
Mansfield Sustainable Land Management Booklet

Welcome to the Mansfield Shire!



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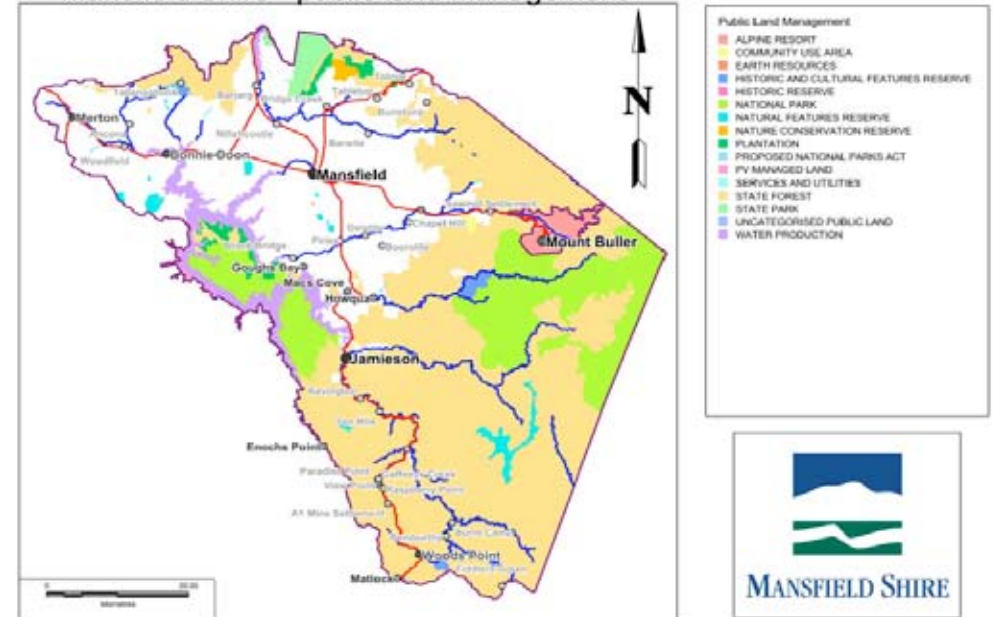
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Mansfield Shire - public land management



The indigenous Taungurung people were the first occupants of this valley utilising the mountains in the summer and the plains in the winter. In 1840 settlers began to arrive and in 1856 gold was discovered in the Jamieson River and at Woods Point, thus altering the lifestyle of the Taungurung people. In 1866, Mansfield was first proclaimed as a Shire and its residents were actively engaged in a farming lifestyle with the successful production of fruit, potatoes, oats, sheep, beef and dairying.

We value the amenities that the rural lifestyle provides for us and has provided for families for decades. It is our hope and intention that as landowners we would strive to maintain the environment in the best condition that our resources allow. We are committed to fostering the protection of land and water resources within this rapidly growing municipality and the Goulburn Broken Catchment.

Mansfield Shire encourages the use of sustainable land management practices on all properties, regardless of size, to assist in stemming land and water degradation in the region.

As a new landowner there are many things for you to consider. The Landcare network (Up2Us Landcare Alliance) together with the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (CMA) have developed this booklet as a resource to get you started and provide basic information on caring for your particular landscape.

Introduction to LANDCARE & Partner Organisations

It is the vision of the Up2Us Landcare Alliance, Goulburn Broken CMA, the Department of Primary Industries (DPI), the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) and Parks Victoria (Parks Vic) to work collaboratively to produce positive outcomes for all landowners. Although these organisations have different roles, together they provide invaluable support to the Mansfield community.

LANDCARE

Landcare is a community-based program involving local landowners working towards improving land management on their properties and in their local areas. New landowners are encouraged to become active members of their local Landcare group.

Up2Us Landcare Alliance is an umbrella group based in Mansfield whose aim is to support and advise local environmental organisations, especially the **Landcare** groups. It is a strong network of people aimed at improving not only the biodiversity of the region, but assisting in the provision of on-ground support for people owning or caring about public and private local property.

Up2Us may assist groups in the following ways:

- by providing up to date information about new development in agriculture, environment and land management.
- introduction to Landcare with similar interests and other groups.
- by drawing attention to the availability of grants and subsidies through various funding bodies and assisting with applications for these.

For further information on the groups within this district please contact the Landcare Facilitator on 0400 613 344 or info@up2us.org.au.



Mountain Bay



Broken River

Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority

Goulburn Broken CMA serves the whole catchment. Its vision is to create healthy, resilient and increasingly productive landscapes supporting vibrant communities. It works closely with other government departments and community organisations to achieve the outcomes set by their vision.

Department of Primary Industries

The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) is responsible for agriculture, fisheries, earth resources, energy and forestry in Victoria. It designs and delivers government policies and programs that enable Victoria's primary and energy industries to maximise their output in a sustainable way.

Department of Sustainability and Environment

The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) is Victoria's leading government agency for sustainable management of water resources, climate change, bushfires, public land, forests and ecosystems. The department leads the state's effort to do more with less. This means using our limited natural resources sustainably while improving productivity. DSE also ensures Victoria's ecological systems remain sustainable.

Parks Victoria

Parks Victoria (Parks Vic) is responsible for managing a diverse estate covering more than 4 million hectares (approximately 17 per cent) of Victoria. It is committed to delivering works on the ground across Victoria's park network to protect and enhance park values. It manages parks in the context of their surrounding landscape and in partnership with Traditional Owners. "Healthy Parks Healthy People" is at the core of everything they do.



Horse Riding in Tolmie



Lake Nillacootie



Bush Walking,
Mt Samaria



Paddling,
Lake Eildon

LIVING IN RURAL VICTORIA

Living Together What To Expect

Recreational Activities

Members of our rural community and visitors to the region have opportunity to engage in many recreational activities, some of which are horse riding, bike riding, 4WD driving, Motocross, boating, skiing and fishing. All people and activities have their place, and acceptance of these activities within safe guidelines becomes a necessity of rural living.

Community Involvement

Mansfield, like most rural towns, has a high level of 'community spirit'. This 'community spirit' can be observed in the support and energy local residents bestow on the large selection of community events on offer. Involvement within local community groups and being a 'good neighbour' will assist integration into your community. There are a number of community groups on offer to suit most interests and Mansfield Shire can be contacted for the further details on these.



Christmas Carols,
Mansfield Hospital

Prior To Purchasing A Property

If you are considering purchasing a rural property, the following 10 points compiled by the DPI may assist you in your decisions.

1. Is the property capable of sustaining what you want to do?
2. What are the relevant planning requirements?
3. Does the property have the required quality and quantity of water?
4. Do you want to graze animals on this property?
5. Are there signs of land degradation? (Serious land degradation problems can be costly)
6. Are there serious pest weeds or animals and what level of control is required?
7. Assess the property's natural resource assets (Natural vegetation – how to nurture or improve)
8. Investigate land use on neighbouring properties and the likely impact on your land/lifestyle.
9. Assess risk associated with extremes of climate or impacts of nature.
10. Do you have the skills to do what you want to do?

Please visit www.dpi.vic.gov.au/new-landholders should you wish to know more.



Mulching the paddock, Barwite



*Angus Cattle,
Piries*

INTRODUCTION TO MANAGING A SMALL PROPERTY

As a land manager, it is your responsibility to care for your property in a way that protects the environment, takes care of the health and safety of your animals and promotes the quality of your crops and/or pasture. Having a farm plan can assist with this.

Whole Farm Plans provide a framework for blending ecological principles into agricultural systems (Campbell, 1991). A farm plan can assist a landowner restore ecological stability together with complementing or enhancing the farm system.

A plan should map what exists in the landscape, analyse those resources, couple them with the present and projected needs and then outline improvement programs which are aimed at increasing the property's sustainability and profitability

When contemplating the plan of your property, an understanding of strategic issues will assist in giving you more control over your enterprise and time.

Here are a few tips or suggestions to consider when planning your property systems:

- Choose an appropriate enterprise – type of stock, crop or pasture system most suited to your property and lifestyle.
- Design a well-planned farm and key infrastructure – good laneways and strategically placed shelter belts will provide you with shelter when needed and ease of movement of stock.
- Develop a low input property – managing weeds and enhancing soil biota will become more cost efficient in the future.
- Develop a source of support labour – think about those who are retired or a family member as a trained assistant.
- Form useful alliances with people who can be contacted by phone or email and who can assist when your skills are lacking.
- Link to established markets – make sure you are getting the right price for anything that you may buy or sell.

- Develop a network of contractors – make a list of contractors you can trust and link in with your neighbours when you need something done eg. spraying, as this may be cheaper overall.
- Develop a communications network – use modern communication wisely so that it can be of use to you.
- Work cooperatively, trading and sharing – neighbours and acquaintances working together are a benefit to all.
- Decide whether to lease land or manage property – perhaps you should lease your land to a local farmer you trust rather than manage it yourself.

Having a clear purpose about how you are going to manage your property will assist in the transition to rural living. Whole Farm Planning courses and other resources are available through the DPI or local Landcare networks. These resources can include computer programs such as the Environmental Best Management Practice which provide you with the skills to implement and record property management changes and evaluate the effectiveness of these changes.



Grassy Driveway, Barwite

Care of Your Land

SOIL

Soil is the life of your land – its foundation: healthy soil breeds healthy plants. “Soil is made up of organic matter, minerals, living organisms (fungi, microbes) as well as containing air and water as life support for plants and soil dwelling creatures such as worms” (Organic Soil Guide, Bryce, 2011). Healthy functioning soils are essential for landscape health, because if the soil ecosystem functions degrade so do the services they provide.

Understanding and managing our soils is a vital step in ensuring the long-term sustainability of agriculture. Practices which assist with establishing and maintaining healthy soil include: managing acidic soils; managing soil erosion and run-off; improving soil structure and improving soil biota.

Understanding the impacts of soil type, slope, drainage and vegetation will assist you establish a thorough property plan, increasing the likelihood of a productive and sustainable property yielding maximum outputs and reducing inputs. For further information on how to implement this, please contact your local DPI office or Landcare Facilitator.

WATER

Mansfield Shire has six major rivers meandering through its valley – the Broken, Delatite, Howqua, Goulburn, Big and Jamieson. All these act as a catchment for water storages (Eildon and Nilahcootie) ultimately contributing to the flow and health of the Murray – Darling system. For further information on water health and recreational use of these waterways you could contact Goulburn Murray Water or Goulburn Broken CMA.

Mansfield Shire and district is a component of the catchment of these rivers and as such careful consideration of the management of water flow on your property should be included in any property plan. Creating dam storage or sinking a bore should be evaluated with the whole landscape in mind. Questioning the motive and necessity of this type of infrastructure is important. What are the options for watering crops or stock that are available to you? Is the dam necessary? Contact the Mansfield Shire should you wish to construct a dam or bore as there are a number of planning requirements and permits necessary prior to commencement.

Stock water is often best provided through a set of troughs on a property. A trough maintains the cleanliness of the water, prevents erosion around waterways and is preferred by stock as a water source.

Named and unnamed waterways meandering through your property are best protected from stock, for example by fencing and revegetating. An action such as this will assist with the prevention of erosion on stream embankments, the disruption of creek or river beds and the degradation of the water quality through turbidity and animal manures. Further information on best practice implementation could be sourced from Goulburn Broken CMA, DPI and local Landcare Facilitator.



Broken River

VEGETATION

Approximately two thirds of Mansfield Shire is remnant vegetation managed as State or Crown Land. Remnant vegetation is native vegetation remaining after clearing for agricultural, roads, towns, housing or fences. The most important remnant vegetation is that left along creeklines and roadsides. Connecting this remnant vegetation to private property through plantings of native species allows birds and animals to move about the landscape, as well as creating more habitat. It increases the plant and animal diversity of the Shire as well as enhancing the overarching visual impact of the district.

Indigenous vegetation is most suited to the soil and climate of this area and therefore most likely to survive and thrive in local conditions without assistance. The higher the habitat quality – i.e. a wide variety of trees and shrubs of differing heights and widths with a large diversity of ground litter such as dead wood and leaves – the higher the proportion of native animal, bird and plant species likely to be found. Native vegetation can be re-established on properties through careful design (Goulburn Broken CMA planting guide is available on line to assist with choosing the correct species). This designing process should enhance property management and production by providing shade, shelter, fodder, wood and an integrated pest management system. If you are planning to have an animal or horticultural enterprise, shade and shelter will be invaluable in effectively caring for your plants, animals and property.

Large paddock trees provide a refuge for a diverse population of insects, birds, fungi and bacteria but are susceptible to disease and destruction due to their isolation from the original forest or woodland system. There are many of these isolated paddock trees commonly seen on properties throughout the Mansfield Shire. Protection and management of these ancient assets may include linking to existing vegetation, increasing the woodland surrounding them or preventing stock camping at their base.



Remnant Vegetation, Piries

The biodiversity (diversity of plants and animals in the environment) on your property can be maximised by using the guidelines outlined below.

1. Examine the biodiversity of your property, the quality of it and consider how you can improve this.
2. Consider any revegetation works which could link remnant vegetation to adjacent properties.
3. Consider the local fauna and how any existing trees could be linked into a corridor
4. Assess the potential for any new revegetation to assist in controlling erosion or contend with salinity discharge
5. Consider the importance of indigenous vegetation for maximising the physical protection of crops, pasture and stock.
6. Consider how natural pest control can be assisted through a diversity of habitat over your block, for example attracting insect eating birds and bats through providing appropriate vegetation.

To many residents, living rurally includes making lifestyle changes and using their land for sustainable living purposes. In saying this, the vegetation chosen to place around your home could be considered as a component of the property plan and once again should be viewed within the landscape context. Questions to assist in making these decisions could be:

- Would I like the vegetation around my house to be productive?
- How close to my home do I want native vegetation and fauna?
- How will I heat or cool my home and yard and how can the trees and shrubs I choose assist with this?
- Are small farm animals ie. chooks, part of our plan and how am I going to shade them? What are their requirements?
- Where is the view and how do I enhance this?
- How much maintenance do I want in the future?
- Can I group trees and shrubs to reduce maintenance?

With a small parcel of land it may be desirable to grow some of your own food in order to reduce your global footprint and provide you with healthy options for fruit and vegetables. A small vegetable garden with herbs and easy to grow vegetables does not have to be a big venture or be too time-consuming. Good information on establishing a small or large food garden can be obtained from Organic, Permaculture or Biodynamic websites, local nurseries or local consultants. The Landcare Facilitator may be able to provide further information for this district.



Pear Trees, Ruffly

PEST PLANTS AND PEST ANIMALS

All land managers are responsible for eradicating plants and animals considered pests on their properties and their boundary roadsides. Pest plants and animals cost the community millions of dollars each year in lost productivity and have a significant impact on the natural landscape.

Pest Plants - In Victoria weeds are divided into categories which determine the severity for the region and the management strategies required. Of prime importance to eradicate are the State Prohibited and Regionally Prohibited weeds. A local weed booklet may be available through the Landcare groups, Mansfield Shire or Goulburn Broken CMA to assist in recognising species and options for control of these.

There are a number of species of weeds in this district which are particularly prevalent and invasive for farmers and should be controlled and destroyed as they have an impact on stock health. As a property owner it is your responsibility to become familiar with and control the following: Great Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*), Horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*), Bathurst Burr (*Xanthium spinosum*), Paterson's Curse (*Echium plantagineum*), Blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus*), Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), St John's Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) and Chilean Needle Grass (*Nassella neesiana*).

It is valuable to note that the ways in which weeds spread vary, but it is often by attachment to vehicles, clothing and animals. Avoiding driving or visiting weed prone areas on your property when they are flowering or forming seeds, and being diligent in cleaning clothes, vehicles or animals when leaving infestations will be an effective management strategy in controlling further spread.

As your property will be most likely adjoining other rural properties, discussions with your neighbours regarding annual weed control options for cost effectiveness and practical outcomes will assist in combating the weed problem within the Shire.

Pest animals - In the Mansfield region pest animals may include foxes, deer, rabbits, hares and wild dogs. According to the DPI website, examples of new high risk invasive animals detected in the wild in Victoria include Red-eared Slider Turtle, Grey Squirrel, Cane Toad, and Indian Ring-neck Parakeet. Safety of self and others becomes mandatory before tackling the management of pest animals on your property. **Please seek professional advice.**

Permits are required for gun ownership and ensure your traps adhere to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulations 2008. For further information on the control of pest animals, refer to the local DPI office or visit their website www.dpi.vic.gov.au

The Wildlife Act 1975 makes it an offence to possess, harass, injure or kill any native wildlife. The use of poisons to kill is highly prohibited. Landowners can contact the local DSE office for a permit to destroy overabundant or problem wildlife or visit their website for further information on www.dse.vic.gov.au



Thistle



Brownie enjoying Mt Battery

Care Of Your Animals

Pets

It is the responsibility of all land owners to register any pet animals with the Mansfield Shire. Microchipping your pets will reduce the annual registration fee and assist with identification should this be required.

Livestock

All properties housing stock must obtain a property identification number, and Livestock Identification Systems are a requirement if you are selling stock. Both of these are available from the DPI.

There is a duty of care for all stock owners to ensure all animals are fed and housed adequately according to their needs: for example, cattle and sheep have different shelter requirements to goats or horses. Property planning including understanding soil types, slope, drainage, vegetation and a paddock rotation system will be inherent in understanding and managing the health of your livestock.

The internet is a valuable source of information about the different types of farming groups you could belong to depending on your enterprise. Locally, the VFF (Victorian Farmers Federation) and the Grass Growers Association may be able to provide you with further links and support.

Disputes

If disagreement or misunderstanding arises between landholders about a land use issue, discussing it with those concerned and resolving it mutually is a priority. If the dispute escalates, involving an informal third party (often available through the local council or the Department of Justice) may be sufficient. Consulting the DPI, Environment Protection Authority or the Department of Justice for further dispute resolution may assist beyond this point.



Sustainable House, Tolmie

INTRODUCTION TO PLANNING & BUILDING YOUR HOME

Living rurally offers the opportunity for a sustainable approach to planning a new home or renovating an existing one. Simple techniques, such as a north facing home, a verandah or eave can reduce the heating and cooling required for your home. Consideration of the most effective appliances can reduce the overall expense of living. Consider alternative energy sources for your property. Advances in technology have provided people with choices about the type of power available. Further information on this can be found on the Sustainability Victoria website: www.sustainability.vic.gov.au.

Ensure that you have a clear understanding with the Mansfield Shire about the planning and permit requirements prior to purchasing your property. Recent changes in policy may affect the ability to build on a property. Understanding the zoning and overlays on your property prior to purchase may help prevent future difficulties.

NATURAL DISASTER PLANNING

Fire and flood are naturally occurring phenomenon in the Australian environment.

Your family may not be together when a disaster strikes so it is important to plan in advance. How will you get to a safe place; how will you contact one another; how will you get back together and what will you do in different situations?

FIRE

The CFA website is a useful tool as you prepare your home and property for a bushfire. This website has a free download PDF outlining the considerations for planning and preparing your property. Consider the possibility of a bushfire when purchasing a property in a rural area, ensuring that the property is suited to your skills and strengths.

On a property specialising in either horticulture or livestock, planning to protect your home and property assets should form part of a property plan. Regulations exist to ensure you have adequate water on your property for fire fighting.

FLOOD

In Victoria most of the rivers, creeks and the surrounding land have a flood rating. If you are planning to build close to a river or creek, please contact the Mansfield Shire to ascertain where your home should be situated. There are certain zones in which you are not able to build, and permits are required.

The SES (State Emergency Services) website has a PDF document about helping to prepare your home for flood disasters.

DROUGHT

When facing a drought, planning is the key to making the right decisions. Important things to consider include water, feed, costs, pasture, animal health and legal obligations.

Water: Will the water you have sustain yourselves and your animals until the next rain? DPI has water use guides on their website. Consider the possibility of selling your stock or seeking alternative water sources.

Feeding: During a drought the likelihood of supplement feeding for your stock every day is high. Good feeding management decisions made early will benefit your animals, your land and enjoyment of owning animals. Ensure you have up to date information in the balance of hay and grain if needing to supplement your animals. This will assist in maintaining their health.

Costs: Hand feeding your stock becomes a costly exercise, so make plans if you are not prepared to continue this.

Pasture: Continuing to graze depleted pasture will cause overgrazing. Overgrazing can result in bare soil increasing the risk of wind and water erosion. To the cost of re-establishing pasture may be considerable. Research other ways to manage stock.

Living Sustainably In A Rural Community

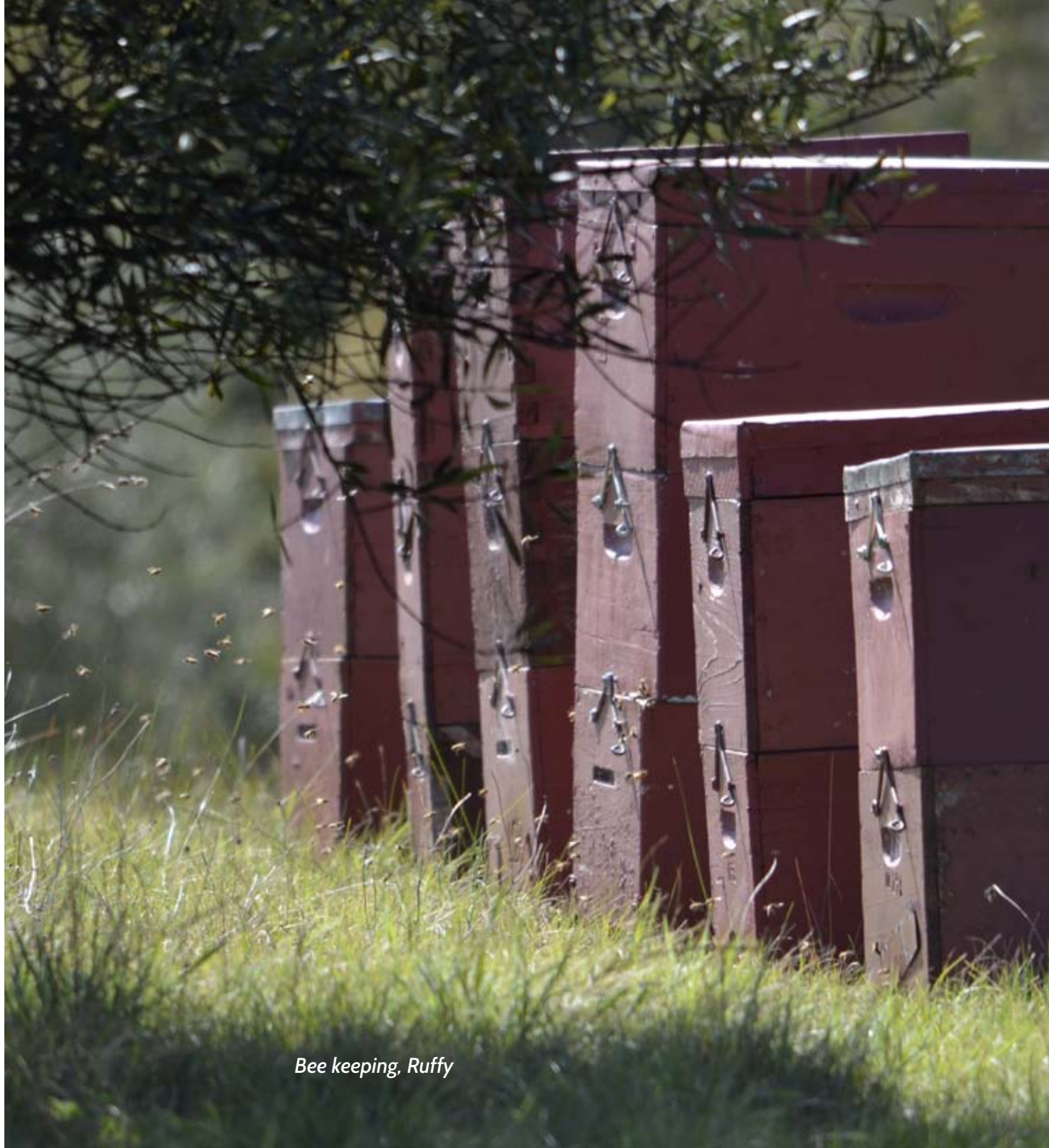
The Up2Us Landcare Alliance is supportive of community initiatives for sustainable living. Taking care to align the following principles with your daily living helps ensure a vibrant community and a vision for the long term health of our region.

Consider your local Landcare group as a source of information, new developments in sustainable land uses in maximising biodiversity of your property.

REDUCING YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

- Supporting local businesses where possible reduces the amount of fuel and energy of a community of people.
- Understanding and contributing to local food and production systems encourages an agricultural movement from the ground up, such as the Farmers Markets and local fresh food suppliers.
- Increasing the diversity of your property so that you can provide your own resources. Can you manage a vegetable garden or chooks? Can you support a cooperative system where your neighbours share what is produced?
- Grow and use your own wood where possible.
- Think local. Join local groups which suit your interests – see the community directory from the Shire

Enjoy Mansfield and the lifestyle that it offers.



Bee keeping, Ruffly



Up2Us Landcare Alliance

For further information on groups within this district please contact the Landcare Facilitator on 0400 613 344 or infor@up2us.org.au

Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (GBCMA)
www.gbcma.vic.gov.au.

Department of Primary Industries (DPI) www.dpi.vic.gov.au

Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) www.dse.vic.gov.au

Parks Victoria (Parks Vic) www.parkweb.vic.gov.au