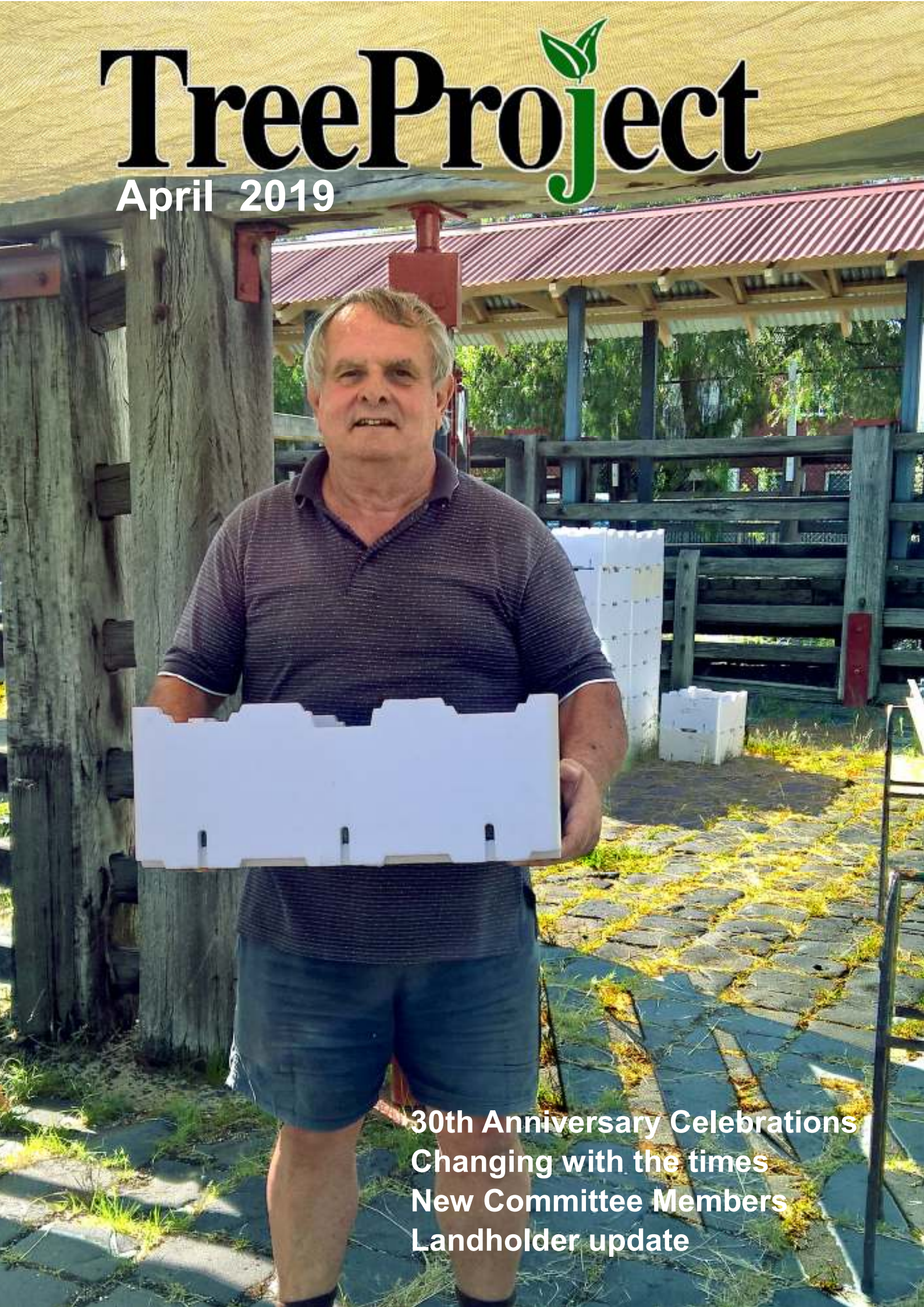
TreeProject

April 2019



30th Anniversary Celebrations
Changing with the times
New Committee Members
Landholder update

TreeProject

Sowing the seeds for a sustainable future

President's report for season 2018 – 2019

The focus of the Re-Tree Scheme is now on our growers as they watch their seedlings grow and develop. New people have been recruited and trained and will hopefully find this an experience to be repeated like so many others have done.

The growing kit assembly team again committed a Saturday or Sunday in October, November and January to relentless tube washing, 44,352 to be precise, and new people came and enjoyed the lunchtime gatherings. For kit preparation, 0.5m^3 of river sand, 81kg of fertilizer and 10kg of germinator were bagged and 11.5m^3 of potting mix were boxed. Volunteers came to our office to help package seed, and check orders and reports.

Amongst the 33 landholders and Landcare groups who ordered this season, are people who have been with us since early days and people who have responded to our efforts at expos, festivals and shows. We are on the promotion circuit again now, inspiring people to take action as custodians of the land.

Thank you for your effort and time spent helping Tree Project.

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Cover—at the depot

Rod Taylor, Geelong grower for 10 years, team coordinator and trainer for new volunteer growers.

TreeProject is turning 30!

30 years ago, the first TreeProject seedlings were planted at Yarra Bend Park, marking the start of an incredible mission to revegetate Victoria's landscape with indigenous plants. More than 2.5 million trees later, our organisation continues to flourish, with the unwavering dedication and enthusiasm of so many people.

"It's a never-ending project," says Lyn Grocke, President of TreeProject. "There is so much more to do, but we get incredible support through sponsorship, donors, and the time and effort of our volunteers."

"We are a group that gives people the opportunity to do something, not just by donating, but actually working with us, putting saplings into the ground, getting their hands dirty." Lyn loves the idea of people in the city and country working together: "It's a good feeling to work with such a variety of people."

"It is because of all of you who continue to give so much to TreeProject that we are organising a number of activities to celebrate our 30th Anniversary, and to acknowledge and thank you all !"

BYO Picnic at Yarra Bend Park, May 5

Fill up your picnic basket with your favourite goodies and come down to **Studley Park Boathouse picnic area at Yarra Bend Park on Sunday 5 May!** It will be a fantastic time to meet fellow growers, listen to music, play fun games, and have a truly delightful day out with your family and friends.

If you have kids aged six to 12, you might want to sign them up for a special ranger activity. They'll get to explore the nearby bushland trail, learn about the importance of trees in our ecosystem, identify indigenous trees and grasses, and try to spot some birds and insects.

We're sending everyone an email about the picnic, so look out for it. Because of the crowd size limit, you'll need to submit the accompanying RSVP forms to ensure your attendance. There will be a link to Eventbrite booking to register for the planting as well as the picnic. You can book the events separately or book for both.

Taking a break from the corporate world, Mayen is busy volunteering with a couple of charities, besides coordinating TreeProject's 30th Anniversary events.

Mayen moved to Melbourne five years ago and is enjoying life here. She loves the diversity of food, culture and people in this endlessly fascinating city, and has never met a vanilla slice she could refuse.

Changing with the times

The evolving approach to local seed provenance

An update from TreeProject's Climate Change Adaptation Subcommittee.

In 2015 TreeProject formed a climate change risk assessment subcommittee. We've considered the challenges a changing climate presents to our operations. A clear risk assessment framework allows us to focus on identifying and prioritising improvements that will futureproof our activities.

Margaret, Kathryn, Lyn and Jenny

Last year, a key achievement was the update of training kits for our new grower training sessions to ensure a stronger emphasis on early and regular seedling progress communication. While this is important now, it will be even more important in the future to help deal with challenging growing conditions and still deliver robust seedlings.

One of our goals is to ensure TreeProject remains aligned with Landcare best practice. Our subcommittee is considering evolving policy for seed provenance. Sourcing seed from local, healthy and sizeable remnant vegetation within the planting locality has been considered best practice for many years, and TreeProject has followed suit. Plant species can adapt over time to specific environmental conditions, giving support to the view that local seed allows for local species to continue where they are most adapted to exist.

Our review of recent research and literature from sources including Treenet, Greening Australia, Macquarie University, Antarctic Climate and Ecosystems CRC, University of Tasmania and the CSIRO suggests, however, that local adaptation may be of greater significance to highly isolated species and vegetation communities. More importantly, we now recognise that the rate of environmental change that species will be subjected to, as a result of climate change, requires us to rethink our strategies around local seed provenance and consider changing species and vegetation class distribution (Carr, 2008; Broadhurst et al., 2008).

Our subcommittee has recently reviewed '*Climate-ready revegetation – A guide for natural resource managers, Version 2'* updated in 2018. This publication is an introduction to tools available for projecting future habitat conditions in order to plan revegetation projects, including species selection and provenance strategies. Our focus at present is on seed provenance issues. The science that informs this guide recognises that rapid environmental change presents challenges and uncertainties. Many academics and revegetation practitioners believe that changes to current practices are needed, based on understanding future habitat conditions, rather than the historical baseline of the past.

The guide outlines the following points of direct relevance to TreeProject's seed sourcing strategy:
"The traditional approach of using only locally collected germplasm is based on an assumption that local genotypes are best adapted to local conditions. Given the rapidity of observed and future climate change, this 'local provenance is best' approach is unlikely to provide the most effective basis for long-term sustainability of revegetation projects". The guide discusses a traditional reluctance to incorporate non-local provenance material into revegetation programs due to concerns that outbreeding or 'genetic pollution' may occur, where seeds from non-local sources potentially interbreed with local plants to produce genetically different 'hybrid progeny', but current opinion is that this risk has been overstated. Importantly, the authors state the following:
"...to balance the urgency of planning for climate-readiness against waiting for perfect knowledge, climate-adjusted, composite and admixture provenance approaches alleviate some of the uncertainties."

Our subcommittee will focus on developing a revised seed sourcing strategy in 2019 to better align our practice with emerging best practice. We will provide progress updates in our next newsletter.

References

Broadhurst L, et al. 2008, 'Seed supply for broadscale restoration: maximising evolutionary potential', *Evolutionary Applications*, vol. 1, no. 4, pp. 587–597.

Carr D, 2008 *There's more to seed than local provenance*, Thinking Bush, Greening Australia.

Hancock N, et al. 2018, Climate-ready revegetation – A guide for natural resource managers, Version 2', Macquarie University, Sydney.

Landholder: Sandra Davey

“The plants were well-developed, had been carefully looked after and were of a good quality.”

The Davey’s dreamed of a revegetation project that would provide a habitat for wildlife on their degraded Yarroweyah farmland. Over many years of farming, it had been depleted of native vegetation and the wildlife that once lived there. Sixty years ago, it was home to bush-stone curlews, koalas and superb parrots. The Daveys hoped they would return if a short corridor of their habitat was restored.

As the Daveys learned, before beginning a revegetation project a lot of planning is required. They had to consider why they were planting, what species they needed, where they wanted to plant, where they *could* plant, what it would all cost, and what needed to be done before they started. In short, they needed a whole farm plan.

A plan would not only guide the project but make them eligible for funding from the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority. With this assistance, they were able to buy the fencing and indigenous dryland plants they needed.

Through research and local knowledge the Daveys were able to select the species they needed for the revegetation – all trees and shrubs that were present in the area before farming took priority. Grey box was an obvious choice as it is the major eucalypt on their property, and buloke was already present on the roadside. Remnant Murray pine, weeping pittosporum and river bottlebrush also guided their choices. In all, 14 species were chosen for planting in the first part of their project.

In 2011, they bought their seeds from the Goulburn Broken Indigenous Seed Bank at the University of Melbourne’s Dookie campus. Sandra remembered TreeProject’s ‘magical’ name from a long-ago read magazine, and found that raising the seedlings with TreeProject was a plan that would meet all their needs. The growing time, she says, was a time of joy, spent dreaming of the good that would come once their plants were grown.

Meanwhile, the Daveys knew that they needed to start by fixing a long-term problem. For years a Goulburn-Murray (GM) Water channel had been leaking onto their property, and too much water would threaten the wellbeing of their little dryland trees.

They burnt the channel banks to find the source of the leak, and GM performed the repair work. The leak was fixed but the process introduced a new (and ongoing) challenge – chickweed. In further preparation for planting the Daveys sprayed weeds, put in fences, ‘ripped’ the site to break up the compacted soil, ran the grader through to break up the clods and unearthed dead lumps of couch grass.

Six months after ordering the seedlings from TreeProject, the Daveys collected them from the volunteer growers, Greg and Lex. Sandy sings their praise, “the plants were well-developed, had been carefully looked after and were of a good quality. As busy dairy-farmers it would have been difficult to grow the seeds to such a high standard, while still earning a living. The benefit of using TreeProject volunteer growers was that all we had to do was travel to Melbourne, collect the plants, put them in the ground and then care for them”.

They planted the wildlife corridor on the farm boundary, parallel to the easement for the irrigation channel, and 15 meters from the middle of the channel, as Goulburn-Murray Water required. It is fenced off from the adjacent paddocks and merges with the grey box eucalypt stand near the dairy. Says Sandra, “The pleasure we get from the plantings is immense and it has probably also increased our land value. We heartily recommend the TreeProject plan of getting plants in the ground, and encourage people to get involved.”

As hoped, the revegetation has brought native birds back to the land. Sandra says, “We find birds in the plantation that we don’t find in other parts of the farm, such as zebra finches and yellow-rumped thornbills.”

On the strength of the success of their initial project, the Daveys have since planted nearby areas with manna gum, wilga and tangled lignum, and have added more species of wattle to the first wildlife corridor.

Seven years on, the Daveys are proud of the habitat they have created for the native wildlife. If there’s one word that Sandra uses more than any other to describe the experience, it is joy.

Of the TreeProject volunteers and everyone who helped along the way, she says “*All these people performed an important part in this plan to restore a little habitat to our hungry land… TreeProject has changed the history of our farm.”*

A success story spanning 30 years

A generation ago TreeProject sowed the seed of an idea that has grown into a community of volunteers and landholders who work together for a sustainable future.

Over the past 30 years TreeProject has grown over two million seedlings, worked with thousands of volunteers and hundreds of landholders. Relationships have been built in the public and corporate sector, working together to repair Victoria's degraded ecosystems. Our projects have made a huge impact and a positive contribution to rural communities. It's time to recognise and **celebrate** all the wonderful things we have done since the first seeds were sown.

Our TreeProject community has included:

485 enthusiastic growers

TreeProject still has six volunteer growers that have been involved for 30 years, 33 growers of 20 years or more, 59 growers of 10 years or more, and 74 growers of five years or more.

Hundreds of additional growers have given their time and energy to nurture seedlings for rural revegetation projects.

Hundreds of landholders and Landcare groups that have received seedlings

Long term partners include: Deep Creek LC and Upper Maribyrnong CMA (16 years), Trentham & District LC and Newham LC (13 years), Nulla-Vale West Pyalong LC (11 years), Malmsbury LC (9 years), Connecting Country (5 years).

Thousands of volunteer planters

Every year 300 to 400 volunteers of all ages and backgrounds, corporate and community, join forces. ANZ has planted for 18 years, NAB for eight. We have also worked with ERM, Australian Super, Hardie Grant, PWC, IHS Markit, Aesop, WEX and international visitors Bliss &

TreeProject growers for the love of seedlings

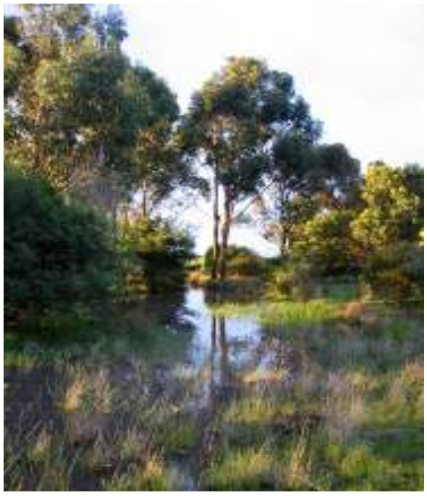
Trentham & District Landcare

ANZ planting team 2006

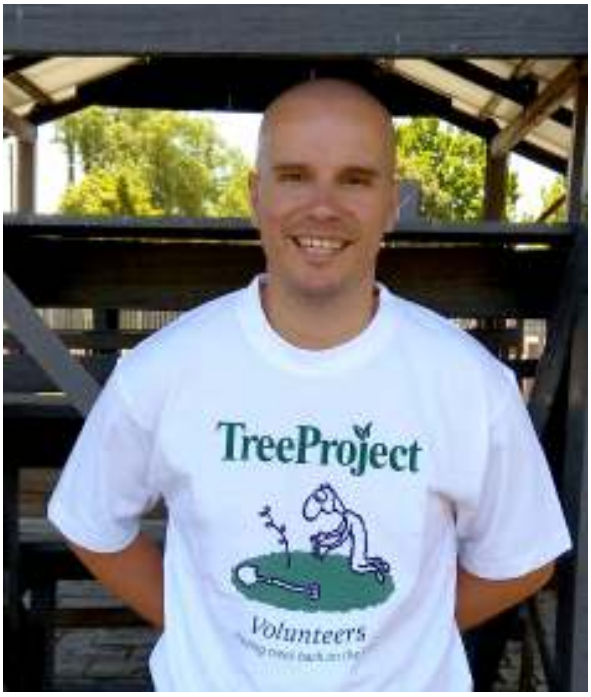
Repair fragmented ecosystems

Protect stock, improve pastures and established wildlife corridors

Re-establish wetlands and repair waterways



Welcome



We are pleased to welcome Fridrich Housa, our new Treasurer

Fridrich came to Australia with his then girlfriend, now wife, for an initial two-year international assignment. Now, after 10 years, they are calling Melbourne home. Fridrich tries to balance his career as a finance executive with being a devoted dad of two girls (aged four years, and two weeks old) and an attentive husband. In his (rare) free time he looks after his garden and enjoys the occasional run along the beach.

In Fred's words, he was lucky to spend childhood and early adult life in Slovakia, a country in Central Europe with significant tree cover. Unfortunately, he also witnessed the negative impacts over-development and unsuitable commercialisation can have on the environment.

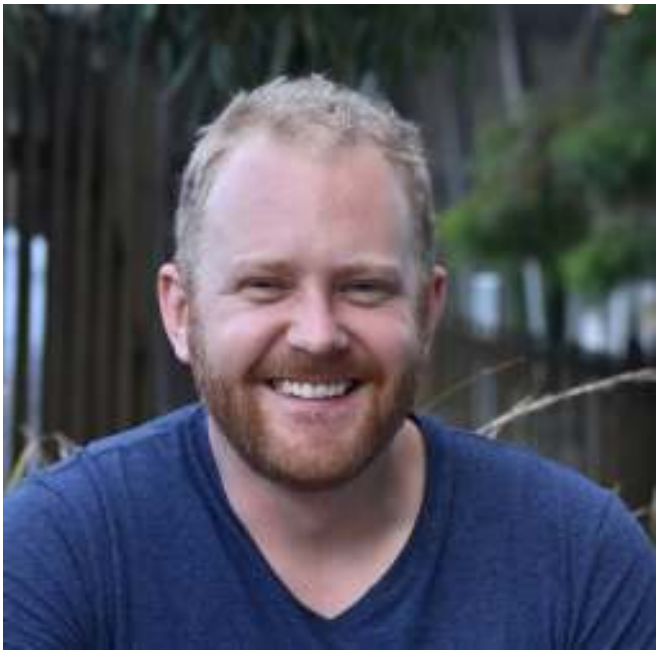
Since coming to Australia, his appreciation of active tree support and management, especially in urban areas, has grown and he has become a passionate advocate of the positive impact trees have on people's lives.

When Fridrich came across the open position of Treasurer for TreeProject, he was impressed by our website and our track record of planting more than two million trees over almost 30 years.

Fridrich is looking to positively contribute to the cause of TreeProject, leveraging his more than 14 years' finance executive experience as well as looking to become grower in future.

In addition to TreeProject, Fridrich and his family have been active supporters of a number of not-for-profit foundations such as Oxfam, Movember and Red Nose Day.

A big welcome to Greg Macallum-Le, our new committee member



Greg MacCallum-Le joined the TreeProject management committee in December 2018. Greg is a practising corporate lawyer and holds a Juris Doctor (distinction), Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice, Bachelor of Economics and Bachelor of Business.

In addition to Greg's responsibilities as a corporate lawyer and member of the TreeProject management committee, Greg is the independent director of the Williamstown Rental Housing Cooperative Limited, a community-run, not-for-profit housing organisation which provides accommodation to families in need of affordable housing in the inner western suburbs of Melbourne. Greg has also spent time providing pro-bono legal advice with various community legal organisations.

Greg was introduced to the TreeProject by his wonderful wife Phuong, who is dedicated to serving various not-for-profit organisations.

Greg is passionate about the environment and living sustainably. He is very pleased to be able to offer his business skills to help maintain the TreeProject's position as a leading provider for sustainable re-vegetation throughout Victoria.

Greg is always keen to hear from members of the TreeProject and he is more than happy to speak to you at any time. If you wish to email Greg his email address is **gnml2018@gmail.com**.

Procedure for ‘pricking out’ seedlings

GROWER TIPS

Pricking out seedlings can begin when they develop their first set of leaves, to when they have the second set. At this stage the root system is small enough to be easily and quickly transplanted to a new tube.

STEP 1

Use a tool to get the tiny seedlings out. Try using Japanese chopsticks (with a pointed end) or an old biro or pencil as a ‘dibble stick’ – anything with a pointed end that makes it easy to lever the roots from the soil and that avoids damaging them.

STEP 2

Take a soil-filled tube with no seedling in it. Make a hole in the soil in the middle of the tube with the dibble stick – deep enough to accommodate the length of the tap root.

Native seedlings such as eucalypts or melaleucas that have long tap roots need a long hole to give the roots a chance to grow.

STEP 3

Carefully lower the seedling into the hole you have made, ensuring the roots do not turn upwards. If the roots bunch up, the trunk may start to curl and that will be no good for the future life of the tree.

STEP 4

Once you have fitted the roots into the hole, gently press the potting mix down around the stem of the seedling.

STEP 5

Gently water with Seasol solution, and keep the seedling in the shade for a couple of days.

Water with Seasol every three weeks to stimulate root growth until seedlings are 6cm. Seasol can be purchased from your supermarket or nursery.

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- ***Promotes strong root growth*** *and beneficial soil micro-organisms*
- *Gives plants better resistance to sucking insects and fungal attack*
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- ***Improves seed germination rates and reduces transplant shock***
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