



21st Century
Careers in
Agriculture

THE AG SHED



EXCURSIONS

Lake Condah, Tae Rak



Thanks to Russell Christie for this report on Birchip's excursion to Lake Condah. Birchip P-12 have received their own school funding as a part of the State government's SSAF.

With funding achieved through the State Secondary Schools Agriculture Fund, Unit One VCE Agriculture, Unit Three Australian History and interested students of Indigenous backgrounds travelled to Tae Rak near Hamilton. Tae Rak is part of the Lake Condah area and is the site of aquaculture activities dating back 6000 years.

The visit began with a tasting plate of Indigenous foods centred around eel. All students sampled and spoke maturely of the tastes they encountered. Our guide, Brayden, spoke passionately about the history of the area. He amazed the group with the lifecycle of the eel which involves an overland journey to the nearest river and ocean, a four-thousand-mile swim to the Coral Sea followed by the death of the eel through the mating process. After fertilisation the young eels may take four years to return to their area.

Woven traps were used to capture eels as they moved through man-made channels. The eels were then moved to smaller ponds that Brayden, referred to as fridges. These enabled easier capture of eels when required by the population.

Students were shown evidence of permanent housing that dispelled commonly held views of the first Australians being nomadic. Brayden discussed how eels were preserved by smoking which enabled them to be traded with other mobs for items such as cutting stones or axes.

Overall the trip was excellent and well worth the day's travel.



Kingston Vineyard, Lake Marmal

Boort Year 9/10 Gateways Class were treated to a comprehensive tour of the vineyard by John Henderson.

The vines are currently heavy with grapes and picking will commence in the coming week. Students were able to taste the grapes and test their sugar content. John also demonstrated the irrigation and fertiliser processes.

Teacher Ben Lee and students found it an interesting and hands-on experience.

Contact John Henderson
johnh@kewines.com.au
 03 5492 9286



Community Partnerships



The State Secondary Schools Agriculture fund also provided Birchip P-12 School with the opportunity to be involved in the design and implementation of crop trials in partnership with the Birchip Cropping Group.

The first part of our partnership involved taking soil samples for analysis. Dr Yolanda Plowman and Tom Jones ran the students through the workings of the machine and involved them in the separation and packaging of the soil sample.

Once the samples have been analysed the BCG team will return to discuss the findings with the students and design trials according to a rigid scientific method.

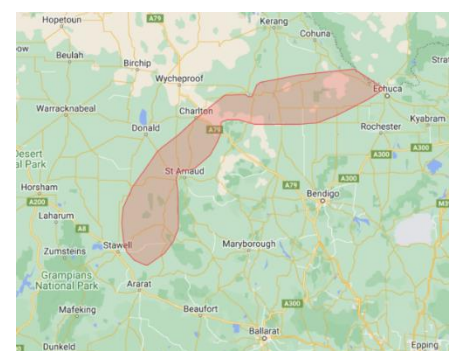
Local Issues in Agriculture

A current local issue for your classes, or the VCE Agriculture Unit 3 - Securing the Future. Or one to pass on to your English teaching colleagues.

VNI West Transmission Lines

Many of our local farming areas are in the potential path of the new VNI West transmission lines designed to connect the renewable energy facilities in NSW and Victoria.

This has become a topical issue amongst farmers from Echuca to Bulgana.



It seems that the reasons for new transmission lines are -

- Government commitment to renewable energy
- The closing down of coal fired stations has led to a sense of urgency in completing the transmission lines to bring the renewable energy to the cities.
- The rising cost of electricity has meant that the government need to complete this project as economically as they can. Option 5 is the cheapest option
- There is a need to improve the existing electricity network. This outdated grid has made it difficult for expanding agricultural businesses such as poultry farms to operate. Apparently, Gilmac Hay near St Arnaud are generating their own power onsite because they could not rely on the local electricity supply.



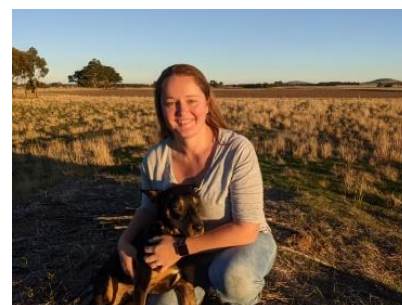
Questions from Landowners are focussed on:

- Impacts on farming systems due to height restrictions
- Impacts on irrigation infrastructure and operation
- Biosecurity risks
- Amount of financial compensation
- Risks of overhead assets in high wind / storm area
- Any Impacts on emergency response



USEFUL CONTACTS/REFERENCES

Katherine Myers spoke with great passion at the St Arnaud public meeting on Tuesday 21st March. She has been at the forefront of opposing these transmission lines from her farm near Ballarat since 2019. Below is a link to her story. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-04-05/potato-growers-fight-transmission-lines/100027596>. She also features in stories in the Weekly Times and Stock and Land (Paywalls).



VFF Fact Sheet - <https://www.vff.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/VFF-Fact-Sheet-VNI-WEST-VICTORIA-TO-NEW-SOUTH-WALES-INTERCONNECTOR-WEST-FEB-2022.pdf>

Local VFF Contacts

Graham Nesbitt, Wedderburn 0409207383 grayj65@hotmail.com
 Colin Coates, St Arnaud 0427693329 coates106@bigpond.com

Loddon Herald

Chris Earl
loddonherald@gmail.com

In the Garden

I planted my first punnet of broccoli this week. While I know it's still pretty early, and it will no doubt attract the attention of the white cabbage moth, I like to get some in while the soil is still warm.

I aim for successional planting so I'll continue to add plantings of brassicas over the next few months.



Sue Gould
Project Officer
 P: 0490 205 705
 Email: s.gould@ncllen.org.au

