

Joining the social media revolution

LOOKING over the fence and finding out what farmers are up to down the road or even on the other side of the state is much simpler thanks to a social media project funded by the Australian government's Caring for our Country initiative.

Ag Excellence Alliance is using social media to break down geographical barriers to agricultural extension and knowledge sharing between grower groups across South Australia.

The Alliance has produced short videos with farmers and grower

groups on a range of topics including cell grazing, the role of native bees in sustainable agriculture, stubble management and integrated pest management.

The videos allow farmers and grower groups to take a virtual look over the neighbour's fence and get ideas on land management from all around the state.

Project manager Mark Stanley said despite encountering wariness at first from some people about being filmed, the project has been hugely successful in the farming community.

"We've had good co-operation from farmers right across the State," he said.

"We try to take a conversational style, we come up with a series of questions and we try to put the interviewee at ease.

"We've got some really good stories using this method, people have taken to it and have been happy to be involved."

Mr Stanley believes social media has great potential to provide outreach services—potential that will likely be in orders of magnitude greater than more traditional

extension methods.

This may be particularly true for younger farmers who are already engaging with social media.

"Most farmers tend to look at the videos and take on the key messages," Mr Stanley said.

"They provide a taste of what can be achieved to inspire the watcher to see further information on the topics presented.

"These messages seem to be most effective when presented by farmers, or the combination of farmers and technical experts.

"The most popular videos are

those dealing with issues that are current."

Due to the enthusiasm of grower groups involved, there are over 80 videos on the Ag Excellence Alliance website—far more than expected.

"We're actually getting groups coming to us now wanting to be involved in the project, so it has been a complete turnaround," Mr Stanley said.

"At the start of the project we were really pushing to get people involved."

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Celebrating Landcare – and LIFE – across the country

LANDCARE groups across the country are getting ready to celebrate Landcare Week 2013, the annual celebration of all things Landcare.

Held from September 2 to 8, Landcare Week is an invitation to everyone, wherever they live and whatever they do, to get involved in the Landcare community and help protect and restore our country's precious natural resources.

Landcare Australia chief executive Tessa Jakszewicz (pictured) believes Landcare Week is a great opportunity for everyone wanting to make a positive difference in their local environment to get involved and join the thousands of dedicated Australians already working towards a sustainable future.

"Landcare Week puts a spotlight on the remarkable activities of the Landcare community that occur year-round and play a crucial role in conserving and rehabilitating our unique and precious ecosystems," Ms Jakszewicz said.

"The variety of Landcare Week activities and events taking place across the country leaves those wanting to get involved spoilt for choice."

Friends of Westgate Park in Port Melbourne are holding a planting day on September 3 to help achieve their vision of transforming the Park into a bushland habitat for local indigenous plants and animals where visitors can enjoy a beautiful natural landscape.

Still in Melbourne, Hume City Council is celebrating Biodiversity

Month, Landcare Week, and spring-time by hosting a planting day on September 4 at Broadmeadows Valley Park.

Local businesses and community members are invited to go along, with all equipment, tools and even a free lunch provided.

The hugely successful Bushcare's Major Day Out (BMDO) is again taking place during Landcare Week at city and country locations right across Australia.

A national day supported by Willoughby Council and Landcare Australia, it is designed to encourage people to take part in the restoration and maintenance of our remaining bushland.

This year taking place on September 8, BMDO offers a wide range of activities at many different locations, ranging from the Launch of the Aldgate Valley Nature Walk in South Australia to sampling what Bushcare is all about in the classic Sydney setting of Tunks Park in Northbridge.

To help groups and networks promote Landcare Week events and activities within their local communities, Landcare Australia has developed a kit of promotional resources using the branding from the popular L.I.F.E – Landcare is for Everyone campaign.

A suite of branded artwork for flyers and posters is available for download, and groups can also access web tiles, an email signature, and a template media release.

There is even a special Landcare Week twibbon available for those



active in social media.

Landcare ambassador Jack Thompson has also thrown his support behind the annual awareness raising week by recording a radio ad, which groups can send to their local radio stations.

Anyone planning an activity or event for Landcare Week can also promote it by adding it to the national Landcare events calendar.

Groups can simply fill in the online form and submit their event details, which will be approved and online within a few days.

"With countless community events and activities taking place, as well as Landcare Awards events, conferences and forums, there truly is a Landcare Week event to suit everyone," said Ms Jakszewicz (pictured).

"I hope the first week in September

sees people across Australia celebrating the importance and relevance of Landcare, not only to their own local communities but to our national backyard."

■ Groups interested in downloading Landcare Week resources or adding an event to the Landcare events calendar should visit www.landcareonline.com.au or www.landcarelife.com.au

The benefits of showing your grass

FARMERS in Western Australia are seeing firsthand the benefits of planting perennials to improve soil condition thanks to a project funded by the Australian Government's Caring for our Country initiative.

Through the Show Us Your Grass project, Evergreen Farming has been showing landholders in the agricultural regions of Western Australia how perennial pastures can be used to decrease soil acidification, decrease wind and water erosion, increase soil carbon content and provide year-round green feed for stock.

As part of the project, technical pasture specialists conducted 80 farm visits across the Wheatbelt, Northern

species and management options can vary according to soil type and the rainfall zone.

Ms Gorter said first time failures are often a significant barrier to adoption which has seen some landholders give up after unsuccessful attempts at trialling perennials.

"The Show Us Your Grass project aimed to increase the knowledge and skills of farmers in using perennials, and maximise their chances of success," Ms Gorter said.

"The project has been very successful and has exceeded our expectations.

"Farmers were receptive to the opportunity to have a renowned technical pasture specialist visit their property and provide advice unique to their situation. They found the experience exceedingly valuable.

Ms Gorter said that establishing new perennial pastures can be costly for farmers, and that farmers began to ask for advice on how to make the most of perennials.

"We responded to their requests by offering on-farm advice and sharing the experiences of successful perennial growers with others attempting a similar pathway.

"This way, if farmers were investing time and money in establishing perennial pastures, we were able to give them the best possible chance of success and a positive benefit from their investment and for their farm environment.

"Some of the properties visited as part of the project were already growing perennials but wanted to try a new variety or work in different soil types, while others were interested in implementing the technique but were not sure where to begin."

A visit from an experienced technical pasture specialist helped set the farmers on the right path to grow perennials to suit their conditions and increase the likelihood of suc-



Farmers in the northern part of WA's agricultural region learning about utilising the out of season rainfall in sandy soils to manage stock.

cessful establishment.

"Our natural environment is one of mixed systems and species and conditions," Ms Gorter said.

Ms Gorter said that by having perennials and annuals working together, farmers are able to, on some parts of their farm, have the best of

both worlds.

"Such a system allows farmers to adjust to variable climatic conditions, protect and build their natural resource base and often extend their growing season to further benefit their farming business."

■ The Show Us Your Grass project

was completed in June 2013. If you are interested in finding out more about the project and its results visit evergreen.asn.au, find them on Facebook or contact Evergreen Farming at evergreenfarming@agvivo.com.au or 0429 833 752

...if farmers were investing time and money in establishing perennial pastures, we were able to give them the best possible chance of success and a positive benefit from their investment and for their farm environment

– Erin Gorter,
Evergreen Farming

Agricultural, South West and South Coast regions of Western Australia and provided advice on the type of perennials to plant and how and where they should be grown to improve soil condition.

Evergreen Farming executive officer Erin Gorter said that, as a result of the farm visits, a mix of sub-tropical and temperate perennials were planted on 5000 ha of the Western Australian agricultural region.

Perennial pasture agronomy is more complex than for annual

Farmers embrace social media

From p1

Some farming groups are using the videos to introduce new projects and land management techniques, others are telling the story of how their group has evolved.

Ag Excellence Alliance has also produced a range of tools to help groups understand how to use social media and to learn at their own pace. These are all available on their website.

The project has led to a fundamental shift in extension

skills, including the use of social and digital media to influence greater numbers of farmers and land managers to improve sustainable agriculture and resource management practices.

With media rapidly changing and more people making their own films and sharing ideas through social media, this project is finding success in encouraging grower groups to use new technologies to share experiences and knowledge.

A social media forum will be held on 22 August 2013 in Adelaide and will focus on the use of social media sites like YouTube, Facebook and Twitter, their design, what makes a good site and how you can monitor these sites to better target your audiences.

■ For more information on the project, check out the Ag Excellence Alliance website at <http://agex.org.au/project/social-media-project>



CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY

LANDCARE in Focus is proudly supported by the Australian

government's Caring for our Country program and published by Landcare Australia Limited.

For more information or to submit an article, email enquiries@landcareaustralia.com.au

Please note that due to space restrictions we cannot guarantee that all submissions will be included.

All submissions must adhere to the following guidelines and the deadlines below and must include:

● One article of no more than 300-600

words saved as a Microsoft Word document or a PDF.

● No more than 2 or 3 high resolution (must be at least 1MB in size) images that clearly illustrate the accompanying article.

● Full captions for each attached image that explain who is in the photos and/or what they illustrate.

Also, please ensure that we have permission from any people featured in the photos to use these photos in Landcare in Focus

● Contact information for more information if required

The last remaining dates for 2013 are as follows:

Publication Date:

October 4

Submission Deadline: November 7



Bushcare's Major Day Out

Bushcare's Major Day Out
will be held on **Sunday September 8th**
as part of Landcare Week 2013

It's a fun day out for all the family, where anyone can get involved in helping to protect and repair their local bushland!

Get involved with your local community and take part in Bushcare activities, including native planting, weed removal, native plant identification and nature walks.

To register your site or find a BMDO site close to you, visit www.bushcaresmajordayout.org

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Dreaming to build land connections

A bonfire, stories, drama and wise elders are ancient ingredients for introducing children to cultural ideas and it's no accident they are also chief ingredients of the Frog Dreaming conference.

Held in New England each year in September when spring is taking some of the chill from the highland nights, Frog Dreaming tackles the modern disconnection of many people from their source of food and fibre using elements that are as old as human consciousness.

Sara Schmude, the schools co-ordinator with Southern New England Landcare, said this disconnect is apparent even in small rural schools - and that Landcare is an ideal vehicle through which to address it.

The two-day Frog Dreaming conference asks students to camp out, plant trees, and observe their environment in enough detail that they can tell stories about their observations.

They also get to hear stories about the environment and its complex interactions from "gurus" who have the ability to make an apparently static landscape come alive.

Ms Schmude tours participating schools before each year's Frog Dreaming, prompting Year 5 and 6 classes to identify a local natural asset to build a story around.

Once they have isolated their subject, the students begin building a story around it that they enact on the first day of the two-day Frog Dreaming conference.

The exercise is a step in opening students' eyes to natural features of their landscape that familiarity has made invisible, Ms Schmude said.

Building a story also asks the children to consider things like the

community's interaction with the object of their story, and sustainability.

The first day is also dedicated to breaking students out of habitual behaviour and perceptions by taking them out of their school social groups and placing them in "tribes" that mix children from different schools.

Each tribe has a mentor, a guru and a totem.

The totem - things like red-bellied black snake, black cockatoo, New England peppermint, Salisbury Waters Creek - gives the children a point of identification with the landscape, and an entry through which they can explore the interconnectedness of everything within the landscape.

The mentor is an older student who was a previous participant in Frog Dreaming, and who showed exceptional leadership.

The guru is someone with exceptional knowledge of their field, often with a high-level university degree, who can give the broad picture and fine detail on a tribe's totem, and link the totem to other elements of the landscape.

After tribes are formed, they begin their initiation into the landscape through the stories of Aboriginal elder Harry White of the Border Rivers-Gwydir CMA.

Mr White talks about the echidna ancestor of his people, the Anaiwan, and how having the echidna totem requires his people to protect echidna's habitat.

In the evening, the children set up camp and then walk to a giant bonfire, the setting at which they tell the stories they prepared in their schools.

That night, they sleep out under the



Frog's 2013 bee focus

ON "Taylors Run", the Taylor family property at Kentucky, the student participants of Frog Dreaming get an insight into the benefits of on-farm revegetation difficult to obtain elsewhere.

After the students have finished tree planting on a specially prepared site - last year, trees were planted on the outline of a giant tree frog designed to be seen from space - they are led by their guru through to progressively more mature tree plantings to a site planted 40 years ago.

As they progress, the students are shown the growing biodiversity of the plantings, the microclimates they form, and the aesthetic appeal of the forests and woodlots.

"Taylors Run" is the work of Jon and Vicki Taylor, who set about revegetating their denuded property more than 40 years ago with extraordinary commitment and vision, and more recently, of their son

Michael and his wife Milly, and Michael's sister Katherine.

"Taylors Run" now carries about 200,000 planted trees, and each Frog Dreaming adds a few thousand more.

"It's a great opportunity to show off my parents' work," Michael Taylor said.

"It's also very enlightening. The kids see everything new, and they question everything, and that makes my question why I'm doing what I'm doing."

Mr Taylor is pictured with Sara Schmude of Southern New England Landcare, Frog Dreaming's co-ordinator, looking at the progress of some of the trees planted last year in the form of a giant tree frog.

When the 2013 Frog Dreaming is held in late September, trees will be planted into a reserve Mr Taylor has prepared with species selected especially for their appeal to pollinators.

Bees, and their essential role in food production, will be one of the major themes of the conference.



Frog Dreaming is a two-day conference for children aiming to tackle the modern day disconnect between people and food and fibre. At the 2012 conference, students planted trees on the outline of a giant tree frog designed to be seen from space.

stars - a novelty not just for the children, Ms Schmude said, but for many teachers.

The second day is all about "connecting with country".

The tribes plant trees on a pre-selected site, and as they work with and walk through the farming landscape they learn about Landcare - the necessity of preserving water quality, pest management, maintaining a robust on-farm ecology - Aboriginal heritage and facets of sustainable agriculture, like dung beetles.

For those receptive to the experience, Frog Dreaming goes deep, Ms Schmude said.

The conference becomes a useful way of identifying future Landcare and environmental leaders.

A group of students who became Frog Dreaming mentors later founded the Armidale High School Landcare Group, one of the first student Landcare groups in the country.

Frog Dreaming was a finalist in the 2012 United Nations Association of Australia Sustainability Education Award.

■ For information about Frog Dreaming contact Sara Schmude, sara@snelcc.org.au



Just some of the Qantas employees who have participated in corporate volunteer activities with Landcare Australia and host groups in the last 12 months

WE'RE HERE FOR THE LONG HAUL

Qantas has been a proud partner of Landcare Australia since 2003 and is supporting four diverse projects in 2013. These are innovative in approach, harness new technology and will have an ongoing legacy, from creating greenwalls to supporting Landcare Adventure Conservation activities.

Qantas is also a major sponsor of the Landcare Awards at both State & Territory and National level, through the Qantas Landcare Innovative Community Group Award category.



Photo: Garry Daly

Worthwhile biodiversity in Bundanon

GIVEN a long-term commitment, the Bundanon Trust land on the Shoalhaven River, south of Sydney, may be able to become an important component in an area of high biodiversity.

Garry Daly, Gaia Research, did a fauna survey of the Haunted Point area of 1100 hectares of Bundanon, left to the Australian public by painter Arthur Boyd and his wife Yvonne.

Despite big incursions of lantana, Mr Daly found high levels of biodiversity, and big potential

to recapture bushland from lantana and repopulate it from surrounding areas.

Mr Daly made his survey as part of the four-year Living Landscape project, which is tackling environmental issues at Bundanon.

Living Landscape is partially funded through Landcare Australia through the Borland Bequest, bequeathed to Landcare by Sydney businessman Raymond Borland, who was disturbed by degradation of the Australian landscape.

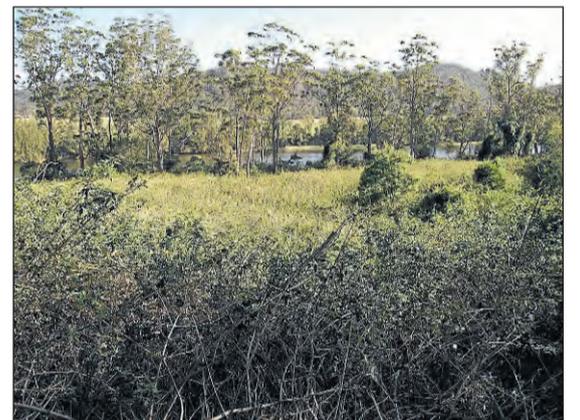
Tackling lantana is the major challenge for Bundanon. Mr Daly, who said the property had very little of the choking weed when he first visited 20 years ago, notes that successfully battling lantana is a very long-term commitment.

The weed can be initially dealt with through spraying and mechanical control, he said – but then there has to be something like a 15-year commitment to keeping it at bay while the bushland forms a shading canopy over the affected area.

Understanding the biodiverse riches of the area, Mr Daly thinks it's a worthwhile commitment.

With lantana vanquished, Bundanon will become a high-integrity component of a region that is one of the most biodiverse in NSW, Mr Daly said.

RIGHT: Thanks to long-term funding, the Bundanon Trust may be able to recapture 1100 hectares of land lost to lantana along the Shoalhaven River on NSW's south coast.



Working with governments makes sense

THE National Landcare Facilitator, with Julia Telford of Engage and Create Consulting, has produced a publication called *Landcare and Local Government Partnerships – why it makes sense*.

Since its inception, the interaction between Landcare groups and local councils has had a vital role in the success of Landcare within a community.

However, there is increasing need for groups to work together as constraints in funding, human resources and equipment pose growing challenges for communities.

This publication aims to provide a resource to Landcare groups and Local Councils interested in forming a partnership.

It contains case studies from across the country, detailing how local councils have worked in close collaboration with Landcare groups for a better outcome in their communities.

It is hoped that the case studies will help provide ideas and inspiration for other Landcare groups and councils wanting to strengthen their relationships, and at how community and NRM issues can be addressed by working together to achieve change.

Each of the case studies highlights what motivated the various partners to engage with each other, how they have kept the partnerships going, and what they would recommend to other groups around Australia.

■ To download a copy of the publication visit www.landcarefacilitator.com.au

Local councils support WWLZ involvement in communities

SINCE 2007, the Wagin Woodanilling Landcare Zone (WWLZ), in Western Australia's wheatbelt, has been operating under a three-way commitment with two shire councils that have aided funding security through uncertain times.

"The land conservation district committees were starting to peter out in the area," said Danielle Perrie, a zone manager for WWLZ for the past six years.

"And so in 2007 we approached council worried about the drop off in Landcare activities.

"We didn't want to be seen going to council with our hand out, so we worked out arrangements based on other funding the Landcare group could get in, and got council to support with some administrative funding."

As a result, the Shire of Woodanilling and the Shire of Wagin signed a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the WWLZ, confirming community support for Natural Resource Management (NRM) activities.

The councils are farmer-based so there is an inherent understanding the value of Landcare

that made it a logical partnership.

It was also recognised that this would allow the group to better maintain capacity by being able to offer longer and more secure contracts.

The communities recognised that someone had to be employed to capitalise on opportunities as they arose.



To be able to link Landcare work to environmental work that the council is doing and giving council recognition is important.

– Danielle Perrie,
Wagin Woodanilling Landcare Zone

Currently, each council contributes a set amount to support the operational requirements of the WWLZ, including salary, office space and equipment, vehicles, mobile phones and other overheads.

The councils operate roughly on a 30:70 split.

Wagin is a bigger shire than Woodanilling, and this is a roughly proportional representation.

The Shire of Woodanilling employs the staff, on a cost-share basis reflecting all local government contributions.

Woodanilling Council purchased and own the Landcare vehicle while the Zone have established a vehicle replacement plan by putting aside a set amount annually for a suitable changeover period.

Both council and zone driven initiatives include "Phascogale Friendly Towns", involvement in the Rural Towns Program to tackle salinity, involvement and joint support for Roadside Conservation Surveys and revegetation planning leading to better informed works crew on kinder roadside clearing practices.

Benefits are exponential. There is a united approach to environmental issues; better informed councillors and decisions; the ability to offer long term positions (up to four-year contracts); and resource sharing.

Other councils have investigated the model as they seek to sustain Landcare in their areas.

"Support doesn't necessarily have to be monetary, it could also be office space, a vehicle, internet access," Ms Perrie said.

"To be able to link Landcare work to environmental work that the council is doing and giving council recognition is important."

"Councils are dealing with a lot of stress. It is important to make a big deal of little things that they are already doing, and look at how Landcare can support this."



Cultivating junior green thumbs

A COLES Junior Landcare grant has enabled Macknade State Primary School in Queensland to build raised beds in its vegetable and herb garden, with flow-on effects into the classroom and home.

Students in Macknade's P-3 class use the vegetables as "brainfood" in snacks and cooking classes and, when there is an excess, in the school tuckshop.

Apart from their practical application, the growing of vegetables teaches students about the ecology of the world around them.

Students learnt the importance of water in the environment and the need to conserve and use water wisely, which has led to discussions on how to conserve water at school and at home.

Classes have also looked at ways to implement environmentally friendly gardening practices, such as using companion planting to eliminate the need for

pesticides, and using environmentally friendly fertiliser products.

The wider school community has become involved.

Parents have helped install raised garden beds, and several past parents have organised soil and cane trash from neighbouring cane fields to use as mulch for the garden.

This year, a grandparent from the school has volunteered to show the students how to propagate seeds and cuttings.

Parents and grandparents give gardening advice to students and modelled how to correctly grow herbs from cuttings and cultivate seedlings.

The garden project delivers a range of environmental and educational benefits, such as the recycling of cane trash.

This led to discussions on other ways by-products could be used in everyday life, including recycling of other materials.

Holistic approach to land management

ALLAN Savory's TED talk *Greening the Desert: how to fight desertification and reverse climate change* has had more than a million views to date.

Can herbivores really save the planet, as Mr Savory suggests?

Next month, Mr Savory will be in Australia to make his persuasive argument for using livestock as a tool for reversing desertification, healing landscapes, empowering communities, delivering food security and halting climate change.

Mr Savory will give a series of talks and seminars about his work in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne from August 14 to 18.

These events, sponsored by the National Landcare Facilitator, are aimed at the general public with the hope of starting a dialogue about important environmental issues.

As part of the National Landcare Webinar Series Brett de Hayr, National Landcare Facilitator, is also hosting a free webinar discussion with Allan Savory at 12.00 noon Eastern standard time on Friday, 16 August.

Mr Savory is also the keynote speaker at the Day After Tomorrow

conference in Orange on August 6.

He has other speaking engagements at Lismore and Dubbo, NSW; Warwick, Qld; and Mataranka, NT.

His holistic management techniques are now used to manage more than 15 million hectares of land worldwide, and have been credited with halting desertification and regenerating landscapes.

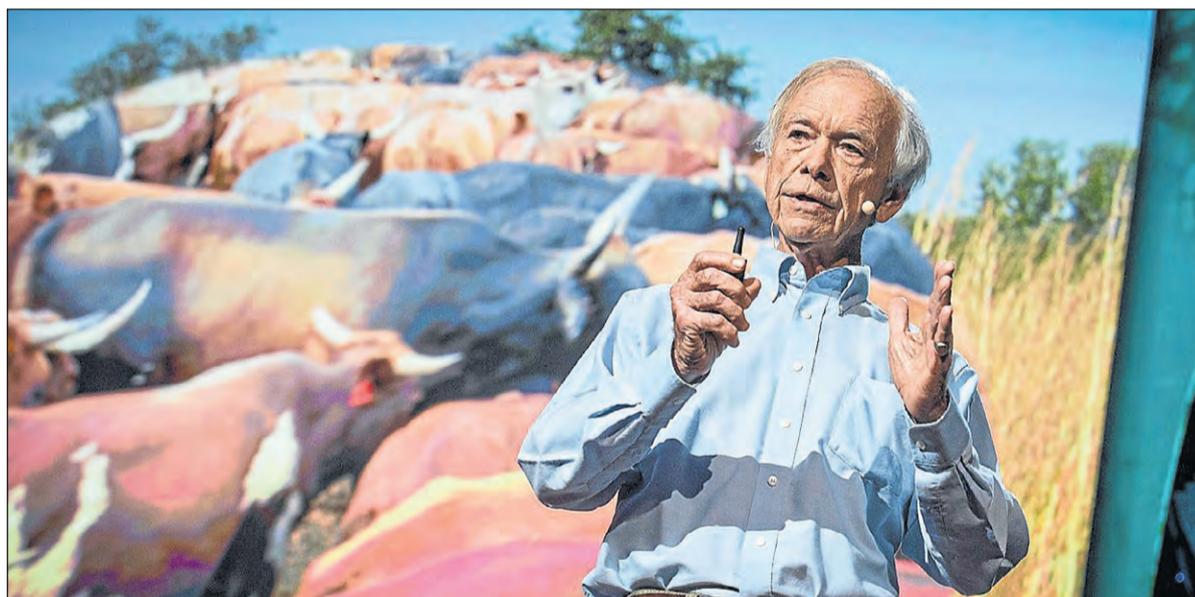
As a young biologist in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), Mr Savory detested livestock and saw them solely as a force of land degradation.

Throughout years of observation and action, however, he discovered herds of livestock could regenerate landscapes if managed appropriately.

A herd can do this by briefly disturbing the soil, churning in plant litter and creating a seedbed, knocking down standing vegetation to protect the soil surface, and dunging and urinating onto what is essentially a prepared seedbed.

If this animal impact is well managed with short grazing periods and long rest periods, Mr Savory claims, the result is land and soil that is progressively regenerated.

Regeneration of soil leads to increased water and carbon holding



capacity, as well as increased biodiversity – and better productivity for graziers.

Holistic management is receiving growing recognition. Mr Savory argues that by sequestering carbon in the soil, his techniques also have the potential to address climate change.

Advocates of holistic management

range from Prince Charles to Richard Branson and Professor Tim Flannery.

His capital city talks and seminars are for people based in cities as well as landholders interested in the potential of a solutions-based, biological approach for repairing our planet and ensuring community resilience for future generations.

■ Visit www.landcarefacilitator.com.au to register for the webinar.

■ Bookings for the lecture series can be made at www.RegenAG.com or by contacting Trevor on (02) 6373 7763

■ For the Orange conference, and other engagements: www.tasteorange.com.au



coles SUPPORTING SCHOOL GARDENS

Coles has supported schools and community youth groups around Australia by providing over **1,600 Coles Junior Landcare Garden Grants** since 2008.

To find out more about how your school or youth group can be part of the program, visit www.juniorlandcare.com.au



Bequest for riparian care

BY LINKING Rivercare and Landcare groups a project to reduce weed infestations along the Deua River, on the NSW South Coast, has been able to substantially boost its effectiveness.

Through Landcare Australia, the Borland Bequest has contributed \$18,000 toward efforts to reduce weed infestations in riparian areas in the upper Deua Catchment, conduct primary weed control upstream of Araluen Creek junction, and to revisit previously-treated downstream sites.

In working to increase the capacity of landowners to conduct weed control, the project was able to link together the Deua Rivercare group with the Upper Deua Valley Landcare group, opening frequent communication and a collaborative approach towards overall catchment health.

The riparian zone across 18 properties was enhanced through weed control or planting. Many of these areas are now able to be managed solely by landholders, and all will be monitored by the Rivercare group to ensure that weed control is maintained.

Planting was conducted on

four sites, planting 1000 tube stock of endemic plants during spring 2012. These sites will be maintained by landholders or, in the case of one site, by TAFE students.

The Deua Valley community were invited to attend the weed control field day in August 2012.

Bushcare training – weed and native plant identification and weed control techniques – was provided to members of the Deua Rivercare group and a wider audience at the field day.

Many of the attendees were not members of the Rivercare group before the field day, but some have since joined.

Since the workshop, contractors have shared their knowledge and skills with landholders to better direct future weed control.

Deua Rivercare ran school excursions and planting days with local school children to engage the wider community in the project, and increase awareness of the value of the Deua River catchment and the inspiring work of Rivercare and Landcare volunteers.

Throughout, a project officer has been employed to assist with community enquiries regarding weed control, planting days and Deua Rivercare.



Conservation for the long-term

ACCORDING to Gabalong, Western Australia, farmer Les Crane, his 2000 hectare property is an on-going conservation project.

Foresight, extensive research and a lot of hard work has seen Mr Crane and his wife Ann establish alleys of different varieties of saltbush and oil mallees across their farm to diversify grazing for their stock, prevent wind erosion and attempt to limit the spread of salt-affected land.

The Cranes run between 1200 and 1300 Merino ewes and 100 breeder cattle, and implement a cropping program comprised of wheat, barley, lupins and canola.

They dabbled in natural resource management for many years, planting their first trees and saltbush in the 1980s.

But the Crane's natural resource management journey gained momentum almost a decade ago when a Perth school ran out of suitable ground for tree planting in Miling and inquired about the possibility of planting on the Crane's property.



Les Crane has established alleys of saltbush and oil mallees across his Gabalong property to diversify grazing for his stock, prevent wind erosion and limit the spread of salt-affected land.

The students planted oil mallees and saltbush on an area of high ground on the property and Mr Crane was amazed with the result and particularly impressed by the hardiness and resilience of the plants.

"We have actually grazed the saltbush continuously for months at a time to the point where there is no green shoots left or even any bush, and it still survives," Mr Crane said.

It took Mr Crane three to four years of planning to establish how he would implement the layout of the project and he started re-fencing his property into alleys in 2008.

"We researched and thought about where agriculture was going," Mr Crane said.

"We thought about where crops and pastures were going and attempted to incorporate them into our small property in a hope it would enable the effective use of larger machinery available."

Each alley was comprised of fences spaced 200 metres (66ft) apart, a design constructed by Mr Crane to ensure 180m (60ft) of working space which would accommodate the efficient use of conventional wide agricultural machinery.

"We chose 180m because it is divisible by so many combinations of machine widths in metres," Mr Crane said.

The alleys were lined with rows of saltbush and oil mallees along each fence line.

Mr Crane said the alleys have proved their benefit as a reliable feed source, particularly in current dry conditions.

"We are moving towards the direction of being able to graze short intense bursts and long rests," he said.

Mr Crane said the layout helped to limit wind erosion and it appeared that salt spread was less prevalent since implementing the system along



Les Crane (right) and German backpacker Angi, show the saltbush and oil mallees which have been established in alleys across the Gabalong property across a number of years.

with a drainage program in the 1980s.

"I think a whole lot of things together have helped it," he said.

He said the alleys were aesthetically pleasing and often provided habitats for native fauna.

The initial year saw the group plant more than 30,000 trees in one weekend, and the same friends helped the Cranes to plant 10,000 trees annually from 2011.

"Last weekend we had 26 people here, plus nine children for the week-

earning their carbon credits when they come to help out."

Mr Crane estimated there was another 15 years before the project would be completed though that was dependent on the future profitability of agriculture.

"We will eventually fence off the entire property, and continue to establish the long narrow paddocks," he said.

Mr Crane said although he had experienced improvements on his property it was difficult to show that there had been an outstanding positive result.

"Agriculture is a long-term project and I think if someone can see a change in their lifetime then they have done exceptionally well."

Agriculture is a long-term project and I think if someone can see a change in their lifetime then they have done exceptionally well

– Les Crane, Gabalong, Western Australia

Since 2008, Mr and Mrs Crane's two sons and their friends have made the journey to Gabalong each year to assist with the tree planting process.

end planting trees and they successfully planted 10,000 trees and saltbush plants," Mrs Crane said.

"Our son's friends joked about

Students 'green' their surrounds

P.E.T plastic bottles are an enormous environmental problem – some 13 billion are disposed of each year with each bottle taking up to 450 years to break down in the soil.

Enter the “greenwall”, a concept that uses P.E.T bottles to create a living wall of nature to insulate buildings and recycle greywater.

Qantas and Landcare Australia are supporting the Junior Landcare P.E.T Greenwall project to help students at two schools create a green wall project that uses 94 per cent recycled material otherwise destined for landfill.

The schools are essentially building a soil-less vertical garden. They are designed to mimic the growing conditions found where greenwalls occur in nature.

Plants on a greenwall live without soil using many adapted strategies to survive poor nutrition, exposed conditions and seasonal drought. They colonise only those rocks and trees that provide adequate aspect, light, air movement, water and nutrients.

The most immediate benefit of a greenwall is its beauty. The greenery is literally a living skin, allowing unlimited design opportunities.

Many greenwalls are high in plant biodiversity: in Australia there are over 5000 suitable native species that colonise rocks and trees.

Mark Paul, Australia's own greenwall guru, has spent over 30 years testing and installing greenwalls suited to the Australian climate; he is now working with Landcare Australia to produce an educational resource kit that will allow other schools to take up the Greenwall Challenge.

The bottle greenwall utilises 600 P.E.T bottles (5m x 2m greenwall) and other inorganic media that is greatly dependent on the properties of plastics to generate plant life. They create a habitat for small animals and insects while instilling intrinsic environmental values in our next generation.

The aim of the greenwall project is to encourage students to reduce their carbon footprint by

using everyday items to create a beautiful edifice.

The project proactively engages student to participate in every step of the greenwall's creation. The project has had a powerful effect at a local level and provides a fun learning experience.

Qantas funding will support the production of an online educational resource available on the Junior Landcare website that will provide a step-by-step guide, enabling schools to green their own built environment.

Landcare Australia recently filmed the greenwall installation at St Rose's Catholic School, Collaroy Plateau, which will form the basis of a short video to help instruct students interested in creating their own greenwall project.

■ For more information about the benefits of creating a greenwall, visit: www.greenwall.com.au

RIGHT: Mark Paul and students with a green wall made of 600 bottles and a range of plant cuttings at St Rose Catholic School, Collaroy Plateau, Sydney.



Shane Norrish, Landcare Australia, and Henry Goodall, Bundanon Trust. Photo: South Coast Register.

Planting trees as part of 'live natural' pledge

THE planting of 10,000 trees will be sponsored by Be Natural in support of Landcare efforts to revegetate and restore important environmental sites.

Be Natural's inspiration for the planting of 10,000 trees was its own 'Day of Change', when thousands of Australians pledged to live more naturally.

The trees are being used by six Landcare groups in four States.

"Be Natural has been in partnership with Landcare Australia for the past three years," said Be Natural

spokesperson Sachiko Shiohara.

"This is another step towards helping communities and the environment while reconnecting people with nature."

The 2012 Be Natural Young Landcare Leader Award winner, Megan Rowlett, said the trees will be a big contribution to the Landcare effort.

Megan will lead the planting of 1000 trees by Illawarra Youth Landcare, helping to restore degraded ecosystems in the Illawarra region.

The other recipients of the 10,000 trees are:

- Sydney Harbour volunteer groups, and the Foundation of National Parks and Wildlife: planting 1000 seedlings at sites around Sydney Harbour;
- The Bundanon Trust (NSW): planting 6000 seedlings as part of a major biodiversity conservation project on the Shoalhaven River;
- Stirling Natural Environment Coastcare Group (WA): planting 1000 seedlings as part of their

rehabilitation of the Hamersley Beach coastline near Perth;

- Tamborine Mountain Landcare (QLD): planting 500 seedlings along the Cedar Corridor Enhancement project in the heart of the third-oldest national park in Australia;
- Bellerive Bluff Coastcare (Tas): using 500 seedlings to support the restoration of local water bodies with the aim of improving water quality.

■ For more information visit www.benatural.com.au

In Brief

Ecological knowledge manual: Territory Natural Resource Management (TNRM) has developed an Indigenous Ecological Knowledge manual to assist project partners in undertaking activities with an IEK element.

Many of TNRM's project partners contributed images and stories to the manual.

■ To view a copy of the manual, please visit www.territorynrm.org.au or for a hard copy, contact Cara Burke, (08) 8999 4110 or email cara.burke@territorynrm.org.au

Social media manual for Landcare:

Landcare Australia has launched a social media manual to help groups get the most out of Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

The manual is for members of the Landcare community who are thinking about starting to use social media, or who have been using it for a while but would like to learn more. With information on how to engage followers, create content, and interact with other social media users, this manual is a useful resource for the Landcare groups, networks and organisations out there who want to get social.

This manual was funded by the Australian government's Caring for our Country initiative through the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

■ The manual is available for download from www.landcareonline.com.au

Tasmanian Landcare conference:

The Tasmanian Landcare Awards and biennial State Conference will be held on Sunday 6 and Monday 7 October at St Helens in the state's north-east. The conference theme will be Linking Landscapes and People and it promises to be a rich and diverse program.

■ For more information or to register, visit www.landcaretas.org.au

Book links landscapes: Networks of land managed for conservation across different tenures have rapidly increased in number (and popularity) in Australia over the past two decades.

Linking Australia's Landscapes, by James Fitzsimons, draws out lessons from a variety of established and new connectivity conservation initiatives from around Australia, and is complemented by international examples.

Chapters are written by leaders in the field of establishing and operating connectivity networks, as well as key ecological and social scientists and experts in governance.

■ For more information, visit www.csiro.au



Sharing pastoralism

TERRITORY Natural Resource Management's chair Kate Andrews, along with regional co-ordinators James Wright and Anthony Kerr recently escorted a group of Maasai herdsman from Kenya to Mt Ringwood Station in Adelaide River.

James met the men – Nelson, Simon and David – at the World Indigenous Network conference in Darwin, and they were keen to visit an Aussie pastoral property to see how the cattle industry works over here.

Guided by youngsters Antonio and Luke Rathsmann, a fascinating and fun day was spent discussing the different approaches to cattle management.

Maasai herdsman Nelson was impressed at the way Mt Ringwood operates.

"Back home we practice nomadic pastoralism – we move with our stock following rain patterns," he said.

"In Australia, it is different and much more organised which results in a better breed of healthier stock."

Naturals support bolsters Beachcare

ONE year of Beachcare on the Gold Coast delivered 1750 volunteer hours on community dune care activities, 3000 native species planted, seven tonnes of weeds removed and 86 bags of beach litter collected.

This already vibrant program has recently been bolstered with support from the Neutrogena Naturals and Landcare Australia Partnership.

Neutrogena's contribution will support the Healthy Creeks = Clean Oceans program, which is engaging university students and local residents in active care of the Gold Coast's landscape biodiversity.

The focus of the project is the sustainable management of the coastal zone, combined with the need to engage with a diverse community network to successfully achieve a healthy coastal environment.

The group of volunteers aim to improve water quality within Flat Rock Creek, with particular focus on protecting riparian areas to improve water quality and boost coastal conservation results.

Beachcare volunteers work in and around Currumbin Creek and tributaries like Flat Rock Creek, which flow through some of Australia's most developed catchment areas.

This has led to poor health throughout most of the catchment. Stormwater pollution, sedimentation, lack of infiltration, loss of biodiversity and



Beachcare Currumbin and Flat Rock volunteers are working together to rebuild the healthy creeks, dunes and wetlands in their areas.

invasion of weeds are primary problems.

The Currumbin to Cobaki wetlands habitat corridor, which includes Flat Rock Creek, is considered to be of national significance because of its high diversity of flora and fauna.

Beachcare worked with local resi-

dents to form Friends of Currumbin, a local dune care group working on the health of the coastal environment.

Beachcare itself is facilitated by Griffith Centre for Coastal Management (GCCM) at Griffith University, in partnership with Gold Coast City Council.

Sustainability for tree changers

By NEIL LYON

LANDCARE groups on Queensland's Darling Downs are working with small-acreage landholders in the peri-urban areas around Toowoomba to help them develop more sustainable pastures and better farming environments.

Projects designed to assist "blockies" and "tree changers" better understand and manage their small farms are helping address the incidence of over-grazing and poor land management that sometimes occur on lifestyle blocks.

Toowoomba Landcare project officer Lorraine Lisle said the current project focussing on healthy pastures for small acreages followed on from an earlier project that looked at regenerative pastures for horses.

Ms Lisle said landholders were shown how they could use different grazing systems to encourage native pastures and regenerate their land.

"Some people had bought properties that had been overgrazed, some had properties that had a lot of com-

paction because of former use and some people had introduced different animals requiring a change in the way the property needed to be managed," she said.

Ms Lisle said one of the best ways small-acreage landholders could take control of the way they managed their properties was through the use of electric fences.

"They seem to be an answer to many things because you can move them and do strip or cell grazing, or you can create a central point where animals can come to. They are flexible and easy," she said.

"But people are often in a traditional mindset and hadn't thought of ways to use electric fences, limit the amount of machinery on the land and reduce compaction."

Ms Lisle said another common problem on small blocks was the inappropriate positioning of gateways and fences.

"People should take care where to site their gates so machinery can go in and out easily. On small blocks people often tend to stick a gate somewhere where the tractor can't



Fiona and Scott Edwards with a purebred Friesian mare on their small farm at Cambooya on the Darling Downs, Queensland.

get through," she said.

Cambooya small area landholders and contract farming operators Fiona and Scott Edwards have been closely involved in the project, running information sessions and helping landholders improve the way they manage their farms.

"We pasture improve as a business but our passion is educating people to run sustainable properties. There are lots of little things people can do that don't cost thousands of dollars," Fiona Edwards said.

"We talked to people about the mix of their animals. Depending on how they like to keep their animals – whether that be keeping single animals in single paddocks or keeping them in a herd – determines how they should manage the grazing and rotation of their paddocks.

"We talked of making combinations of management practices that could assist them grow more grass over a season to help feed their livestock."

On their own four-hectare farm where they run a Friesian horse stud the Edwards have implemented an extensive soil and pasture improvement program.

"Originally this was a market garden, so there wasn't any pasture growing on it at all," Ms Edwards said.

"Firstly we addressed any compaction issues with the soil through the use of organic and natural fertilisers and soil conditioners, as well as using a Yeomans Plow to decompact the soil.

"It lets water, air and mulch through the compacted layer,

down into the soil to make it more friable."

Ms Edwards said despite its size and appearance, it was a minimum till implement designed to rip the soil with little topsoil disturbance.

"We have quite a few horses on a small acreage here so we look at ripping our paddocks every one to two years," she said.

The next step for the Edwards was to address the weed problem on the block and plant specific pastures to suit the horses they ran there.

"There are specific pastures for horses, cattle, pigs, goats or alpacas.

"For our horses we have planted horse-specific pastures which are a combination of mainly Rhodes grass, digitaria and creeping blue grass," Ms Edwards said.



Darling Downs small area landholders and contractors Scott and Fiona Edwards decompact and rejuvenate their soil with a Yeoman's Plough fitted with a container for drip feeding liquid soil conditioners.

Technology harnesses rain's fall

WHEN it comes to understanding climate variability, Doug James has a pretty good handle on the issue.

The fourth generation mixed farmer from Bungeet, in North East Victoria, has ongoing rainfall records begun by his ancestors in 1881.

Computer technology has allowed the records to be graphed, giving a 132-year history showing wide variation around the farm's 525 mm long term average annual rainfall.

Although the driest year occurred this century in 2004 with just 200mm falling, the wettest year was 1889 when more than 1000mm was received.

Doug and wife Jan run the 1300ha property "View Bank" in partnership with son Steve and wife Mardi, cropping and running 2200 first-cross ewes.

Each generation of the James family have learnt to adapt and cope with changing weather patterns.

During the 1990s, cropping was an important part of Doug's enterprise, much like the rest of the district.

But the long drought of the past decade resulted in an enterprise shift. The cropping component now maintains the sheep enterprise, resulting in lower input costs and reduced risk.

As a Warby Ranges Landcare Group member, Doug was introduced to the concept of pasture cropping about five years ago by central NSW farmer Colin Seis.

"I went on a bus trip to Col's place – he was a real down to earth bloke and I remember thinking what he said made a lot of sense. He spoke about increasing perennality to use the rain when it fell," Doug said.

He found the conversion to pasture

cropping easy as it melded with his own philosophy and methods.

The family has volunteered to host pasture cropping and sequestering carbon trials to stay abreast of the latest ideas and experimentation.

The pasture cropping trial, undertaken in partnership with the Broken Catchment Landcare Network, was sown down to oats followed by triticale with a mix of perennial grasses.

"We have the small seeds box on the combine going all the time," Steve said.

"We are always spreading a mix of grass seeds while we are sowing the cereals.

"We can now graze and harvest the cereals, and then graze the native grasses over summer.

"The grazing cereal component is a big part of keeping the enterprise going while the natives convert summer rainfall into effective feed for the sheep."

Steve said the yield penalty from grazing resulted in lower financial returns from the crops taken through to harvest.

"But, we take a long term view as pasture cropping fills the autumn-winter feed, provides better value summer grazing, and improves soil structure and fertility," he said.

Doug has observed the regeneration of windmill, red, spear and wallaby grass.

He also likes lucerne in the mix and is aiming to further increase the species diversity.

"Like a lot of things in life, to get the best out of the farm it needs a bit of time and TLC – it's not only humans need a rest time, nature does as well," he said.



Doug James, "View Bank", Bungeet, Vic, has graphed his property's 132-year rainfall history thanks to computer technology.

"We are more environmentally aware and aim to achieve 100 per cent ground cover, retain stubbles and use zero-till machinery.

"With good ground cover, there

is no heliotrope or melons in summer.

"We have gone away from using Roundup as a knockdown, although sometimes it is still needed depend-

ing on what species we are wanting to control.

"We also use Sprayseed or Gramoxone and sow straight into the stubble or pasture paddock."

Positive approaches to pasture cropping

FIRST-hand farmer accounts of experiences with pasture cropping have been released in a handbook by grassroots Landcare network Gecko ClaN.

The collection of interviews with seven farming families from throughout the North East was commissioned by Gecko ClaN Catchment Landcare Network and compiled by journalist Kim Woods.

Pasture cropping is a technique of sowing zero-till annual crops directly into living perennial pastures.

Gecko ClaN have conducted pasture cropping trials using Caring for Our Country grants from the federal government since 2008.

The handbook was launched at Benalla last month, with the event attended by the founding father of pasture cropping, Colin Seis, a farmer from Gulgong in central NSW.

Pasture Cropping project officer Jacqui Campbell said it was pleasing to see so many farmers had found the technique offered positive improvements to their business.

"It has also stimulated interest in the benefits of retaining and managing native grasses," she said.

She said a Gecko ClaN survey had found farmers reporting biodiversity, farm health and lifestyle improvements under pasture cropping systems.

The farmers featured in the handbook are Doug and Steve James, Bungeet; Russell and Helen Ellis, Chesney Vale; Cam and Kathy Barrett-Lennard, Violet Town; Bob and Marj Falconer, Meadow Creek; Belinda Steers and Mark Goodman, Avenel; Tony and Trish Burke, Lake Rowan, and Kevin Mitchell, Devenish.

Colin Seis used low-cost pasture cropping techniques to turn around the biolog-

ically dead soils on his own property at Winona.

He said the average nutrient increase in his soils had been 172 per cent, with calcium lifting by 8 tonnes per hectare and phosphorus by 800kg/ha.

"I grew up in high input agriculture and I am now saving annually \$80,000 on reduced inputs," Mr Seis said.

"We are running the same number of sheep but wool quality is better, biodiversity has increased on the farm and I am now harvesting and selling native grass seed."

Gecko ClaN chairman David Dore said the pasture cropping trials had drawn international interest from Europe and the network was a finalist at the 2012 National Landcare Awards.

■ For a copy of the handbook, contact (03) 5761 1560



A Gecko ClaN field day in action. A Gecko ClaN survey had found farmers reporting biodiversity, farm health and lifestyle improvements under pasture cropping systems.



greener pastures

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Advocating trees for life at 'Kiraba'

BALAKLAVA, South Australia, farmers Murray and Pam Kirkland, with their daughter Kelly, have long been advocates for the environment.

For the past 40 years, Murray and Pam have replanted native vegetation on their 1214-hectare property "Kiraba".

Running a mixed farming enterprise with sheep and cropping, they decided to become involved in the Target 100 social media project 12-months-ago after reading about it in a Meat and Livestock Australia brochure.

"It's important for people in the city to see that people from the country are genuinely concerned and like to promote environmental issues," Kelly said.

"We would like to encourage other people to be involved as well."

In the 15 years since they became involved with Trees for Life, the Kirklands have planted about 5000 trees.

Most of their paddocks have substantial stands of trees, or shelterbelts, which double as an important place for their 1500 Roseville Park-blood Merino ewe flock to shelter from the strong westerly and north westerly winds which blow across their property.

Trees are also planted in an 8ha "plantation", and a further 16ha of their property is also heritage listed.

"We had a couple of sections of natural scrub remaining on our property so we decided to fence it off to make one big plantation," she said.

"It was largely non-arable, being a mix of sheet rock and very rocky ground, which made it perfect as an area to replant trees."

Kelly said a Trees for Life volunteer in Adelaide propagated 100 to 150 trees and bushes annually for them to replant on their property.

"Dad was planting more trees – about 400 to 500 – but we can get harsh summers here and need to water trees during periods of hot weather in summer, so it was getting a bit much," she said.

"We generally water trees for about three to four years during summer, before they are big enough to survive by themselves."

Kelly said the shelterbelts had been brilliant for protecting stock from the elements.

They had also brought back a lot of wildlife.

"They've brought back the bees and the wildlife," she said.

"It's nice to have been a part of it."

Kelly said the Target 100 campaign had done very well, particularly interstate.

"It's been a useful campaign for urban people to be able to get to know farmers from different areas and what they do," she said.



Murray, Pam and Kelly Kirkland (pictured), "Kiraba", Balaklava, South Australia said planting 5000 trees on their property had provided a host of benefits to their mixed farming enterprise.

"At a time when city people are starting to see rural practices in a poor light, I think it showed that for all the bad things there are a lot of positives in the rural industry, and

many people striving to do the right thing."

Kelly said boosting environmental outcomes on her family property had provided many positives.

"It's nice to know we can interact with the environment and work together," she said.

"I wouldn't like to see it any other way."



Brayden Berchy, Bentleigh Secondary College, Melbourne, took part in the college's first planting in the Create a Forest project, which was launched in June by the Australian Home Heating Association.

Challenge to create sustainable forests

REVIVING a traditional strategy, a sustainability initiative is creating a forest of trees to be used for future firewood.

The Create a Forest project, launched in June, was instigated by the Australian Home Heating Association (AHHA) through Landcare Australia with a \$5000 grant.

Bentleigh Secondary College in Melbourne's south-east picked up the challenge, and the first planting took place on June 2 at Bentleigh Secondary College where 31 students and parents planted more than 500 trees. Further plantings are scheduled later in the year.

AHHA General Manager Demi Brown said the association wanted to work with a school to educate youth about the necessity of sustainable forestry.

"When firewood is sourced from a sustainably managed forest or plantation it recycles carbon from the atmosphere, leading to zero carbon emissions," Ms Brown said.

"Trees – not only as a fuel source and

a sink for carbon – provide a wide range of environmental, social and economic benefits, and that is why the AHHA is a supporter of Landcare Australia."

Landcare Australia Partnership and Project Development Manager Jenny Knox said Bentleigh Secondary College was selected because of its focus on creating sustainability leaders for the next generation.

"Bentleigh Secondary College has a number of initiatives in sustainability that provide wide ranging educational benefits so it was a natural fit for this type of project," Jenny said.

"The school has a solar energy system, an on-campus wetland and an impressive water management strategy."

"But what is most relevant for the AHHA is the school's urban forest – with 2000 square metres of the campus being transformed into a multi-layered forest populated with native plants."

Ms Brown said the AHHA elected to be involved in such a project because of the benefits in the years to come.

"Sustainability initiatives provide significant educational benefits to the next generation of land carers, as well as demonstrating how community action can have a positive effect on the environment," Ms Brown said.

"We wanted the planting to be used in the future for fuel – firewood – and Landcare Australia identified the right school for us. We're looking forward to getting our green thumbs on and making a start on this project."

The AHHA has already supported the Landcare group Otway Agroforestry Network (OAN), helping farmers to establish and manage trees on their properties.

The AHHA provided \$10,000 to the OAN to help the group improve information to growers about the growing, harvesting and marketing of sustainable firewood.

"Obviously we're aware that our industry requires trees for fuel so it's very important to us to invest in projects that support sustainability," Ms Brown said.

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Kids to get hands on Condamine conference

CONDAMINE Headwaters Landcare Group is inviting Landcarers to bring their kids with them for the 2013 Queensland State Landcare Conference.

A Junior Landcare Conference will run concurrent to the adults' program from 27 to 29 September, giving young people an opportunity to learn about natural landscapes and good land management.

Chairman of the Condamine Headwaters Landcare Group Andrew O'Dea says the junior program was put together to engage and empower young people to better understand the landscape and will feature hands on activities to boost awareness of conservation and production issues.

"We'll have interactive roleplaying that portrays soil microbes and the soil world," Mr O'Dea said.

"Kids will be getting their hands dirty on the banks of the Condamine River, planting lomandra and learning about fish habitat and water quality.

"We'll be revamping Warwick Central State School's garden beds ready for spring, learning about the rescue and rehabilitation of possums, reptiles and bats and we'll set out on a walk and talk around Rosenthal Scrub.

"Kids from 7 to 15 years are welcome to come along and we have more activities to announce in the program soon."

Children accompanying full conference delegates can attend for

free and the fee for other children is only \$25 for three days. This includes all activities and meals.

"We wanted to encourage people to bring their kids to Warwick," Mr O'Dea said.

"But in doing so, we're also offering an excellent program for local kids during the school holidays."

The Junior Landcare Conference is sponsored by Landcare Australia Limited.

The adults' program will include keynote presentations from Major General Michael Jeffery, Australia's first soil advocate, authors Julian Cribb and Bill Gammage, 2012 Carbon Cocky of the Year Shane Joyce, Dr Nancy Schellhorn from CSIRO, Georgie Somers from Queensland Rural, Regional and Remote Women's Network, and Terry McCosker, a pioneer in the field of soil carbon and carbon farming.

More than 30 concurrent presentations, field trips, social events, plenty of networking opportunities and workshops fill the rest of the program.

The QLD State Landcare Awards will also be presented at the conference Gala Dinner.

Pictured is Warwick Central State School student Emma Potter counting waterbugs found in the Condamine River.

■ Registration, program and more information is available at headwaters.ddrlandcare.org

Newcastle to host Landcare awards

SEPTEMBER is a big month for Landcare in NSW with the State Landcare Awards winners to be announced at the movement's biennial gathering in the beautiful coastal city of Newcastle.

The forum is the premier showcase of sustainability, Landcare and volunteering across NSW, and includes the annual Landcare Muster and the NSW Landcare Awards dinner.

Costa Georgiadis will headline the 2013 forum as keynote speaker.

The landscape architect with an all-consuming passion for plants and people knows how to bring out the best in both, and takes great pleasure in bringing them together.

Costa believes in embracing and celebrating Mother Nature's cycles and seasons and nurturing her balance, beauty and bounty organically.

His holistic approach is all about gardening the soil and the soul. He is bound to inspire and delight his Landcare audience.

The State Landcare Awards, in its 23rd year, recognise the achievements of dedicated people who give up their time to care for precious land and water resources.

The awards have become an integral part of the State Landcare Forum.

Winners are announced at the forum awards dinner.

The theme for this year's forum is "Many Hands Connecting Communities".



Megan Rowlett, 2011 NSW Landcare Awards winner.

It is a chance to gather with up to 400 people from Landcare and community groups, farmers, Aboriginal groups, regional catchment bodies, industry and government representatives from across NSW and Australia.

Motivating speakers from across the country will share their Landcaring and catchment management experiences in a range of sessions, which will include a sneak peek at the NSW Landcare Awards finalists.

You'll be able to check out what Hunter Valley Landcarers have

been up to on one of the diverse field trips which will take you by boat, bus, foot and bike to wineries, beaches, headlands and horse studs across the region.

Landcare NSW and the Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority are your hosts for the 2013 NSW Landcare and Catchment Management Forum on 3, 4 and 5 September.

■ For more information about the forum visit www.landcarecmaforum.com.au or contact John Wilson on (02) 4930 1030

ACT awards excellence over breakfast

MORE than 20 nominations have been received for the 2013 ACT Landcare Awards, which will be announced at a breakfast awards ceremony at the Boathouse by the Lake in Canberra on Thursday September 5.

As well as eight national categories, there will be two special awards presented at the event, which are specific to the ACT.

The Quiet Achiever Award will be presented to a group or individual who has shown consistent contribution in volunteer

work for the environment, and the Environment

Community Support Award will be awarded to an outstanding community co-ordinator who works with local Landcare or ParkCare groups.

These awards celebrate the fantastic contribution of Landcare groups and individuals to natural resource management in the ACT and their contribution to community activities.

SA recognises tireless contributions

THE 2013 South Australia Landcare Awards will this year be held in conjunction with the Premier's NRM Awards.

The awards recognise the outstanding contributions of South Australians who work tirelessly to help protect and preserve South Australia's unique natural habitat.

The Premier's NRM Awards were introduced in 2007 to acknowledge the volunteers and other people working in natural resources management in South Australia.

This year, there are seven categories.

1. Partnership Project
2. Community Engagement
3. NRM Research or Innovation
4. Big Picture
5. Aboriginal Leadership
6. Rising Stars
7. Service to NRM

The Natural Resources Management Council is hosting an awards presentation ceremony at the Observatory Function Centre, Hackney Road, Adelaide, on Wednesday 6 November 2013.

Celebrating inspiring Territorians

DO YOU know an individual or group in the Northern Territory who deserves a Natural Resource Management or Landcare award?

Territory Natural Resource Management (NRM) will host the first ever Territory NRM Awards in conjunction with an annual forum, free workshops and training for natural resource managers in the Territory.

The Territory NRM Awards will complement the NT Landcare Awards, now in its 23rd year, celebrating the achievements of inspiring Territorians who work hard to improve their local environment. Finalists from each Landcare Awards category will go on to represent the Northern Territory at the National Landcare Awards in 2014.

These awards, which take place on November

6 at Darwin Convention Centre, will celebrate the outstanding achievements of groups and individuals working hard to manage the Territory's special places and species.

The Territory Natural Resource Management Annual Forum and Workshops will take place from November 5 to 7 in Darwin.

The forum will focus on natural resource management projects in the Northern Territory and will involve workshops and a field day.

This is a great opportunity for people involved in NRM throughout the Northern Territory to get together, share stories, learn from one another and celebrate our achievements.

■ For more information and to download the entry forms for both awards streams please visit www.territorynrm.org.au

Volunteer's floating challenge a boost for conservation

LANDCARE is an institution that takes volunteers well beyond the terrestrial environment, and out onto the water.

Floating Landcare volunteers – known as Workers on Water (WOW) – have since last year been visiting boat-access only locations along the Hawkesbury River and in the Pittwater.

The program aims to protect and, where necessary, restore environments around the pressured Hawkesbury estuary.

It is part of the Landcare

Adventure Conservation program, which delivers important conservation outcomes that often could not be done by paid workers because it is too expensive or logistically impossible.

Landcare Adventure Conservation activities are intended to be fun, challenging and take place in a range of unique places. Volunteers do bush regeneration, collect litter, and run simple flora and fauna surveys.

While they are at work, Floating Landcarers learn about environ-

mental issues and visit beautiful locations like Spectacle Island, Hungry Beach and Scotland Island.

The two-year project is co-ordinated by the Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment Management Authority in partnership with Pittwater, Hornsby and Gosford Councils and National Parks and Wildlife Service, and receives funding from the NSW Environmental Trust.

Landcare Australia was engaged as a community partner to help attract corporate support to the program

and engage corporate and local volunteers in Floating Landcare activities.

The program has since received a funding boost with Landcare Australia's project partner Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) coming on board and awarding a 2013 RBC Blue Water Project Leadership Grant aimed at protecting urban waterways.

Launched in 2007, the RBC Blue Water Project is an innovative 10-year, global commitment to help protect the world's most precious

natural resource: fresh water.

Its objective is to provide access to drinkable, swimmable, fishable water, now and for future generations.

As well as supporting Landcare Australia and the Floating Landcare program, RBC will be supporting their staff to get involved in Floating Landcare events.

■ For more information about corporate volunteering and Floating Landcare visit www.landcareonline.com.au/corporate-volunteering



Tarrabandra's key to success in teamwork

IN THE South West Slopes of NSW, 12 landholders have got together to patch together a badly fragmented natural environment.

The Tarrabandra Hills Restoration project is taking place in a long-settled region south of Gundagai, where only small remnants of the original box gum grassy woodlands remain.

According to an ecologist who surveyed the remnants, this fragmentation gives the area the dubious distinction of having one of the most degraded examples of this environment in the country.

That revelation inspired a group of

landholders, all with land adjoining at least one other participant, to get together and address the problem.

They have been supported by the Jaramas Foundation, which through its partnership with Landcare Australia is supporting sustainable agriculture in NSW.

Over five years, the Tarrabandra Hills Restoration Project has built an extensive network of corridors on private land to link remaining remnants of box gum grassy woodland.

The corridors allow plant, bird and animal species to move more freely between the remnants, strengthening



Dave Elworthy, one of the champions of the Tarrabandra Hills Restoration project, placing tree guards on one of his sites.

their resilience and increasing the possibility of native species recolonising each remnant.

Through some challenging years for farming, the landholder group has revegetated 47 hectares of native habitat with 21,000 native trees and shrubs, and built 18 kilometres of fencing to exclude stock.

The project has not only improved biodiversity, but improved farm management as well.

By providing extra shade and shelter for stock, creating additional fencing for better stock management, improved stream water quality through fencing, and by improving

the functionality of properties in general land prices have improved.

The project began with a cross-property planning workshop.

Landholders were provided with a map of their property, on which they marked remnant areas and existing revegetation projects. They then identified priority sites for potential corridors.

The landholders then shared this information with their neighbours.

Using a subcatchment map they negotiated between themselves as to where each of them should place native vegetation corridors to join from property to property.

Once consensus was reached within the group, the landholders worked with their local Murrumbidgee CMA Natural Resource Officer to develop a management agreement for each property.

This simple agreement included a list of ground works, detailed planting requirements and ongoing landholder management responsibilities.

Each year the group meets to evaluate the success of the project, and mark on the subcatchment map the sites that were planted that year and to negotiate between themselves the corridor sites for the coming year.



LEFT: Revegetation activities across the Tarrabandra Hills aim to connect acres of endangered box gum grassy woodland.