

# Capacity building

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## Wetland Wonders at Guyra

Southern New England Landcare Ltd



**How a Mother of Ducks Lagoon event helped a whole community learn how to protect healthy upland wetlands.**

### The issue

Mother of Ducks Lagoon, a vital upland wetland in Guyra, faces multiple pressures: declining biodiversity, invasive species, and limited public awareness of its environmental importance. Local community members lacked access to up-to-date information on wetland ecology, biosecurity, and species management. Without stronger knowledge-sharing and active participation, efforts to conserve the area's unique ecosystem risked losing momentum. The challenge was to engage diverse stakeholders—including landholders, volunteers, and students—in a meaningful, informative event that built capacity for practical wetland conservation while strengthening community commitment to protecting the region's natural assets.

### The solution

Southern New England Landcare collaborated with Northern Tablelands Local Land Services (LLS) to host a half-day capacity-building workshop at Mother of Ducks Lagoon, with support from the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust Highland Wetlands Project. Expert presenters, Dr Debbie Bower, Dr Steve Debus, and LLS officers, shared research and practical advice on wetland functions, bird and frog ecology, Copperhead snakes, and disease management. Displays on cane toads and biosecurity strengthened awareness of emerging threats. Grant funding covered the venue, logistics, materials, and catering, while community promotion invited volunteers and residents to learn collaboratively and engage in wetland protection.

### The impact

The event attracted local landholders, students, and volunteers who reported increased knowledge of wetland ecology, species conservation, and biosecurity. Feedback praised the "excellent" and "wonderful" speakers, valued the practical information on reporting apps, snakes, birds, and cane toads, and described the day as informative, enjoyable, and worth repeating. Participants left more aware of the importance and vulnerability of upland wetlands, with renewed motivation to support restoration, monitoring, and local stewardship. The collaboration strengthened links between scientific experts, agencies, Landcare, and community members, showing how shared learning can translate into practical biodiversity action.

### Learnings

Expert speakers, the guided walk, and species displays worked well, making the event credible, practical, and engaging. Feedback showed participants valued the clear information and wanted more events like this. Future events could broaden promotion, strengthen youth engagement, and use a simpler feedback process.



### Key facts

- Event: Mother of Ducks Lagoon, Guyra
- Duration: 10am–2pm, including guided lagoon walk
- Presenters: experts in zoology, ecology, and biosecurity
- Focus on wetland health, birds, frogs, reptiles, and invasive species
- Delivered by Northern Tablelands Local Land Services in partnership with Southern New England Landcare Ltd
- Funded by Australian Government Natural Heritage Trust with support from the NSW Landcare Enabling Program

### Project Partners



Australian Government



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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