, bringing into effect a number of changes for Victorian incorporated associations, many of which have been deferred from earlier reforms from 2009 and 2010

With these scheduled reforms, we are likely to see the introduction of new Model Rules which will replace the current set. There will be some transitional arrangements in place for organisations electing to adopt these new Model Rules, further details of which will be available once the reforms have passed through Parliament. The Bill is likely to be debated in the first half of 2012. Once the transitional arrangements become available we will circulate them to members.

## **RESOURCES**

### **NAVIGATING THE MAZE - AN INTRODUCTION TO LEGAL ISSUES FOR NOT-FOR-PROFIT COMMUNITY GROUPS**

PilchConnect's legal seminar series kicks off with our popular introduction to legal issues for not-for-profit community groups in Victoria. This seminar is designed to help you navigate the 'maze' of legal concepts, processes and requirements for community groups. It provides an overview of legal issues every community group should know about - especially useful if you are just getting started!

Generously hosted by the University of Melbourne and presented by PilchConnect lawyers, the session covers:

- Getting started - key concepts and issues to consider
- Incorporation - the pros and cons, how to do it
- Tax concessions - what are they? Can we get them and how?
- Duties of board/committee of management members

- Risk management and insurance.

This seminar will encourage questions and active participation from attendees. We invite multiple representatives from community groups to attend. Details of the seminar are:

Date: Friday 17 February 2012

Time: 10:00am - 4:00pm (registrations open at 9:30am)

Venue: Melbourne University Law School, Room 102, 185 Pelham Street, Carlton VIC

Fee (incl. GST):

\$100 per person for small organisations (up to 10 EFT employees)

\$200 per person for large organisations (more than 10 EFT employees)

### **THE LANDCARE INFORMATION GATHERING PROJECT**

The current strategic document for Landcare, titled the Victorian Action Plan for Second Generation

Landcare, expires in 2012. As a result the Department of Sustainability and Environment in consultation with stakeholders including the FTLA, is reviewing the future direction of the Victorian Government's program of support for Landcare in Victoria – the Victorian Landcare Program (the Landcare Program).

To inform this process, DSE commissioned RM Consulting Group to undertake a project to gather information on the views of people involved with Landcare in Victoria (the Information Gathering Project). The summary of results is available on the Landcare Gateway at: <http://www.landcarevic.net.au/news/landcare-information-gathering-project-summary-of-results>

### **BIOCHAR – IMPLICATIONS FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY**

A report released by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES), reveals biochar could help improve agricultural productivity and assist in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

This report focuses on production and application of biochar to soils to improve soil function and the ancillary benefits that may arise. Use of biochar as a way to abate greenhouse gases and sequester carbon is discussed in only general terms.

To view the report go to:

[http://adl.brs.gov.au/data/warehouse/biochar9abcm001/biochar9abcm0101/TR.2011.06\\_Biochar\\_v1.0.0.pdf](http://adl.brs.gov.au/data/warehouse/biochar9abcm001/biochar9abcm0101/TR.2011.06_Biochar_v1.0.0.pdf)

Please note there is currently funding available for Biochar research – see

below.

### **NEW SMART PHONE WEED APP**

The Grains Research & Development Corporation (GRDC) has produced a free mobile app which is designed to be used in the paddock by growers to assist in identifying the most common, annual, biennial and perennials weeds in Southern Australia.

Where possible photographs have been provided of the weed at various growth stages to ensure correct identification. Each weed has a calendar to show which month/s the weed is likely to be present in the paddock. The application allows users to search, identify, compare and email photographs of weeds to their networks. For more information go to:

<http://itunes.apple.com/au/app/weeds-the-ute-guide/id482862261?mt=8&ls=1> or

<http://www.grdc.com.au/director/events/apps?shortcut=1>.

### **MAKING CENTS OF CARBON AND EMISSIONS ON-FARM BOOKLET**

Carbon and emissions management is relevant to many aspects of farm management. In many cases, actions to reduce emissions or increase carbon on farms have multiple benefits for farm businesses, such as increasing farm health and profitability.

This new booklet, Making cent\$ of carbon and emissions on-farm, focuses on the practical actions that farm businesses can take now to improve their emissions performance, rather than on the future 'what-ifs', such as a carbon tax or incentives.

The booklet is free, and can be ordered either by

- filling out the on-line order form at <http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/agriculture/farming-management/weather-climate/understanding-carbon-and-emissions/making-cents-of-carbon-and-emissions-on-farm> or;
- emailing Glenda Jackson – [glenda.j.jackson@dpi.vic.gov.au](mailto:glenda.j.jackson@dpi.vic.gov.au).

Stay updated

You can stay informed about on-farm carbon and emissions by joining the Carbon Toolkits in Agriculture Network. Membership is free and is for anyone who wants to keep up-to-date with the latest events, resources, policy developments, research, tools and more regarding carbon and emissions in agriculture. To join the network and subscribe to quarterly updates, fill out the online form.

## **NRM Knowledge Online Digital Archive – Now Open**

This repository is designed as an open access digital archive for publicly funded information derived from Australian Government investments in natural resource management (NRM) activities.

The Australian Government has invested in a wide range of activities under its natural resource management programs and initiatives including the Caring for our Country initiative, the National Action Plan on Salinity and Water Quality, Natural Heritage Trust, National Landcare Program, and Defeating the Weeds Menace. These have variously produced a range of information products - including publications, images, audio-visual products, maps and databases - that are currently stored in a variety of widely dispersed locations.

The Australian Government Land and Coasts team has developed a digital archive to manage these information outputs to ensure that the information produced as a result of Australian Government investments is readily discoverable and publicly accessible over an extended period of time. The initial focus is on publications but the archive has the capability of storing a wide range of digital formats.

For more information go to: <http://nrmonline.nrm.gov.au/>

FROM PAST NEWSLETTERS

### **BIODIVERSITY FUND ONLINE APPLICATION FORM NOW AVAILABLE**

I'm pleased to let you know that the online application form for the first grant application round of the Biodiversity Fund is now available. You can download a copy of the form by visiting the web at Biodiversity Fund - Information for Applicants - Clean Energy Future

**Applications for the first round will close 5pm AEDT Tuesday 31 January 2012.**

Copies of the Biodiversity Fund grant application guidelines, along with information about how to apply for a grant at **MailScanner has detected a possible fraud attempt from "mail.vff.org.au" claiming to be** [www.environment.gov.au/cleanenergyfuture](http://www.environment.gov.au/cleanenergyfuture)

## **BIOCHAR RESEARCH FUNDING**

\$2 million in funding for competitive grants for biochar research has been announced by the Federal Agriculture Minister under the Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI). The grants will fund the research that is needed to investigate how biochars can reduce carbon emissions, and to support the development of biochar offset methodologies.

For more information go to: [www.daff.gov.au/climatechange/cfi/biochar](http://www.daff.gov.au/climatechange/cfi/biochar).

**Applications close 3rd February.**

## **CALL FOR FUNDING APPLICATIONS 2012/13 CFOC BUSINESS PLAN**

The Federal Government is seeking applications for grants for natural resource management and sustainable agriculture projects that address the Business Plan targets and can be completed by June 2013.

Funding of \$64 million is available under this business plan for projects in the 2012/13 financial year. For more information go to: [www.nrm.gov.au](http://www.nrm.gov.au). Or by calling 1800 552 008.

**Applications Close 9th February 2012.**

## **CARBON FARMING DEMONSTRATION GRANTS – ACTION ON THE GROUND**

\$99 million over 4 years in Action on the Ground funding (part of the Clean Energy Futures Program) has been announced by the Federal Agriculture Minister Joe Ludwig. This funding program is designed to enable on-farm trials and demonstration of practices and abatement technologies to reduce agricultural greenhouse gas emissions and/or increase carbon stored in soil.

This will be achieved by supporting landholders, research, industry, non-government, government and farmer 'care' 'grower' groups/organisations trial and demonstrate on-farm management practices and technologies that can reduce agricultural greenhouse gas emissions (such as methane and nitrous oxide) and/or increase carbon stored in soil.

The first funding round of competitive grants will commit up to \$25 million between now and 2015. The program is a part of the Carbon Farming Futures Fund under the government's \$1.7 billion Land Sector Package. Funding can be used to help reduce methane emissions from farmed animals and their waste; improve fertiliser use to reduce nitrous

oxide emissions; and the planting and rotation of crops and grazing practices to reduce emissions from soils or increase carbon stored in soil.

Grants up to a maximum of \$605,000 (inc GST) are available over the four years to June 2015, with funding of between \$55,000 and \$385,000 (inc GST) available in 2011-12. For more information: [www.daff.gov.au/climatechange/carbonfarmingfutures/action-on-the-ground](http://www.daff.gov.au/climatechange/carbonfarmingfutures/action-on-the-ground) or call 1800 025 005.

[www.daff.gov.au/climatechange/carbonfarmingfutures/action-on-the-ground](http://www.daff.gov.au/climatechange/carbonfarmingfutures/action-on-the-ground).

**Applications close 8th February 2012.**

These newsletters are compiled from many sources, and thank-you to those who supplied the information.

Kind regards

***Susi J Johnson***

Executive Officer

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