

Capacity building

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Connecting Community Creek Care

Southern New England Landcare Ltd



From weed-choked drain to thriving wetlands and walking spaces - Armidale Urban Rivercare Group (AURG) showcases success with a Creeklands Bus Tour for councillors and partners.

The issue

Since 1940, large sections of Dumaresq Creek became dominated by willows, privet, blackberry and other exotic species, forming dense, almost impenetrable thickets.

These infestations contributed to bank instability, rubbish accumulation and poor water quality, while the heavy autumn leaf fall from exotic species promoted eutrophication and seasonal loss of aquatic life.

Access for residents was limited, and the ecological and social value of the creeklands was under-recognised by both the wider community and some decision-makers.

The solution

A Creeklands Bus Tour on 26 November 2025 took councillors and community leaders to creek restoration sites to meet AURG volunteers and partners behind the work.

Stops included Ken Jones Park, Elizabeth Park, the 'Weedy Wasteland to Wildlife Wetland' Taylor Street plantings, and High Country Urban Biodiversity sites, showcasing staged weed removal, native plantings, and a wetland creation that have transformed the urban creek corridor.

AURG leaders and our Local Landcare Coordinator highlighted how grants from NSW Environmental Trust, Stronger Country Communities, and federal programs, along with thousands of volunteer hours, have driven this work since 2002.

The impact

Participants saw how weed-choked edges now support thriving native vegetation, wetlands and open woodlands, boosting water quality, stabilising banks and providing habitat for platypus, rakali and wetland birds.

The tour strengthened relationships between AURG, council and community partners, building appreciation for the environmental, recreational and mental wellbeing benefits of healthy urban creeklands, and reinforcing the need for ongoing investment in maintenance, climate resilience, and biodiversity corridors.

Learnings

Community-led creek restoration shows that long-term commitment, adaptive, staged planting techniques, and strong partnerships create resilient wetlands, engage decision-makers and volunteers, and build support despite funding, weed and climate challenges.



Key facts

- Volunteers have been restoring Dumaresq Creek's urban reaches since 2002 with support from various government grants.
- The 'Weedy Wasteland to Wildlife Wetland' Project planted 15,000 native trees, shrubs and grasses and recreated a whole wetland.
- Regular community and school working bees have engaged 200+ students.
- Platypus, rakali and wetland bird species have now returned to the area.

Project Partners



This initiative is made possible by the NSW Landcare Enabling Program, a collaboration between Local Land Services and Landcare NSW supported by the NSW Government.

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