

SMALL CHANGE 

BIG

IMPACT



Alpine Valleys
Community Leadership



A calendar of simple, everyday actions all of us can do





#SmallChangeBigImpact

About This Calendar

Alpine Valleys Community Leadership Program aims to foster the development of a vibrant network of community and business leaders across Northeast Victoria, its border regions, and beyond.



AVCLP provides potential and emerging leaders with a unique experiential “learning by doing” program that develops the participant’s personal leadership skills, their knowledge of the region and their network of professional and community contacts. The 2021 program cohort had the opportunity to develop and deliver a community-based project within individual leadership teams.

Team Chrysalis developed this 12-month reusable calendar that uses the process of storytelling to connect people with their community. The calendar profiles everyday regional people whose actions inspire us to reduce our impact on the environment, improve sustainability and resilience, and help address climate change.

Enjoy this calendar year after year, celebrating individual action and challenging yourself to make positive change and learn about the region we live in. Please share this calendar with others to inspire them to do the same.

We are proud to present to you the **SMALL CHANGE BIG IMPACT** calendar.

Team Chrysalis

Laura Benson, Bonnie Clark, Hayley Hollis,
Lee Manning, Maria Wadley.



PRINTED ON 'ECO STAR' STOCK, 100% RECYCLED, POST CONSUMER WASTE (PCW), MADE CARBON NEUTRAL

January

BEING PLASTIC WISE

#SmallChangeBigImpact





Nicole FROM WODONGA



#SmallChangeBigImpact

“All you need is that little nudge and someone else saying ‘hey, I’m going to do this too!’”

Nicole is a passionate advocate for the environment and is practicing making small changes to her habits and inspiring her friends and colleagues to be more sustainable together.

When Nicole heard of ‘Plastic Free July’ she wanted to jump on board and invited her team for a plastic free morning tea. It was a challenge to buy things that weren’t packaged in plastic, which meant choosing brands that use cardboard or paper, taking reusable containers to the deli, or cooking with only fresh ingredients.

I am only one, but I am still one

The team worked together to share recipes and plastic-free food options and the result was fantastic. They learned a great deal and continue to challenge each other to think about purchasing habits. The morning tea inspired shared action, using connections and friendships to motivate themselves and others to make small changes.

There is a quote that Nicole thinks about often, especially in relation to climate change and behaviour change, it reads ‘I am only one, but I am still one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something that I can do’.

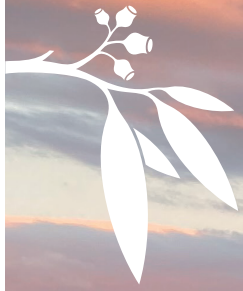
✓ ACTIONS

- Take reusable containers to the butcher, deli, or take away
- Make your own cleaning products and refill empty containers
- Host your own plastic free morning tea

NOTES

Plasticwise have not for profit community groups across the region, dedicated to reducing, reusing, recycling, repairing, and sharing.





February



TREE PLANTING

#SmallChangeBigImpact

Earl

FROM MANSFIELD

Earl considers it an 'unusual privilege' to live on the edge of the Great Dividing Range. He understands the importance of being close to nature. It's simple. Earl loves trees.

"Trees are fantastic both aesthetically and for the environment - both at large and in a small context. They give life to earth, provide beauty and shade."

For quite some time now Earl has been planting trees on his parent's farm. What started out as something small has grown over time, much like the hundreds of trees around him.

*Planting trees makes a difference
and it feels good*

When trees drop their seeds and regenerate below, Earl digs them up and replants them in open spaces where they will thrive. This guerrilla planting will benefit future generations and provide long-term gain.

"I actually feel like planting trees makes a difference and it feels good. If every person in Australia planted ten trees in their lifetime, that would have a significant positive impact."

There are benefits to planting trees that extend beyond environmental advantage and into social and communal advantage. Humans feel a calming effect from being near trees. The serenity can significantly reduce stress and fatigue. Trees provide privacy, accentuate views, reduce noise and glare and even enhance architecture. Natural elements and wildlife are brought into the urban environment by trees, which increases the quality of life for residents **Find out more at arboriculture.org.au.**



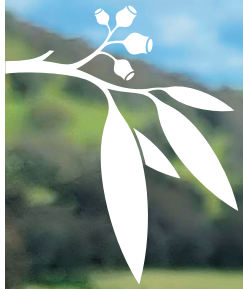
#SmallChangeBigImpact

✓ ACTIONS

- Spend half an hour sitting under a tree, discover its species
- Join a local Landcare group to learn more about revegetation
- Plant ten trees on your property or a friend's property

NOTES





March

#SmallChangeBigImpact

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT / WHOLE FARM PLANNING





Jennie AND Graeme

FROM CHARLEROI



When Jennie considers what resilience means for her, it is a personal challenge each day to maintain a healthy mind and healthy body.

Working as operational support at her community medical centre, Jennie rides to work each day to maintain her physical fitness.

“If you’re able to build a sustainable area around where you’re living, doing the things that make you feel generally fulfilled, that increases your resilience and helps you maintain that”, particularly when times are challenging, as with the 2020 summer bushfires that impacted nearby communities.

Known as the ‘Pasture Master’ to his family, Graeme is a generational farmer managing his land with a regenerative mindset and common sense.

Through observation of his environment and cattle behaviours, Graeme has found symbiotic efficiencies that minimise the decline on the landscape and improve the condition of the cattle.

“In hill country cattle don’t ever do as well as what they do on the flats because it’s harder work, I call it the cost of harvesting.” The 1997 drought led Graeme to track permanent water on his farm and plan a reticulated water system for the cattle. Reticulated water improves the water quality for the cattle through protected dams and piped clean water, as well as managing the ‘cost of harvesting’.

“Providing good quality water, right next door to the feed, even though it’s hill country, makes a difference to how much weight gain the cattle have.”

By riding to work Jennie is saving approximately 8kg of carbon each day. Every kilometre you ride a bike instead of driving a car saves more than 240g of carbon. Graeme’s approach to land management is called Whole Farm Planning. **You can learn more about Whole Farm Planning through Agriculture Victoria.**



✓ ACTIONS

- Swap your car for a bike this weekend
- Take time to observe the landscape around you and see what patterns you notice
- Plan an irrigation system to drought proof your garden

NOTES





April

RECYCLING

#SmallChangeBigImpact

Hockey Kids

FROM BENALLA

The ethos of the Benalla Hockey Club is that anyone can be involved and that every person contributes to the team.

Today's kids are worried about the future, but every single one of them has the power to change that worry into action. Start with something easy like paper recycling, then move on to recycling scrunchy plastics, or help to save the orangutans by buying food which doesn't contain palm oil.

Buy clothes from Op Shops and give hand-me-downs to another family - Erin.

The hockey kids also reuse egg cartons for arts and crafts (Lily), use grey water on their garden (Charlie), collect rainwater for animal troughs (Sophie), ride to school (Hadassah) or catch the bus (Amber), use bamboo toothbrushes (Erin), and use solar panels to heat their water (Emma and Liam).

Many plastics can be recycled into flooring, play equipment, toys, and even wheelchairs. Become an 'influencer' without social media by helping others to recycle trickier things, including sneakers and thongs (via "Save Our Soles" at Sportspower); pens, batteries and e-waste (at Officeworks); milk bottle lids ("Lids4Kids"); and bread tags ("Aussie bread tags for wheelchairs").

Businesses can purchase collection boxes to recycle almost anything from:
TerraCycle Australia - #RecycleEverything



✓ ACTIONS

- Recycle your worn out sneakers and thongs via "Save Our Soles"
- Search for venues that recycle scrunchy plastics, bread tags, milk tops, etc
- Set up your own recycling depot at work, school, or at your Club

NOTES



May



LOCAL FOOD SHARING



#SmallChangeBigImpact



Jess AND Kate



FROM KING VALLEY

#SmallChangeBigImpact

Jess and Kate have always been interested in where their food comes from and grow vegetables and fruit at home, but in 2019 they took a big step and started a food co-operative.

The King Valley Food Collective provides local and bulk food available for purchase bi-monthly. It's an opportunity for people to stock up on staples like rice, oats, dried fruit, and nuts and importantly, to make purchasing local produce easier. "We order most of our bulk dry goods through suppliers in Wodonga or Melbourne, and distribute locally grown or made products like honey, olive oil, flour, and soaps. It's not a one-stop-shop but it builds a connection between people and their food and supports them to access affordable, wholesome produce locally".

My kids experience cooking and food sustainability without thinking about it

"My kids experience cooking and food sustainability without really thinking about it. It's good for their health, it provides an activity for the family to engage in and it role-models healthy eating".

Purchasing local or bulk food supports local people and industry, reduces packaging and food miles, builds a stronger connection to food and can save time and money. **Head to LocalHarvest.org.au to learn why local is so important and to find your local farmgate sales and farmers markets.**



✓ ACTIONS

- Purchase direct from the grower or maker at a farmers market
- Reduce plastic by making your own crackers or muesli bars
- Buy food in bulk from wholefood stores or food co-operatives

NOTES





June

REDUCING WASTE / CONSCIOUS DECISION-MAKING

#SmallChangeBigImpact

Angela

FROM WANGARATTA

Angela has always lived her life with a focus on not wasting anything.

Growing up in Italy during WW2 meant that there was not the luxury of being able to waste anything from food, clothing, household goods, or even opportunities to enjoy the company of friends and family.

Angela loves spending time in her garden, particularly her vegetable garden. The satisfaction of growing her own food as well as the health benefits of being physically active and having chemical free fruit and veggies are all part of what makes the process so valuable. Having a variety of flowering plants around the vegetable garden also ensures that there is a good population of bees and other beneficial insects. Angela even utilises common weeds like dandelion, stinging nettle, and chicory as insect attractors, and then harvests them to eat as they are great for your health.

I walk whenever I can, it keeps me healthy and is better for the environment

Another philosophy that Angela lives by is buying less, buying the best quality that you can afford, and looking after your possessions. Buying cheap, throw away items adds to landfill, and is usually false economy as you have to replace them more regularly. Buying better quality items usually means that they will last longer and can be repaired if needed.

Beneficial insects can help keep your soil healthy and protect your plants. Many local businesses in our region source quality, ethically sourced products.



✓ ACTIONS

- Grow a vegetable, citrus tree, blueberries, or strawberries in a pot or in your garden
- Learn about beneficial insects, introduce a bee hotel to your yard
- Challenge yourself to only buy sustainably and ethically produced products for 1 year

NOTES



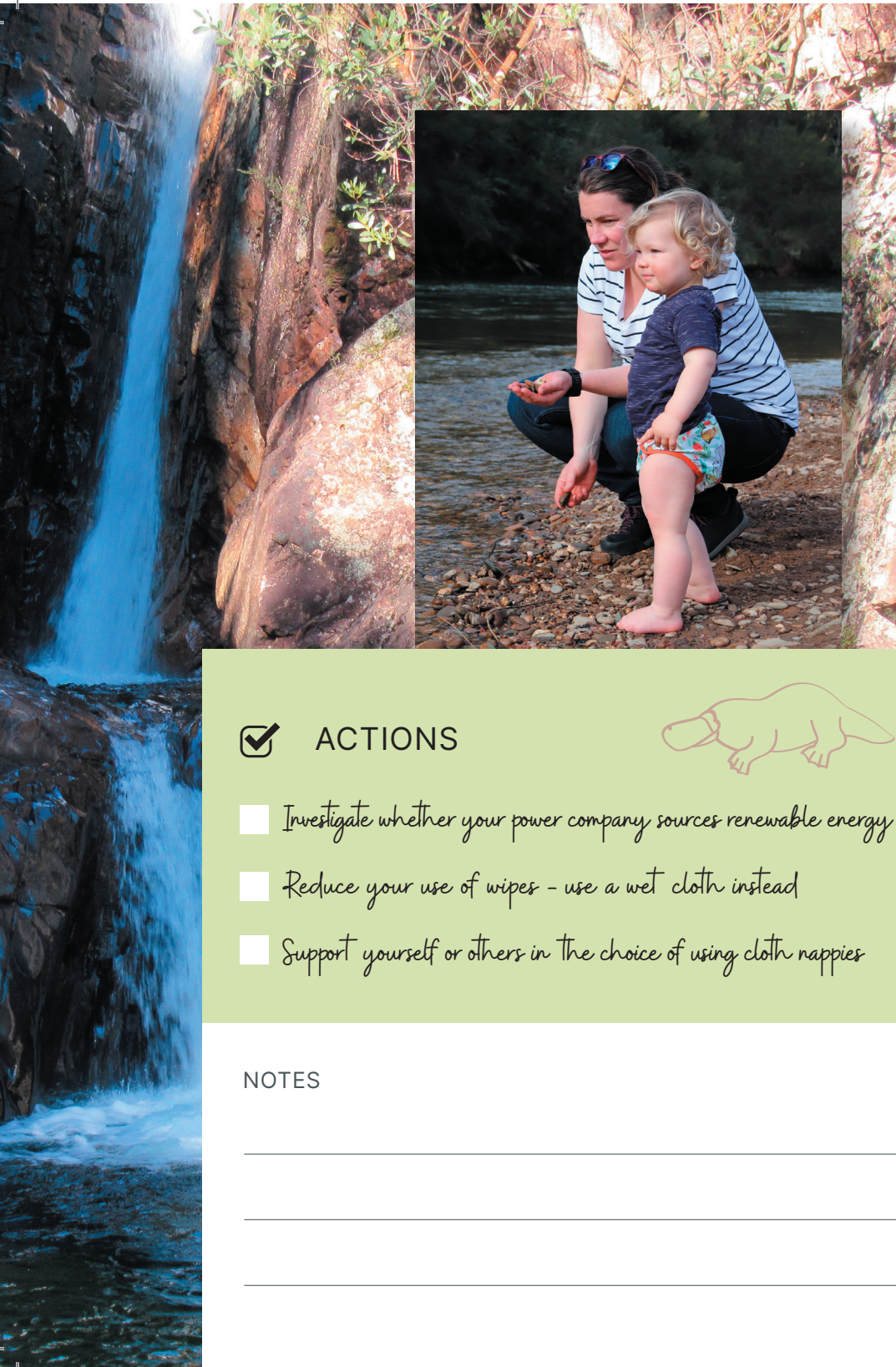


July



CLOTH NAPPIES

#SmallChangeBigImpact



Emily AND Oscar

FROM BRIGHT



#SmallChangeBigImpact

Emily was encouraged to use cloth nappies for Oscar by her sister-in-law who had twins, so she figured she should be able to handle it!

She feels it is important to reduce their impact on the world, after witnessing drastic environmental changes such as the disappearance of glaciers between visits to Europe.

“In deciding to have kids, part of that decision was we need to do everything that we can fit into our lives to look after the environment.”

Living in Bright, Emily offsets the use of a clothes dryer in winter by using renewable energy through Indigo Power. They use bikes around town, and connect and learn from others at the local community garden, food co-op, and food share. Cloth nappies are very achievable, but support from friends or even online chat groups is important for motivation and problem solving.

In terms of environmental choices, Oscar is my main motivation to make a really big effort

Choosing convenience impacts both your wallet and the environment. Birth to 2.5 years can cost over \$3,000 in 6,500+ disposable nappies, equating to 190 big wheelie bins of landfill and over 58 tonnes of CO₂ emissions. Reusable cloth nappies cost less than \$1,000 including laundering (www.clothbaby.com.au). Disposable nappies in landfill will still exist in 500 years' time.

You can 'try before you buy' by hiring cloth nappies to find out which work best for your baby's body shape.

ACTIONS



- Investigate whether your power company sources renewable energy
- Reduce your use of wipes - use a wet cloth instead
- Support yourself or others in the choice of using cloth nappies

NOTES



August



RADICAL HOPE / VEGANISM

#SmallChangeBigImpact

Rory

FROM MANSFIELD

Rory has lived a vegan lifestyle for two years. He chooses to eat plant-based food like fruit, vegetables, and grains and does not eat or consume animal products like meat, dairy, eggs.

Veganism is growing in popularity across Australia and the world as people become more aware of food production systems and the climate crisis.

Rory believes we are living in humanity's greatest crisis, and everyone must do their part.

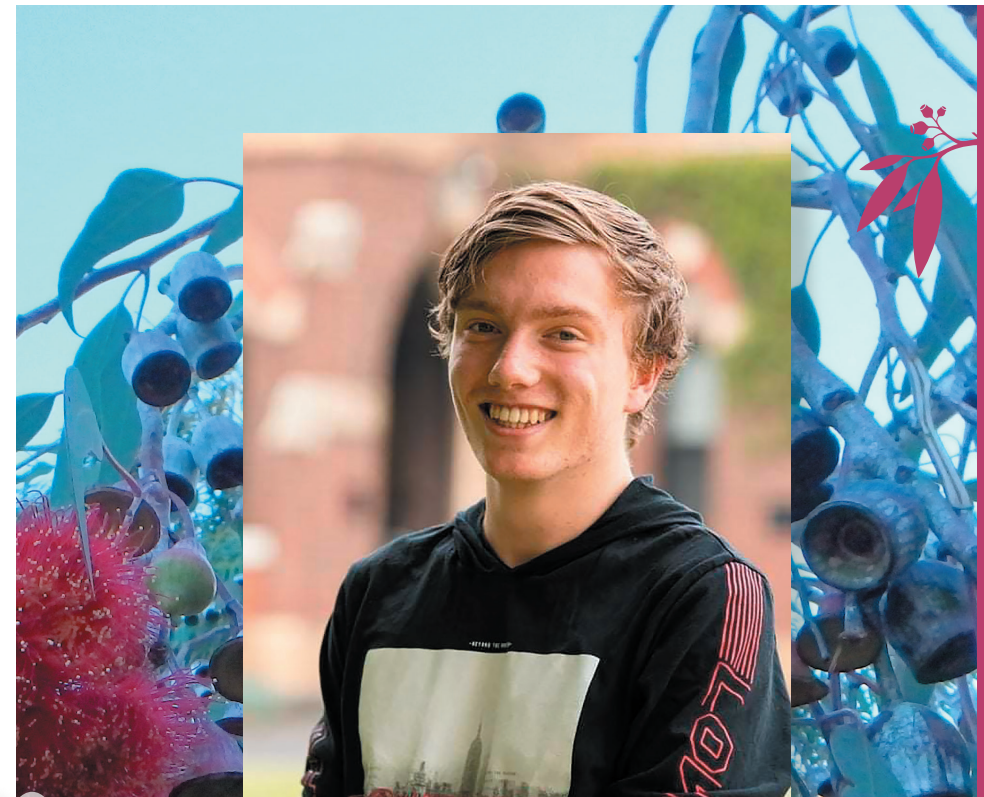
"It does not take one person doing sustainability perfectly to solve this problem. It will take everyone doing it to the best of their ability. It is up to you to make a difference."

The first step is always the hardest but I am motivated to be the change I want to see

Typically, food accounts for up to 30% of a household's carbon footprint so making conscious choices about which foods to buy or grow is a really tangible way to reduce our footprint on the earth.

We can make small changes to our daily habits. Rory understands it's not always easy or convenient but living by these principles is very rewarding and will benefit us now and in the future.

Did you know that vegetable proteins can be produced using a tenth less land and water than meat? In Australia, the CSIRO estimate that it takes 50,000 litres of water to produce 1kg of beef, but only 1,010 litres to produce the same amount of wheat.



✓ ACTIONS

- Research the impact of veganism on health, environment, and humanity
- Try cooking a veg recipe you have never eaten before
- Reduce the amount of meat you eat - try Meat Free Mondays

NOTES





September



SUSTAINABLE FARMING

#SmallChangeBigImpact



✓ ACTIONS

- Start a compost at home or work
- Chat to your friends and community about what you do - motivate someone else to give it a go
- Explore regenerative farming online or in your community

NOTES



Rosie

FROM WHITFIELD



#SmallChangeBigImpact

Rosie has a farm in the King Valley which supports a diverse range of animals and food.

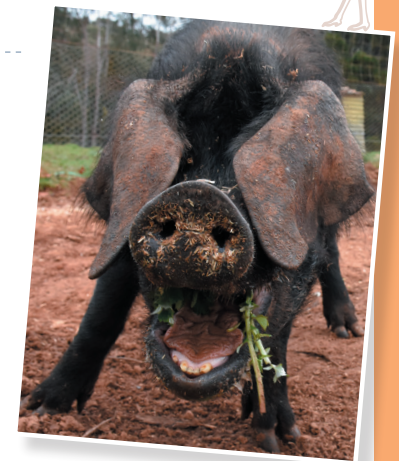
It's here that she and her family are consciously reducing their off-farm inputs and are focusing on a circular economy to turn animal waste into useable products which feed the farm.

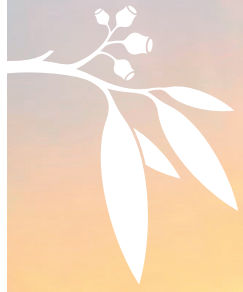
"I enjoy learning and have a lot of ideas about how we can improve our farm practices to reduce the things we bring into the property. We spend a lot of time growing or collecting food to feed our animals – the old straw from the guinea pigs feeds my worm farm which in turn produces worm juice which I use to fertilise my paddocks.

I want my footprint to improve where I've been

All of the small and often repetitive actions seem insignificant at the time but together they amount to something great. I want my footprint to improve where I've been. To leave this property and everything here in a better condition than when I arrived. It's a slow process but it's very rewarding."

Composting converts a waste product into rich soil that can be used to grow plants. Start small by collecting your food scraps (nitrogen), layering it with twice as many leaves, straw or paper (carbon), add some water and aerate by turning it with a shovel or garden fork. Observe as it heats up, starts decomposing and transforming into soil. **To learn more about composting read Gardening Australia's composting fact sheet at: www.abc.net.au/gardening.**





October



SOCIAL CONNECTION AND WELLBEING

#SmallChangeBigImpact

All abilities crew

FROM WANGARATTA

Being connected to our communities is very important to all of us; when we feel supported we are more able to cope with difficult times.

For this group of all abilities employees at a local Wangaratta business it's part of what makes their workplace and their town so vital. Some of the things that come up in conversation with this crew include the importance of actually talking to the people that you interact with regularly – shopkeepers and staff at the local shops and supermarkets, other people who use the local facilities and the people that you work with.

We spend so much time together and we are such a great community at work

There are so many aspects of our towns and communities to be grateful for, here are a few that this crew wanted to share:

"I feel useful and needed, and I know people, and they know me. We have lots of great services – everything that I need is here" – Patrick.

"The beautiful parks and great cafés in Wangaratta. I love that we can meet up with people for a run or walk and then have coffee" - Anthony.

"I love the waterways, and the bike tracks along the river" - Jason.

"I like living in a town that is kept clean and tidy" - Stephen.



✓ ACTIONS

- Find out what local sport or activity groups are in your area
- Volunteer for a community group - Lions club, CWA, Repair Café, RSPCA, Boomerang bags, Rotary, Carevan
- Go to local council meetings and get involved

NOTES

Your Council website often provides inspiration on local Clubs and activities - search "What's on in ...".



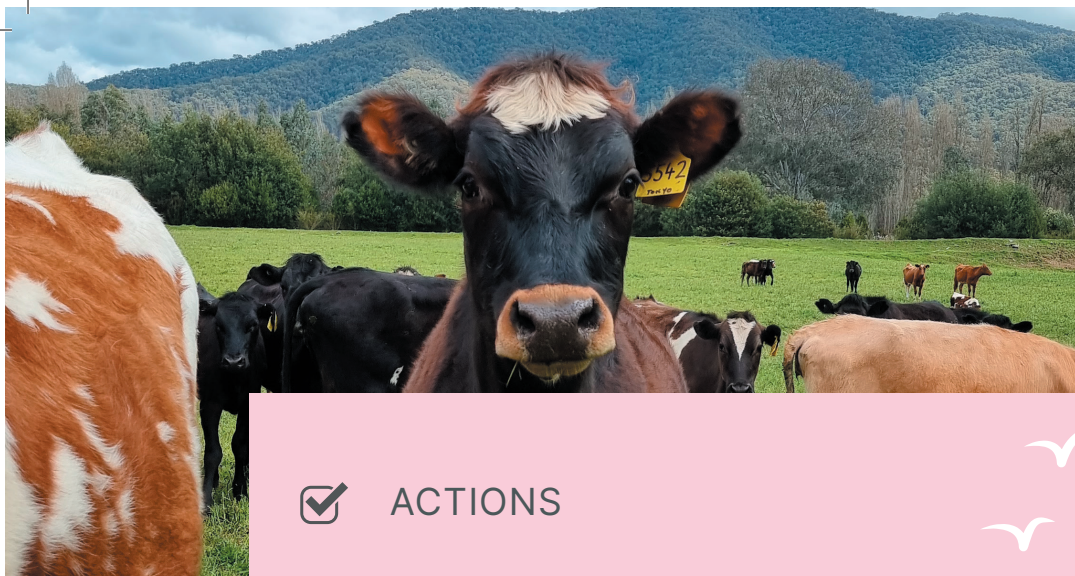


November



CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN AGRICULTURE

#SmallChangeBigImpact



✓ ACTIONS

- Try to repurpose your waste before recycling or throwing it away
- Eat local - reduce food miles and support local producers
- Eat ethically - find local producers whose values align with yours

NOTES

Edith FROM TALLANDOON



#SmallChangeBigImpact

Edith runs and manages her family dairy farm in Tallandoon in the Mitta Valley. Her innovative approach is building on generational wisdom to create a sustainable and replenishing model to maintain healthy soils and happy cows.

By using manure from the feed pad, and hay and bedding from the sheds, she is creatively reusing the waste products to build large-scale compost windrows. The compost is then spread across those paddocks that have sandy soils and are lacking in healthy organic matter.

Sustainability builds redundancy into the system when things go wrong

Planting diverse species in her pastures builds the health of the soil, and provides interesting mixed feed for her cows. Edith is seeing improvements along the way, including finding worms in previously sandy soils, better water drainage, and mushrooms returning.

As a primary food producer, Edith encourages people to think about who grew the food that is on their plate, and how it was grown. "We're interacting with the environment all the time, and one of those interactions is your meal that you have three times a day. If we're thinking about and connected to where our food comes from, we're going to have a positive influence because we're going to be supporting our values."

Circular economy and waste reuse is beneficial for the environment, but also economically sustainable. You can find out more about how circular economies benefit the environment through Sustainability Victoria. **Learn more about your local sustainable food systems through the North East Local Food Strategy 2018-2022.**



December

ABORIGINAL FOOTPRINT

#SmallChangeBigImpact

Ann-Marie FROM MANSFIELD

Ann-Marie is a Wiradjuri Elder who is a respected Aboriginal woman and resides in the Taungurung community.

She believes the North East needs to embrace our First Peoples and learn about the cultural activities that have sustained Aboriginal people for thousands of years. Doing this would enhance our environment and keep our lands safe.

Indigenous societies right across Australia are built on a robust and remarkably resilient cultural foundation. Resilience is strengthened through the collective experience of adversity, such as transgenerational grief and loss, and the resulting support structures and shared resources that are developed and maintained through cultural practices to strengthen bonds, mutual understanding, and respect.

Education for a sustainable future can be achieved

For most Aboriginal people, "sustainability" is the result of conscious and intentional strategies designed to secure a balance between human beings and the natural world and to preserve that balance for the benefit of future generations.

Ann-Marie encourages her family to stand and be proud for the benefit of their generation, and generations to come. She emphasises the importance of sharing ideas and listening and learning from our Elders in the community - to really listen to the storytelling and other shared experiences, as it is the future generations that must make this world strong.

Aboriginal people are a source of sustainability strategies that can contribute to our collective well-being. Through ongoing communication and an understanding of traditional and environmental knowledge, education for a sustainable future can be achieved.



#SmallChangeBigImpact

ACTIONS



- Discover which Traditional Owner mob belongs to your area
- Learn about how Traditional Owners managed land differently than we do now
- Talk to a friend or neighbour about how they feel connected to place

NOTES



avclp.org.au

SMALL CHANGE 
BIG
IMPACT



 **Alpine Valleys**
Community Leadership
Sponsored by the Hugh Williamson Foundation
& the Kyamba Foundation