

Landchat

Landcare in the Southern New England, No. 114, July - September 2018



Southern
New England
Landcare

Our mission is to **lead, connect and enable** communities in the Armidale, Guyra, Uralla and Walcha areas to meet their sustainability goals.

Welcome

Welcome to our spring Landchat 114, and here's hoping for much more rain on our paddocks!

We report on some great achievements in this issue, so keep it handy and enjoy with your next cup of tea!

Remember, if you want regular updates or more information on coming events, please sign up to our eNews at www.snelandcare.org.au.

We welcome feedback and articles from members. We also welcome advertising from local businesses. Please contact us at mail@snelandcare.org.au or on 02 6772 9123.

Diary Dates

National Landcare Conference & Awards..... 10-12 Oct

Free Tickets to Australian Biological Farming

Conference offer closes..... 15 Oct

Australian Biological Farming Conference.....9-12 Nov

November Member Muster & AGM..... 21 Nov

Trees on Small Farms & Bush for Birds Field Day..... 1 Dec

February Member Muster - Dr Ron Ehrlich.....21 Feb

Victorian Landcare Network Pledges Drought Support for our Farmers

Dry Time Dinners will be the mechanism Southern New England Landcare employs to support local farmers using money pledged by the Northern Yarra Landcare Network in Victoria.

Southern New England Landcare were contacted in August by Mr John Birse, president of the Northern Yarra Landcare Network.

"At our recent AGM, we decided to assist drought-affected farmers in NSW by donating \$1000 of our own funds," said Mr Birse.

"We wanted the funds to go to a local landcare network because we knew that they would know the best way to assist - landcare is all about local people working together to solve local issues," he said.

Mrs Karen Zirkler, Executive Officer at Southern New England Landcare, took the call from Mr Birse last week.

"I was a bit speechless to think that a random landcare network from another state would ring us out of the blue and offer assistance," said Mrs Zirkler, "but we quickly began a like-minded, enjoyable conversation."

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Continued from page 1

“I think there is a lot of potential for our two networks to form a strong and supportive long-term relationship,” she said.

Mr David Henderson, president of Southern New England Landcare thanked Mr Birse, saying, “People, like the Northern Yarra Landcare Network, are amazing at times like this; their support and generosity are a beautiful reminder of the strength of the human spirit.”

Southern New England Landcare will match the donation with a further \$1000 and provide 10 \$200 ‘Dry Time

Dinner’ vouchers for use by groups of 10 neighbours at local venues. The dinners will be coordinated by Southern New England Landcare members, but open to groups of 10 neighbours who may or may not be members.

The aim of the dinners will be to give farmers a well-earned night out to connect with and support their neighbours, and at the same time, support a local business who may also be feeling the effects of the drought.

More information on hosting or participating in a dinner can be found at www.snelandcare.org.au or by calling 02 6772 9123.

The Northern Yarra Landcare Network

By Anne Fitzpatrick

The Northern Yarra Landcare Network incorporates Steels Creek, Dixons Creek and Chum Creek Landcare Groups.

The network formed in 2010/11 post the catastrophic 2009 Black Saturday Bushfires. Local resident and Project coordinator, Rob Fallon, himself affected by the bushfires, led the establishment, supported through bushfire funds.

The Network was set up with the objectives of reconnecting fire-affected communities with nature, to assist and support fire-affected landholders with the recovery of their land and to establish a network of like-

minded individuals and bring them together in an environment of learning and sharing.

Nearly 10 years on, testament to the resilience of nature and the local community, the groups still work together and the roll-out of a multi-year blackberry management program has tackled a significant local issue.

Of course, there is more work to be done!

Anne Fitzpatrick has supported Northern Yarra Landcare Network as their part-time local Landcare Facilitator since July 2017.

Find them on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/nylandcare/?ref=br_rs

Grass Growers Tea Party to Sponsor Major Conference

The Grass Grower’s Tea Party has been a sub-group of Southern New England Landcare for many years after forming to coordinate and host the highly successful 2005 People in the Landscape Conference in Armidale.

The group has been dormant for some years but met recently and decided to spend funds remaining from the conference on supporting the 2018 Australian Biological Farming Conference & Expo to be held at the Gold Coast on 9-12 November 2018.

FREE TICKETS!

As Silver Sponsors, the group now has three free tickets to the conference valued at \$440 each to give away.

To obtain a ticket, you must be a current financial member of Southern New England Landcare, and send an email to karen.zirkler@snelandcare.org.au before 5pm on Monday 15th October 2018 explaining in 50 words or less, why you would really love to attend. Free tickets will be limited to one per family.

Delegates who attend on the free tickets will be asked to provide a photo and a short testimonial on their favourite talk at the conference for our next Landchat.

For more info on the event, visit www.australianbiologicalfarmingconference.org OR www.facebook.com/Australian-Biological-Farming-Conference-and-Expo-2018-1953714108005961/

Nourishing Australia Founder to Speak at February 2019 Member Muster

Dr Ron Ehrlich will be guest speaker at our first quarterly Member Muster for 2019 on Thursday 21st February in Armidale.

Together with his friends Vicki and Tim Poulter, Ron founded Nourishing Australia more than 10 years ago.

“We in the city are too far removed from the essentials of life like our food,” said Ron.

As a dentist, Ron has been interested in holistic healthcare for more than 35 years and when Vicki and Tim introduced him to Holistic (land) Management, it became a passion of his.

Ron has a weekly podcast called Unstress with Dr Ron Ehrlich and in the last few months he has had the pleasure of interviewing Joel Salatin, Charles Massy and Allan Savory.

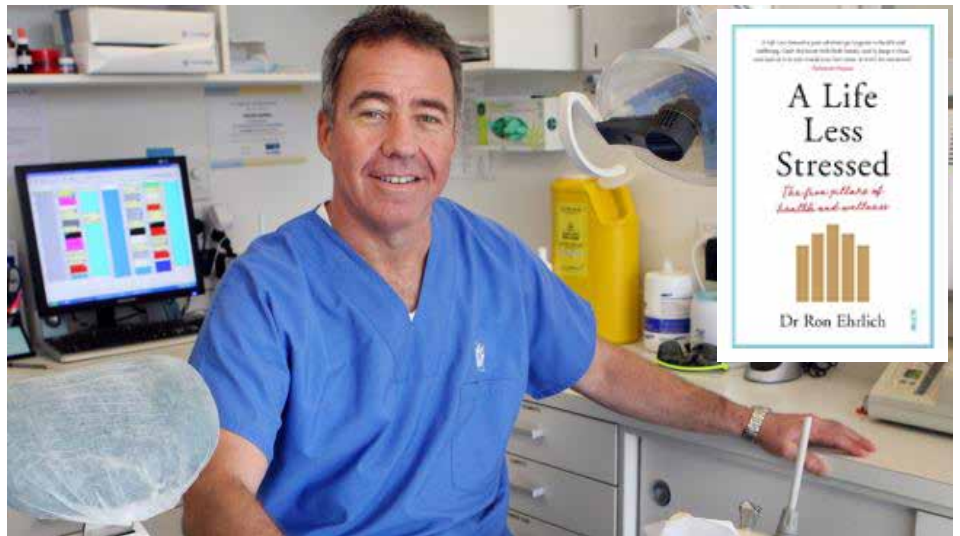
Ron recently had the pleasure of meeting Glenn and Katrina Morris at the MINDD forum in Sydney (<https://mindd.org/mif18/>).

He would love to interview others, including farmers and practitioners in the landcare world who are keen to make a difference.

“It would be great to do a whole series on soils, regenerative agriculture, life as a farmer managing resources and some of the challenges,” said Ron.

Ron is keen to share with community members in and around Armidale his Unstress: Simply Be Well workshop while he is here, so if enough interest is shown, SNELancare will assist him to do this as well.

If you are keen, please let us know at the office on mail@snelandcare.org.au or 02 6772 9123.



Above - Dr Ron Ehrlich at his dental practice in Sydney. inset - one of the books he has authored.

Members Mustered Around Renewables in August

Farm-based renewable energy was the topic at a seminar with three guest speakers in Armidale on 15th August 2018.

Southern New England Landcare secured the speakers for it's quarterly Member Muster.

“Several of our members indicated that farm-based renewable energy was an important but somewhat frustrating topic to them,” said Karen Zirkler, Executive Officer with Southern New England Landcare.

Jeff Foster, a semi-retired grazier from between Brewarrina and Walgett who has recently settled near Bingara spoke at the event.

“Our decision to go completely off-grid was purely financial. It was going to cost us over \$100, 000 to go on the grid,” said Mr Foster.

Landholder from the Walcha area, Damien Timbs, has recently gone 'off grid' and also shared his story and experiences on the night.

Landholders who, some years ago, installed solar power when the feed-in tariff was sufficient to pay off the cost of the system in a relatively short period of time, found answers to their frustrations at the event.

“Now that feed-in tariffs are significantly lower, these landholders have been left with what they're calling 'big, fat, lazy systems', and they're left wondering if and when new technology can solve these frustrations and benefit their bottom line,” Said Karen Zirkler, Executive Officer at Southern New England Landcare.

“Our third speaker on the night was Brett Martin from Eco Energy & Solar Solutions, who specialises in helping landholders solve these kinds of issues,” she said.

Participants were then able to question all speakers during panel discussion before partaking in informal discussions over a light supper,” said Karen.

Landcare and the Drought

Article by Landcare NSW

The Landcare community across NSW is responding actively to the drought. Regional responses vary according to need and capacity but include participation in drought-related forums, events and activities in partnership with Local Land Services, other agencies and community groups.

Landcare groups are providing support, information and referral to landholders with the assistance of Local Landcare Coordinators and other professional Landcare staff. In smaller communities which do not have any government staff, Landcare is the key point of contact. Within their available resources Landcare groups are doing what they can to assist, in some cases pushing other Landcare work to the background to focus on the immediate issues.

Landcare NSW CEO Dr Adrian Zammit met with the State Drought Coordinator, Pip Job, on 15 August to hear her views and to offer the support and assistance of the Landcare community. This followed the lengthy discussion about the drought at the 14 August Landcare NSW Council meeting.

The message conveyed to Pip was that Landcare offers a supported network of groups, volunteers and professional staff who are skilled in land management and well-connected in their communities. Landcare has a role in the immediate response to the drought, in recovery and in preparation for future droughts. Landcare's assistance ranges from technical advice to social

support to rallying communities. As a former CEO of Little River Landcare and former Executive of Landcare NSW, Pip is well-versed in the capabilities of Landcare.

The point was also made that NLP2 (the National Landcare Program) had resulted in greatly reduced support for Landcare in many areas and that this has a major impact on capacity.

Pip advised her role was to support a whole-of-government approach to the drought in NSW. This includes coordinating the Government's response, overcoming barriers faced by farmers and resolving issues and problems. She advised the impact of the drought varies between regions and the length and intensity of the drought is not yet known, i.e. the situation could worsen which will place even greater demand on farmers, businesses and community groups such as Landcare.

Pip appreciated the offer of assistance from Landcare and offered to facilitate a statewide webinar to brief the Landcare community on the support available through the Rural Assistance Authority and other agencies. This webinar will provide an update on the Government's effort to coordinate the many drought appeals and ensure assistance is equitably and efficiently distributed. Landcare NSW will be taking up this invitation and further information will be provided by State Landcare Coordinator Natasha English on the date and arrangements.

Landcare NSW will also distribute

information to the Landcare community on NSW Government drought measures, along with details of the Rural Resilience Officers who are the point of contact for the Rural Support Networks that are being formed around the State.

Further, Landcare NSW will place drought on the agenda of the September LLS/LNSW Joint Management Committee to coordinate a government/Landcare response.

At the August meeting Councillors offered a number of suggestions for how Landcare could further assist in the drought should resources become available. These ideas will be summarised into a Landcare NSW Drought Response Paper and be provided to the Government and other partners.

Landcare's response to the drought will be the focus of our next edition of *The Advocate*. We will seek opportunities to contribute to the public debate. For further information on Landcare's response to the Drought please keep an eye out for further advice from Landcare NSW.

Further information: *Natasha English* (nenglish@landcarensw.org.au)

Apology

In our article "Creeklands Plantings Attract Threatened Species" (Landchat 113, page 13), we quoted Ray South. Our apologies, as the article should have quoted Helen Webb instead.

Wanted:

Landcare MEMBERS to HOST

DRY TIME Dinners

**Know a farmer who needs
a break and a night out
with friends?**



If you are a Southern New England Landcare member and primary producer, how about coordinating some of your neighbours and hosting a Dry Time Dinner at a venue near you?

Dry Time Dinners aim to support small groups of neighbouring farmers experiencing drought by helping them have a night out AND support a local venue in one of our smaller towns, because they too are feeling the effects of the drought.

10 Dry Time Dinner vouchers valued at \$200 each are available to groups of neighbours. Now we need 10 'hosts'!

To find out more, please visit www.snelandcare.org.au or call 02 6772 9123. Potential Hosts should visit www.stickytickets.com.au/75393. Offer valid from 1 September to 30 November 2018.

This initiative has been made possible with a generous \$1000 donation from the **Northern Yarra Landcare Network in Victoria**, which we have matched with a further \$1000. Further donations would enable us to extend this opportunity to more groups. We welcome donor enquiries on 02 6772 9123.



Art of Hosting the Focus of Training

By Jude Turner

In August Landcare Coordinators and some landcare committee members were fortunate to attend a Landcare community gathering at 'Metuchin' near Utungun in the beautiful Nambucca Valley.

The gathering involved three days of experiential training in the Art of Hosting (www.artofhosting.org) approach to participatory leadership.

Three practitioners from Campfire Co-op (www.campfire.coop), Mel, Moze and Dave, together with co-hosts Karen Zirkler and Sara Schmude from Southern New England Landcare, joined with 14 Landcarers from the New England, North West and the coast to explore the powerful calling question: What is possible when we work together to host our communities?

Participants explored practices including World Café, Open Space, Four-Fold Practice, Harvesting ideas and Designing for Wiser Action. We engaged with each other as a Community of Practice in Landcare and our wider communities; posed some powerful questions of each other; and shared some equally powerful answers.

Together we began designing four projects that participants sought

'wise counsel' on:

1. organising the Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative gathering in Sydney in February 2019
2. igniting a passion and involving students in the Nambucca Valley in Landcare
3. Relocating and improving the Inverell community garden; and
4. conducting seasonal and targeted surveys, and raising awareness of dung beetles in the Hunter LLS Region.

The youngest member of our gathering – Chyenne Cameron is a work experience student from Bowraville who has been helping at Nambucca Valley Landcare. Chyenne is hoping to share her passion for the bush with other youth in the valley. She showed a willingness to collaborate, and wisdom and skills way beyond her years, and we predict will be a future Landcare award winner!

In a world rampant with bureaucracy, these few days showed us other ways to collaborate and co-create. This gathering was an antidote to the overwhelming and often unnecessary red tape and hierarchical systems that do not contribute to inspired and motivated teams and workplaces.

This was undoubtedly the most inspiring and worthwhile Landcare event many of us have ever been a part of. We would highly recommend this training to anyone seeking to explore different ways of engaging with community, and of organising teams – whether the team be as small as a family or as large as an entire organisation.

The answer to our calling question, 'What is possible when we work together to host our communities?' is, of course, anything!

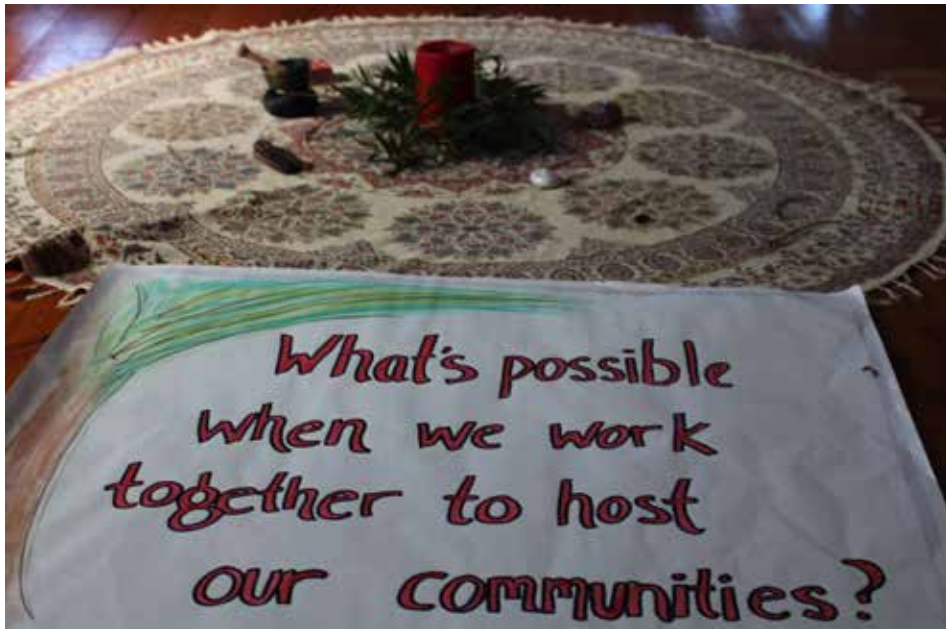
Top right - the powerful calling question for the training at Utungun was 'What's possible when we work together to host our communities?'

Middle right - participants discuss a key question during the 'World Cafe' process.

Bottom right - circle practice is a powerful way of including everyone in the conversation.

This training was supported by the Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative, a partnership between Landcare NSW and NSW Local Land Services.





Landcare Audits Return & Earn CDS

Members and friends may have seen a number of 'Return and Earn' Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) machines popping up around the region recently.

They are proving popular given users receive a 10c return on eligible containers deposited in them.

In the Guyra, Armidale, Uralla and Walcha regions, Southern New England Landcare are the Container Deposit Scheme 'Auditors', which means, we have the contract to audit the machines and the process once every three months to ensure it's all working how it should!

It also means landcare is paid to do this task - a small but potentially growing revenue source. At some point in the future, we hope to become one of the 'Donation Partners' in the scheme, which means we will appear as an option on the 'Donate' button on the machine.

Wouldn't it be great if landcare didn't need to rely so heavily on government grants because we source funds through other mechanisms such as this?!

We encourage everyone to use the Return and Earn process - the more the merrier, and our landfills will thank us!



Around Our Groups

Soil Balancing Group Keep in Touch



Above – from left John Christiensen, Derek Smith, Johann Croukamp, Karen Anderson, Justin Hoad, Garry Bashford, Beatrice Bashford, and Lia Christiensen, some of the participants of the Balance & Boom workshop series who caught up on 29th August at the Uralla Community Centre.

A new group has emerged from the Balance & Boom Workshops held from February to May 2018 with Derek Smith from Working With Nature.

The group met at a Keep in Touch day on Wednesday 29th August in Uralla to discuss insights they have had about their own situation, what possibilities they now have, and where to from here.

The group will meet again on Wednesday 27th February 2019 at a group member property near Nowendoc.

Short Films Showcase Regenerative Ag

By Sara Schmude

A highlight of my working month in August was helping organise a regenerative agriculture film night with UNE's Agriculture Extension students and their mentor Bec Smith.

As part of their coursework, the students were tasked with interviewing farmers who are using regenerative agricultural practices. With limited resources and a very brief timeframe, they came up with an engaging set of interviews with locals Heather and Lachie McPhie (Castledoyle), Derek Smith (Guyra) and Bec Smith

(Agriculture teacher from Armidale High School).

The film launch attracted 84 participants at the Wicklow Hotel and was complimented with talks by Glenn Morris on 'The Importance of Humus for Regenerating the Earth' and Jason Simmons on his broad experience experimenting with regenerative agricultural practices for the last eight years.

A robust discussion followed in our Q&A session with questions like 'What is Regenerative Agriculture?' If you'd like to know more, visit a video of the session at our SNE Landcare YouTube

page at https://youtu.be/_ceRoVmi4mU.

To cap off the night we had the opportunity, thanks to film director Frank Olly, to screen the award winning 'Grassroots' documentary – an inspiring story about an agronomist exploring the possibilities, with the main protagonist being 'melanised endophytic fungi', which play a major role in extending plants' capacity to access nutrients. Frank has kindly offered that anyone wishing to host their own screening may contact him at grassrootsthedoc@gmail.com.

Road to Regen



Road to Regen was an event that took a closer look at regenerative farming with speakers Joel Williams and Grant Sims. Participants began the day in a workshop setting at the Welder's Dog in Armidale and then travelled to Jason Simmons' property on Long Swamp Road south-east of Armidale.

Joel Williams from Integrated Soils is an internationally recognised presenter on soil and plant health and resilience. His session was about facilitating participant's understanding of soil-plant dynamics on their farm and improve their capacity to make management decisions. He has worked with a range of production systems but primarily with conventional producers applying a nutritional and biological approach to managing plant and soil health and towards reducing input costs. Joel is currently authoring a book on soil biology and the links between soil and plant health.

Grant Sims hails from Pine Grove in Victoria and has started a group called 'No-till Farming Victoria'. Grant shared his experience of no-till broadacre farming, which since 2008 has improved the life and function of his farm's soil biology. Participants related to his approach with feedback stating that they were more likely to explore regenerative practices such as mixed species cover cropping now that they have heard Grant's story. You can find more about Grant's approach at <https://www.vicnotill.com.au/no-till-farming-systems/>.

Venturing out to Jason Simmons' enabled everyone to network and gain an insight into the regenerative practices he has applied to his 480 acre property 'The Gums'.

Highlights included the large-scale composting system, learning how he has balanced soil nutrition and ecology and seeing the success of his pasture cropping and planned grazing systems.

Top - participants crowd into the Welder's Dog. Middle - Composting at the farm scale. Bottom - Healthy soil.



Around Our Groups

Woolbrook Rallies for Drought Support

The Woolbrook Hall was bursting at the seams on Saturday 25th August.

Woolbrook Landcare Group helped support a community gathering "Doing it for Woolbrook 2354", which was instigated by Sydney resident Mark Rosa and his partner.

Mark and his family and friends coordinated groceries, water, toys and other goods from both Sydney and locally to hand out on the night. More than 120 people gathered to share a meal and socialise.

Below - dinner at the Woolbrook Hall for community members affected by drought.



Malpas Catchment Project Update

A Steering Committee has been reformed for the Malpas Project.

Committee members are: Bill Perrottet (Landholder), Bernadette Phelps (Landholder), Derek Smith (Landholder), Beth White (Landholder), Luke Finnegan (Armidale Regional Council), Leith Hawkins (Northern Tablelands Local Land Services) and Rachel Lawrence (SNEL Landcare).

A \$12.4 million grant for the Malpas Guyra pipeline was approved in June. This will provide greater security for Guyra's water supply and may open doors for more job creation in the region.

Fencing maintenance is currently underway at Malpas Dam. This maintenance will be ongoing for a while and will assist in improving the quality of water entering the dam directly.

Harnham Hosts Brazilian BBQ for Drought

Harnham Landcare Group teamed up with Sydney-based Chris and Helen Thompson (Kipling's Garage Bar) to host a Brazilian BBQ and Music night at the Kentucky Hall on Saturday 22nd September.

The whole community enjoyed sumptuous food and joyful music performed by Massiel Barros-Torning, Peter Georkas, and Jon Anderson from Armidale.

The idea was to provide a fun social time for community members to have some much-needed relief from the burden of drought.

The night was a great success. Harnham Landcare would like to thank Chris and Helen Thompson and team for their initiative and care!

Below - Latin Fusion Music by L-R Jon Anderson, Massiel-Barros Torning & Peter Georkas.



New Hours for SNE Landcare Team

Due to further cuts in funding and a number of unsuccessful grant applications to the National Landcare Program Phase 2 earlier this year, the team at SNE Landcare have reduced their hours on the job to enable available funds to go further and retain a level of service to our members and communities.

- Karen Zirkler, p/t Executive Officer and p/t Local Landcare Coordinator (Rural), Monday to Thursday.
- Sara Schmude, p/t Local Landcare Coordinator (Urban & Youth), Tuesday – Thursday.
- Struan Ferguson, p/t Administration, 15 hours Tuesday – Thursday.
- Rachel Lawrence, p/t Malpas Catchment Coordinator, 9.5 hours Tuesday – Wednesday.
- Our book keeper Mandy Fenwicke is normally in on Thursdays to process payments etc.

Please note our office hours will remain 9am - 3 pm Tuesday - Thursday (closed Mondays and Fridays).

This allows us to consolidate staff time together so we can better connect and provide a more consistent service to our members and organizational partners. It also allows Karen to have a day each week working from home, which increases her productivity on those days!

Prickly Problems Project Launched

Trials with river rock mulch, interpretive signage, keen volunteers, the 3 Robinia Sisters, mud cake, our State MP and the Armidale Regional Council Mayor where just some of the highlights of the Prickly Problems Project launch.

Armidale Urban Rivercare Group have worked tirelessly this past year removing the highly invasive *Robinia pseudoacacia* that began its life in the 1940s to then establish into an impenetrable forest on the banks of Dumaresq Creek, East Armidale.

The launch attended by a great cross section of the community was hosted on site with our AURG representatives Bruce Whan and Bryan Johnson, who engaged the crowd with stories of how the project evolved and has achieved great outcomes for the community.

Below - L-R Adam Marshall MP, Bruce Whan (AURG), Dr Darren Ryder (UNE) and Armidale Regional Council Mayor Simon Murray.

Mayor, Cr Simon Murray cut the willow branch to officially unveil a grand sign that tells the history of the site and AURG's involvement in working in partnership with key stakeholders rehabilitating the creeklands these past 16 years.

"It was a pleasure to join with the community to celebrate this occasion and discuss the next couple projects for the group in the coming 12 months, as it tackles other sections of the creeklands. A huge congratulations to Bruce, Bryan, their team and all the volunteers who helped make this happen. It is spectacular!!" said Adam Marshall MP.

AURG will host a working bee 8.30 am on the second Sunday of October to December, south of Pil Wheaton Soccer Fields Armidale. Morning tea & sausage sizzle provided. All welcome.



PEER GROUP MENTORING SERVICE FOR AGROFORESTRY



FARMER TO FARMER EXTENSION

FOR FARMERS MANAGING TREES FOR REASONS THAT MATTER TO THEM!



WHO ARE THE MENTORS?

- LOCAL EXPERIENCED TREE GROWERS
- MASTER TREEGROWER PROGRAM GRADUATES
- TRAINED MENTORS



WHAT SERVICES ARE PROVIDED?

- FARM VISITS SUPPORT YOUR IDEAS & GOALS
- TECHNICAL EXPERTISE AND INFORMATION
- SITE REPORTS



WHAT TOPICS CAN BE COVERED?

- Shade and shelter
- Farm aesthetics
- Natives or exotics
- Tree establishment
- Habitat
- Farm tree planning
- Native forest management
- Species identification
- Trees for timber

HOW DO WE KNOW IT WORKS?

Most significant change technique tells the story...

The suggestions and guidance of what species to try, planting locations, when and in what season to plant, as well as planting designs have all been of tremendous value.

Helen Nino & David Menzies, Castletbrook, Uralla

The mentors passed on valuable insights about the diversity in my forest and helped me see it as a whole ecosystem. They also provided useful practical tips which filled out much of my own opinions on where to go with its management.

Rob Laurie, Brigadona, Nowendoc.



WWW.SNELANDCARE.ORG.AU

A project of the New England Agri-Woodland Network (NEAWN), a sub-group of Southern New England Landcare Ltd. This project is supported with funding from the Australian Government, and in-kind contributions from the Australian Agroforestry Foundation.



Mike & Jane Reaching for Potential at Kelly's Plains

Before moving to Armidale we came from a farming background out near Dungowan, west of Tamworth. Our farm was much larger than what we have now and was run as a commercial enterprise with irrigated Lucerne, cattle and occasionally fat lambs.

We have been on our Kelly's Plains property for three years. Our block is a windy, nearly treeless landscape, typical of the area. When we arrived, our farm was almost treeless, except for a few paddock trees and plenty of Hawthorn.

Out at Dungowan trees were primarily thought of as shelter for stock. Here on our 40 acre hobby farm we hold a different view and are in a position where we have smaller acreage just to play with. We still want trees for shelter but additionally for habitat and aesthetics and ideally, we wanted natural plantings, we didn't want to plant tree lines.

Both of us signed up for the Master TreeGrower program and really liked the diversity of properties and different approaches. While we found that the course content was not always relevant to us in our situation it was always interesting and encouraged people to be involved and try different things.

Using trees commercially was also new concept for us and while this isn't what we are aiming to do on our property we liked the idea and found this to be an interesting concept. The Master TreeGrower program also influenced our ideas for how to plant and we learnt the importance of ripping, spraying and mulching to reduce weed mass enhance growth rates and limit mortality rates of plantings.

In November the same year we had a visit from three Peer Group Mentors - Shane, Garry and Carol.

We benefited from their advice and suggestions on where to plant what species and where to start. We found them to be an enthusiastic group and enjoyed the discussions and having them out to our farm.

Since our MTG program and the PGM visit we have planted 450 trees on the farm and have recently written up and submitted a grant to help out with our next planting stage.

We are now much more confident than when we started that we have the ability to undertake a successful planting because we have a much better idea of the 'how, what and where'. We have even produced farm maps to further assist in planning future plantings which we aim to undertake on the east of the property and expand on the recent plantings to the south.

We didn't realise the regeneration potential of paddock trees and are now incorporating them where we can into the patchwork plantings that we've adopted and are most interested in.

Our awareness of plant and even bird species has also increased and we now have a better understanding of the importance of trees for birds and bugs.

For us this experience has strengthened existing relationships and allowed for new connections and networks.

*Mike Patterson and Jane Marr
8th February 2018*

Interview by Ben Vincent (PGM)

2018 National Landcare Conference & Awards

10-12 October | Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre

Good luck to our Armidale High School BC² Group who are finalists in the Junior Landcare Team Award!

Vote for them in the People's Choice Award!

<http://www.nationallandcareconference.org.au/>

Half Price National Conference Tickets if Drought-Declared!

If you're a Landcarer in a drought-declared area, and would like to attend this year's National Landcare Conference in Brisbane, Landcare Australia are offering you half price community registration.

If you've already registered and are in a drought declared area, Landcare Australia invite you to bring a friend for free.

To take advantage of this special offer, please email awards@landcareaustralia.com.au with your full name, address and phone number, and if applicable, your friend's name their full address and number.

Program and speakers at www.nationallandcareconference.org.au. Terms and Conditions apply.

Upland Wetlands of the New England Tableland Bioregion

Northern Tablelands Local Land Services have recently completed a project looking at upland wetlands on the New England Tablelands.

Upland wetlands are ephemeral wetlands occurring along the spine of the Great Dividing Range – they are often referred to as “lagoons”. These wetlands are less than 1.5m deep, generally ovoid shaped and characterized by a crescent shaped dune (lunette) on the eastern or downwind side. They oscillate between wet and dry, with dry being more common than wet, hence the term “lagoon” can be a little misleading. Some upland wetlands will fill in most years (perhaps not this year) while some will only fill once or twice in a century or even less. They only form in areas where rainfall is <1000 mm/year, with similar wetlands also occurring in the Southern Tablelands and Monaro region. Some local well-known examples are Dangars, Thomas and Racecourse Lagoons near Uralla, Barley Fields Lagoon, Callahan’s Lagoon at Niangala, Mother of Duck’s and Llangothlin and Little Llangothlin.

Fifty-eight wetlands ranging in size from 443 ha (Mother of Ducks and Llangothlin) to 0.3 ha, covering almost 2000 ha are known within the New England Tablelands Bioregion. Almost 70% of the wetlands studied in the NTLIS project were in moderate (or better) condition, 15% (five lagoons) were in excellent condition and 26% were either in very poor condition or extinct.

Upland wetlands are listed as threatened communities/ecosystems. This is because there are so few of them and they have often been altered historically through draining or damming, cultivation, nutrient enrichment, inappropriate grazing, the impact of run-off or drift from farm chemicals and inappropriate enhancement such as the planting of shrubby species (that don’t naturally occur in these ecosystems). These Wetlands co-occur with two other threatened biological communities (Montane Peatlands and Carex Sedgeland) that are also important for ecological functioning and biodiversity within the broader landscape.

The wetlands are unique and threatened plant communities that have a unique function. They are important habitat for many bird species including local birds, but also birds that migrate from as far away as Siberia. They also support abundant terrestrial and aquatic invertebrates including insects (aquatic and terrestrial life-stages), spiders and non-insect aquatic invertebrates such as crustaceans. All of these are an essential food source for wildlife (i.e. reptiles, frogs, bats and small native mammals in addition to birds). This wildlife is a joy in itself to have around, but also serves an important pest control role on farm - and in your gardens! Wetlands are also a source of persistent moisture (and therefore abundant life) as landscapes go through wetter and drier times seasonally and with longer-term cycles.

Plant species that are found within the wetland community are generally not rare. It is the composition of the communities that is unique. There are effectively concentric rings of changing vegetation across the wetland profiles. The concentration of several different vegetation communities within such a small area allows for a great diversity of plant and wildlife to coexist. These plant communities are as follows:

- On the outer rim is wet tussock grassland. These grasslands are dominated by taller tussocky species such as Paspalums, Swamp Foxtail, Juncus and Sedges with other grassy species also present.
- Inside the wet tussock grassland is mixed grassland and marsh. This is a very diverse, interchangeable zone that is a wet tussock grassland dominated by a mixture of grasses and sedges that includes Eleocharis gracilis/Slender Spike sedge (absent in the wet tussock grassland), along with a strong sub-dominant flora of mixed herbs. Holcus lanatus/ Yorkshire Fog is commonly invasive in this zone as well.
- Marsh/sedgeland is inside this zone. Marsh/Sedgeland requires extended inundation of >10 cm and <50 cm depth. It is dominated by sedges and moisture tolerant grasses along with a variety of forbs that can survive (and thrive with) inundation.
- In the innermost zone is Sedgeland. This plant



Above - Black Swans find healthy upland wetlands good sites for nesting.



Above and below - upland wetlands are typically shallow and support various communities of wetland plants.



community requires semi-permanent water at least 50 cm deep for extended periods and is dominated Myriophyllum* variifolium, Eleocharis acuta/Spikerush and Eleocharis sphacelata (Tall Spikerush).

The wet tussock grassland is inside fringing vegetation. This fringing vegetation consists of tussocky perennial grasses and serves the important function of filtering nutrients and/or pesticides from the surrounding landscapes of the wetlands.

Thick layers of peat build-up over time in these wetlands due to wetting and drying cycles and the anaerobic environment which leads to peat formation. This peat acts as a sponge holding water for long periods of time.

While there is a reasonable understanding of the importance of these wetlands to overall landscape functioning and biodiversity, relatively little scientific work has been done on them. Continuous, and heavy, grazing is detrimental to the wetlands because livestock can alter the ground layer dynamics by increasing surface area and greatly accelerating evaporation of these shallow water bodies. They also damage the spongy, peat layer causing its rapid degradation. Damaging it negatively impacts the plant and animal community and the seed banks within the peat and soil. Carefully managed strategic grazing (i.e. when wetlands are dry and birds are not nesting) can be implemented with very minor impacts. Further research and monitoring around this is likely to be valuable.

A short-film about Upland Wetlands and similar wetland areas on-farm was put together by a group in Southern NSW. It

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is called "Buffers, Sponges and Moderators" and is available on Youtube.

These wetlands are unique, threatened and very dynamic ecological communities, providing a number of important ecological services to the broader farm landscape. They hold water in the landscape for drier times and support wildlife on farms. However, they are also important in contributing important pest control services that assist with crop/pasture protection and also protect the trees that are so important to our region. Archeological work is also suggesting the importance of these wetlands to indigenous cultures. So, they're important for all of us and a source of visual and auditory pleasure.

If you have wetlands on your property and are interested in fencing and off-stream watering support to improve management outcomes, funding is available via NTLLS 'Healthy Rivers' and 'Trees on Farms' programs. Expression of interest forms are available on the LLS website.

Regional Land Partnerships Announced

Southern New England Landcare is looking forward to working with the Northern Tablelands Local Land Services for at least the next five years!

The National Landcare Program Phase 2 'Regional Land Partnerships' Bid, which we entered with the LLS as a consortium partner has been successful and a contract for core funds has been signed.

The contract will extend from August 2018 to June 2023 and will see Southern New England Landcare and it's peer landcare networks in the tablelands assist the LLS to achieve successful outcomes in a number of regional scale projects.

Projects that are likely to be rolled out within our local area include one around Little Llangothlin Lagoon, one focusing on the Regent Honey Eater Habitats on our western flank, and one focusing on grassy box gum woodlands across the whole region.

Keep an eye on eNews for coming events and opportunities as they roll out.

Welcome Anya

Southern New England Landcare would like to welcome Anya Salmon to the new RLF role.

Anya has worked with Gwymac Landcare at Inverell for many years and knows the landcare community in our Northern Tablelands region very well.

Anya will be based at the Northern Tablelands Local Land Services office in Inverell but will support landcare across the Northern Tablelands.

Welcome Anya and please join us for our AGM on 21st November in Uralla!

Field Day
Trees on Small Farms = Bush For Birds
Saturday 1 December 2018
RSVPs essential for catering, directions & times by calling 6772 9123 or mail@snelandcare.org.au
Come for the morning, the afternoon or both!

Morning
Bush for Birds Part 3
Closing the gap for threatened woodland birds with ornithologist Andrew Hugget

Lunch
Socialise over a delicious picnic we will provide for your enjoyment

Afternoon
Trees on Small Farms Part 2
How to revegetate successfully

CLOSING THE GAP

FUNCTIONAL HABITAT

FOR THREATENED NEW ENGLAND FAUNA

Graziers in this project will help close a 23 km gap in habitat connectivity for threatened woodland birds and other fauna of our beautiful New England region - from Mount Butler and Invergowrie in the west to Gara Gorge and Dangars Falls in the east.

Closing this gap will help **save from local extinction**, some of our threatened woodland birds. A spring 2017 bird survey recorded a total of 994 individual birds from 69 species.

Woodland remnants supported 44 species, including the threatened (in NSW) Varied Sittella, locally conservation-significant Eastern Yellow Robin, Dusky Woodswallow, Striated Thornbill, Buff-rumped Thornbill, White-throated Treecreeper and the migratory, hollow-nesting Dollarbird.

Older planted sites (16-25-year-old) were utilised by 22 bird species including Brown Thornbill, Striated Thornbill, Rufous Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Crimson Rosella and Grey Fantail.

Intermediate-aged plantings (6-15-year-old) supported 17 bird species, such as Superb Fairy-wren, Yellow Thornbill, Spotted Pardalote and Scarlet Honeyeater - mostly those able to utilise food, shelter and nest sites available in developing shrubs and trees.

Young revegetation (1 month - 5-year-old) provided habitat for 34 species, typically more common, open country birds - Eastern Rosella, Willie Wagtail, Australian Magpie and a bird of the paddock-planting's edge, Yellow-Rumped Thornbill.

For more information visit www.snelandcare.org.au, call 02 6772 9123 or mail@snelandcare.org.au



Image: Eastern Yellow Robin courtesy Jesslyn Taylor.

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Is your membership current?

You may have noticed that our financial members get special treats like free or discounted tickets – this is just one of the benefits of your membership with Southern New England Landcare!

There are currently 245 'members' however only 106 are financially up to date!

Only current financial members receive a hard copy of Landchat in their letterbox, so if you only have an electronic copy, chances are your membership is not current!

Please note all eNews recipients can access an electronic copy of Landchat via our website.

Anyone who has used our website membership portal to sign up should receive an email reminder to renew their membership in the lead up to their membership anniversary. The email provides a clickable link for easy renewal.

If you have missed your renewal email, or are unsure of your membership status, please visit www.snelandcare.org.au and login using your email address and password (top right of the home screen). This will direct you to your Member Profile page, OR if in doubt, please contact mail@snelandcare.org.au or on 02 6772 9123 and ask Struan to check for you.

Notice of Annual General Meeting

All members are invited to the November Member Muster and Annual General Meeting of Southern New England Landcare Ltd to be held at 6.30 pm Wednesday 21st November 2018 at the Uralla Community Centre.

Please RSVP for catering purposes to mail@snelandcare.org.au or 02 6772 9123 by Monday 19th November 2018.

Guest Speakers

Members and friends will be treated to two guest speakers following the 6.30 pm AGM.

Bec Smith (Armidale High School) and Mark Fisher (NEGS) are both John Winter-Irving Bequest recipients of recent times.

This year, they teamed up to coordinate an extraordinary event for High School Agriculture students called "Regenerative Agriculture for the Next Generation".

Bec and Mark will present on how the event came about, and what changes it has instigated among their schools and their students. Know a local high school teacher? Bring them along to learn how they too could build landcare and sustainable agriculture into their student's activities.

JWI Bequest Recipient to be Announced

The 2018 John Winter-Irving Bequest recipient will also be announced on the night. Then, stay on for supper and refreshments, which may even get a little festive to celebrate the close of another year of landcaring!

Program

6.30 pm	AGM
7.00 pm	Around Our Groups - group reps have the chance to provide a short update on their group's activities
7.30 pm	Guest Speakers: Bec Smith & Mark Fisher
8.00 pm	2018 John Winter-Irving Bequest Recipient Announced
8.15 pm	Supper, refreshments & networking
9.00 pm	Close

If undeliverable return to Southern New England Landcare,
Suite 10, 128 Beardy Street, PO Box 85, Armidale 2350.
Tel 02 6772 9123, mail@snelandcare.org.au.

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Landchat presents a forum for the expression of a range of opinions. While every effort is made to publish accurate information, Southern New England Landcare and its employees do not accept responsibility for statements made and opinions expressed in this newsletter.



Need Insurance

for your farm, equipment, car or household?

We recommend Wesfarmers Federation Insurance, proud supporters of Landcare.

Mention you are a member of Southern New England Landcare, and 3% of the value of your premium is returned to SNElandcare to support projects! Contact David de Ferranti on 1300 934934 or 0412 328 911.



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