

Joint forces a win for land at Woady

TWENTY years ago landholders in the Woody Yaloak Catchment, south west of Ballarat, joined forces in a bid to restore their badly-degraded landscape.

Little remnant vegetation remained, weeds and rabbits were widespread, many waterways were unprotected and areas of salinity and erosion were having an impact on farm production.

In 1992 members of the Rokewood, Werneth, Misery Moonlight and Pittong Hoyles Creek landcare groups came together with the common aim of improving the environmental conditions in the 120,000 hectare catchment.

With support from the Victorian Farmers Federation, Greening Australia and Alcoa, the four Landcare groups developed an ambitious five-year plan and the Woody Yaloak Catchment Group was formed.

Their challenge was daunting.

Pastures were dominated by annual species leaving the ground prone to erosion in summer. Most soils were deficient in nutrients and highly acidic.

Fast forward two decades, four plans and many highs and lows, the Woody Yaloak Group is continuing to shape environmental conditions in the catchment and beyond.

The group, with more than 30 partners, has supported 1740 projects worth \$9.8 million.

Landholders have planted 800,000 trees, fenced and enhanced 83 kilometres of waterways, constructed 15 crossings, 105 offstream and paddock watering points and clocked up 6300 hours of earthworks for erosion control, removal of rabbit harbour and weeds and a further 600 hours enhancing or creating wetlands.

An additional 7600 litres of chemical was used to control weeds. Eleven thousand hectares of deep rooted perennial pastures were sown or



Woody farmer Bluey Smith.

improved through technical and financial support.

Yet this activity is only part of what is happening in the catchment with many landholders tackling projects without assistance.

A 2013 survey indicated the average annual investment in landcare, excluding grants, was \$4340 per property, equating to an annual investment of \$720,000 across landcare members.

Grants for on-ground activities in the past three years were only \$44,000 per annum, representing six

per cent of the total “recorded” expenditure on landcare.

Another significant investment by landholders during the past two decades has been toward improving the soil. Large changes in soil conditions have required investment of \$23.3 million in fertiliser and a further \$5.2 million in lime.

The group has been active in communicating results and experiences, creating and sharing new knowledge and encouraging others to form partnerships.

Members have hosted 151 tours,

held 94 information sessions, given 63 invited presentations, 129 radio, print and television stories, commented on 30 strategies and plans and been involved in 22 University studies. Twenty six farm productivity trials have also been undertaken.

Encouraging people to get involved and “have a go” has been at the core of the Woody Yaloak Catchment Project.

When the project commenced in 1993, landholders involved in Landcare managed 22 per cent of the private land in the catchment. Now

there are seven landcare groups and, in the past decade, average membership has been 58pc.

Analysis of 1100 soil tests from 106 farmers across two decades suggests many paddocks have reached or exceeded the optimum for production and now have enough nutrient to enable greater soil carbon sequestration.

A survey last year showed farms are now almost 10 per cent larger while their profitability rose by 18pc in the first 10 years and nine per cent in the second decade.

Pocket tool to help dairy farmers dish the dirt on fertiliser

A MOBILE phone app could soon be one of the most useful tools dairy farmers use on their properties thanks to new technology for managing the application of fertilisers.

The app, in development by Dairy Australia with support from an Innovation Grant from the federal Department of Agriculture, will provide farmers with soil and fertiliser information to determine quantities of fertiliser for optimal feed requirements.

The app assists farmers to track fertiliser usage and ensure best nutrient management practices to increase production and profitability.

“Fertiliser is such a big cost for the dairy industry – a tool that can deliver a more precise application of fertiliser could make big savings overall,” said Dairy Australia program manager Amy Fay.

The project also responds to the need for a fertiliser reporting system that reduces record keeping and adds value to farmers’ decision making.

Dairy Australia is working with local fertiliser companies, including Cobden’s Webber and, to develop the app.

It will link real-time application with industry best practice fertiliser and soil management advice.

The app will be piloted across 60 farms in western Victoria and will encourage more efficient information sharing.

Improved data collection on fertiliser use will also position the industry to meet increasing international demand for sustainably produced dairy products.

“International and domestic consumers are becoming increasingly interested in the environmental credentials of Australian dairy products,” Ms Fay said.

“This app will assist our industry to demonstrate good practice in fertiliser use.

“Implementation of fertiliser management plans is an industry sustainability target and will contribute to increased security of international market access for Australian dairy products.

“This is an exciting opportunity to work with the federal government, local service providers and farmers to get ahead of the game in fertiliser and soil data management and build a tool that will assist farmers in their everyday operations.”

The \$341,000 project – a result of the dairy industry responding to market signals to promote sustainable practices – was made possible by funding from federal Department



A young farm worker rides a quad bike towing a yellow spreader dispensing its contents about the paddock. Carter farm, Ringarooma, Tasmania. Photo: Dairy Australia.

of Agriculture’s \$21.2 million Innovation Grants program.

Innovation Grants projects help ensure Australia’s agriculture, fisheries

and forestry sectors remain competitive and at the forefront of sustainable food and fibre production.

■ For more information on other

projects funded under the Innovation Grants program visit www.daff.gov.au/natural-resources/innovation-grants

Volunteers a boost for coast care

MOST Australians live and work on the coast but not enough of them are volunteering to protect fragile coastal and marine environments.

Much of that job is falling on the shoulders of over-stretched coastal environment groups who say they haven't the manpower or resources to tackle the challenge.

The environment is not a popular choice for the six million Australian adults who volunteer each year yet more than 90 per cent of the public say they are interested in environmental issues.

Central Queensland University PhD

candidate Julian Reid (pictured) is exploring the characteristics, structures and functions of voluntary coastal environmental groups.



Australia's current population of 23 million people is expected to increase to between 30.9 and 42.5 million people by 2056.

"More than 86pc of the Australian population live in the coastal zone and this concentration of people and economic development is creating pressures for marine and terrestrial biodiversity, ecosystem services and cultural and natural heritages," Mr Reid said. "Ecosystems near coastal urban areas and industrial developments in the east and south-east of Australia are reportedly in poor health while Australia's marine environment is expected to seriously degrade in the next 50 years."

Mr Reid will explore the structure, function and organisational behavior of coastal environmental groups, their governance, succession planning, community engagement and the general management of volunteers and the volunteer experience.

The expected outcome of his research, which has started in Queensland, NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia, is the development of a framework for the use of natural resource practitioners and coastal environmental group officer bearers to deliver coastal natural resource management strategies.

The survey will collect information from volunteers and interviews will be held with both office bearers and volunteers.

■ Email Mr Reid on j.reid2@cqu.edu.au to participate in the survey or interview or to nominate a group for case study.

A seedy tango for farming

Australia and Argentina team up for no-till

EVER wondered how machinery from Argentina might change the way we farm in Australia?

When the Conservation Agriculture and No-till Farming Association Inc (CANFA) looked to new technologies to tackle issues in broadacre farming – such as herbicide resistance and dependence on fertilisers – they found an unlikely ally in Cordoba, Argentina, the heart of machinery manufacturers.

Precision planting, improved weed suppression, reduced erosion and better crops were some of the benefits Argentine farmers were reaping using modern machinery for winter cropping of soybeans and maize.

And now the NSW-based CANFA, through an Innovation Grant from the federal Department of Agriculture, is trialling the same machinery to see how it performs in our unique conditions.

"The issue had been on our mind for years – how we could create quick and dense crop canopy cover which is essential to aid weed suppression and reduce wind and water erosion," said CANFA's executive officer Neville Gould.

"We looked to the Argentine model that had already mostly moved to no-till systems on their erosive soils.

"Using new machinery to plant more precisely allows farmers to retain more surface cover and improve soil health."

Machinery that can provide these solutions includes seed singulation metering technology, seed firming and fertiliser delivery technology and new disc planting systems, including new leading coulter designs.

The seed singulation metering system allows seeds to be distributed more accurately, leading to more spatially exact plant populations. This discourages weed intrusion and growth and less exposed soil surface for wind and water erosion.

There are also tools that create bet-



Greg Butler, research manager from SANTFA, and co-investigator on the project, with the PLA double disc seeder fitted with a precision seeding system. Photo: CANFA.

ter seed-soil contact (presswheels and seed firmers), leading to quicker and higher levels of germination and establishment, leading to more aggressive crop competition for weeds and quicker and more even canopy cover with reduced soil erosion.

Single disc seeding technology is better able to handle higher residue levels required to reduce weed establishment and reduce soil erosion.

CANFA's project will see these tools imported and used at a number of sites in NSW and South Australia under broadacre dryland situations to test their performance against cur-

rently used Australian seeding systems.

Canola and chickpeas – usually sown at a high seed rate and therefore expensive – will be crops of interest.

Precision planting is expected to reduce seed costs considerably, providing better returns to farmers and land managers.

"We were so pleased to receive the grant that is allowing us to go ahead and trial this," Mr Gould said.

"It is a win-win situation for Argentina and Australia.

"Argentina can form a basis to exemplify their machinery and export to us (and) Australia is gain-

ing the benefits of planting more precisely – healthier soils, more efficient water use, less operating costs and greater crop yields.

"It is providing solutions to issues we are now experiencing in broad-acre cropping, namely herbicide resistance, growing dependency on artificial fertilisers, the need for strategic tillage and stubble burning, and climate variability.

"We are excited because the implications are quite significant – it could potentially change the way we farm altogether."

■ Visit www.daff.gov.au/innovationgrants

Looking to the future after 25 years of Landcare

UPDATE

Tessa Jakszewicz

LAL chief executive



THE team at Landcare Australia and I are excited to kick off with this first edition of *Landcare In Focus* for 2014 – the year that not only marks the quarter century anniversary of the formation of Landcare Australia but also signals 25 years since Landcare emerged as a national movement.

With strong government and industry support – for the work we do nationally, both on-ground and providing resources for thousands of volunteers – we are looking forward to celebrating the past but, just as importantly, to discussing how to tackle the challenges we face looking

after our land and waterways in the future.

In consultation with the Landcare community, government, our corporate partners and others, we are developing a range of activities and events to celebrate this significant milestone.

In 2014 we will continue to engage our key partners, the Landcare community and demonstrate to the wider public how Landcare and its achievements are increasingly important and at least as relevant today as a quarter of a century ago, when the crisis in land degradation prompted the commencement of a Decade of Landcare.

The National Landcare Conference and Awards will be the key events to mark this 25th anniversary and we very much look forward to working with the wider Landcare and natural resource management communities to them successful events of which we can all be proud.

As part of this celebratory year, we

would love for all Landcarers and friends of Landcare to get involved in a national conversation about what Landcare has meant for you, what it is doing right, what more can be done, and how Landcare as a

the productivity and value of the land and show how they can lend a hand.

Let's ramp up the Landcare conversation among our friends and the wider community, share

We want to remind all Australians about the importance of improving the productivity and value of the land and show how they can lend a hand

– Landcare Australia chief executive
Tessa Jakszewicz

movement should prioritise and adapt for challenges in the future.

On our interactive L.I.F.E campaign website, please consider submitting your L.I.F.E story or local Landcare events on this easy-to-use interface landcarelife.com.au, you can also search for grants and find or ask for volunteers.

We want to remind all Australians about the importance of improving

information, interact, and make 2014 a year of Landcare to remember.

■ Subscribe to free e-newsletters on the Landcare Australia website. Visit www.landcareonline.com.au search for Landcare Australia on Facebook, follow them on twitter @LandcareAust and on Youtube at www.youtube.com/LandcareEducation



An international Landcare master class in Malawi in July last year looked at composting techniques for soil improvement.

Funds needed for an international boost

By ROB
YOUL

AUSTRALIA now has an Overseas Landcare Fund to support small community environmental and sustainable farming projects abroad.

A recent compelling innovation by Australian Landcare International (ALI) and the Victorian Landcare Council, the fund needs support.

Funds have already gone to projects in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (revegetation), Nigeria (wetlands, biodiversity), Tanzania (Junior Landcare), Sri Lanka (water quality) and the Philippines and Indonesia (tree nurseries), with Laos (wetlands) and Cameroon (nursery, permaculture training) connections coming soon.

goes a long way overseas.

To ensure funds arrive at their destination and are used effectively, Landcare links with known overseas non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and contacts and, as work progresses, seeks pictures and reports from groups involved.

Now well established in this challenging field, Landcare is inviting other Australian groups, networks and individuals to contribute.

Projects await in Africa, south-east Asia and the South Pacific. Where appropriate, Landcare links donors with specific projects.

Involvement may lead to genuine relationships, exchanging ideas, even to Australian Landcarers working abroad. Support for the fund could

Landcare now has a recognisable presence in 26 countries, thanks to Commonwealth and State governments, individuals and specialist Landcare NGOs like the Secretariat for International Landcare (SILC) and ALI.

Other key players include Rotary International, Crawford Fund and especially Landcare International (LI) in Nairobi, which has recently run Landcare master classes in Uganda and Malawi.

Last year Landcare groups and projects commenced in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Tonga and Japan.

Indeed, PhD student Tomomi Maekawa, Tokyo, Japan, who is currently at Albury's Charles Sturt University, chairs a committee aimed at introducing Landcare to Japan.

Recently a Queensland-managed appeal raised \$5600 for Typhoon Haiyan victims to be disbursed by the Landcare Foundation of the Philippine Islands.

Closer to home Fiji, where the World Wildlife Fund started initial projects, has several Landcare projects.

ALI members also helped launch Tonga's first Landcare group through Rotary Australia.

New Zealand's government will support expansion to other villages.

■ To get involved, visit www.australianlandcareinternational.com or contact robmyoul@gmail.com

Landcare now has a recognisable presence in 26 countries, thanks to Commonwealth and State governments, individuals and specialist Landcare NGOs

– Landcare International chair
Rob Youl



Initial donations came from the two organisations, Landcare networks and groups and private sources.

To cover set up and transfer costs, Victoria's bankmecu donated \$1500. A \$500 grant, the current limit,

broaden your group's outlook and give great satisfaction.

Meanwhile, international Landcare, with its multi-disciplinary approach and emphasis on empowerment, continues to bound ahead.

Enlisting biodiesel in coral cactus battle

HOT chip lovers in Longreach will be doing their bit in the battle against weeds in Queensland's Central West when Desert Channels Queensland (DCQ) begins converting used cooking oil into pre-refined biodiesel.

The escalating price of diesel has been making the cost of containing Coral cactus and other invasive species more prohibitive each year, especially for graziers who have been fighting the battle for up to 30 years, and DCQ chief executive Leanne Kohler said it had got to the stage that some projects were in danger of stopping.

The purchase late last year of a bio-fuel converter from neighbouring regional body, South West Natural Resource Management (NRM), meant a cheap fuel source could be substituted to bring the cost down.

The town's used chip oil is already being collected, thanks to the Longreach Lions Club, and freighted to Rockhampton for reuse.

Now, the club has entered into an agreement with DCQ to redirect the drums of oil their way, and the natural resource management group has signed a similar agreement with the Winton Shire Council, who will be collecting oil in that town.

"We'd like to get a few others on board – the more there are the greater the cost savings," Ms Kohler said.

Currently landholders are paying about \$70 per backpack for a herbicide and diesel mix.

Ms Kohler expected DCQ's production costs would be roughly a third of

this, a saving that would be passed on to the landholders and the Landcare groups it is working with.

"This represents a significant saving and we hope it will reinvigorate people's desire to control cactus," she said.

The Lions Club stands to benefit from the innovation as well – it will continue to receive \$5 for each 20-litre drum it collects and DCQ is working to promote the scheme to new businesses.

Although the unit can produce full grade biodiesel, DCQ will only turn out a pre-refined product, which is all that's needed to spray cactus.

"DCQ will be using 100 per cent of the refined cooking oil for spraying," she said.

The group has received advice from local authorities that it can convert and store the fuel product without a permit, providing no more than 100L of diesel is stored on site at any one time.

"We can never be accused of always doing the same thing the same way," Ms Kohler said.

"We have tried different approaches and reinvented the way we do things to help stay relevant and effective, but hats off to the Lions Club – they were a step ahead of us and already have momentum in this area."

DCQ is a community-based natural resource management body that works to ensure a sustainable social, economic and environmental future for the Queensland section of the Lake Eyre Basin. Its official partners include Landcare Queensland.

LANDCARE in Focus is proudly supported by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture and published by Landcare Australia Limited.

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

Please note due to space restrictions we cannot guarantee 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 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

Dates for 2014 are:

<i>Publication</i>	<i>Submission</i>
May 15	April 10
August 21	July 18
November 20	October 17



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture

Sunday 23rd March 2014, 11am - 3:30pm

FREE
Community Day!
Live. Grow. Explore.



Live. Grow. Explore. Community Day

Living Legends at Woodlands Historic Park, Oaklands Road, Greenvale.

Come along for a FREE day of family fun at Woodlands Historic Park! Discover the park's hidden wonders, learn more about your local environment, and take part in fun family activities. For more information, please visit

www.landcareonline.com.au and www.jemena.com.au.

Event organisers



Supported by Hume City Council



Tracking a decade of conservation

For a decade Landcare and VicTrack have been working to conserve fragments of some of Victoria's most threatened ecosystems, including the Plains Grasslands.

The grasslands originally extended over land ideal for farming and as a result less than one per cent of the original extent of the ecosystems remains.

Many remnants are probably too small for long-term survival.

Some of the best-preserved Plains Grassland sites are within the railway reserves managed by VicTrack where they have survived away from ploughs, fertilisers and exotic pasture plants.

Without active management, these areas will eventually be permanently modified by weed invasion, lack of fire, clearance for infrastructure expansion and vehicles.

For the past 10 years, Landcare Australia has been a partner in the important task of working to preserve the ecological integrity of many of these sites.

VicTrack is one of Victoria's largest landowners, managing more than 5000 kilometres of railway corridor.

The organisation rehabilitates, protects and enhances many of the environments it controls, but the task is enormous.

With VicTrack funding, Landcare Australia uses its expertise to identify sites worthy of conservation work, and then engages community Landcare groups to do restoration work.

Once it becomes aware of endangered habitat within its management boundaries, VicTrack also develops management plans that support the conservation of these sites.



Landcarers working on one of the reserves managed by VicTrack.

Several key Plains Grassland sites were identified on VicTrack properties in 1990 by the then Department of Conservation and Environment, and were cared for by a range of Landcare groups.

In 2009, the Western Melbourne Catchments Network received VicTrack funding to maintain sites along the Melbourne-Geelong and Melbourne-Ballarat lines with the help of groups like the Werribee River Association, Little River Improvement Society, Pinkerton Landcare

and Environment Group and East Moorabool Landcare Group.

The project expanded to include sites on the St Albans Line, and brought in the Sunbury Landcare Group, Friends of the Organ Pipes and Friends of Skeleton Creek.

More recently, VicTrack has supported the Bellarine Rail Trail Revegetation and Restoration Project, which aims to provide a continuous link of indigenous vegetation between Geelong and Queenscliff, and the Cowangie Rail Reserve

Rehabilitation Project.

The Bellarine project involves the Bellarine Landcare Group, Friends of the Bellarine Rail Trail, and Swan Bay Environment Association.

These groups are working on revegetation, weed control, seating, interpretation, education and maintenance activities.

The railway reserve at Cowangie adjoins the Mallee Highway. The reserve contains significant woodland species and native grasslands and its land system is unique to the

surrounding area.

The Murrayville Landcare Group removed and replaced a fence which had fallen into disrepair, and built a new rabbit-proof fence backed by a rabbit eradication program.

After decades of neglect, the past decade of work has alerted landcarers across many communities to the rarity of the ecosystems along the railway tracks, and as a result, given these grasslands a better outlook for the future than they have had since the first ploughs began tearing them up.

Trials making vines mulch better

MULCHING grapevines could make Perth basin wine and table grape growers up to 20 per cent more efficient in their use of water, a project sponsored by Woolworths through Landcare Australia has found.

In the past five decades, rainfall in south west Western Australia has slowly declined, so the region now receives about 20pc less annual rainfall than it did in the mid-1970s.

At the same time, the population has expanded, putting increasing pressure on Perth's main underground water resource, the Gnambarra aquifer.

Grape growers in the Swan Valley, along the Swan River upstream of Perth, draw from the same aquifer.

As water consumption increases and the authorities raise water prices to encourage greater water efficiency, producers face increasing water costs.

Electricity charges have also risen by 70pc in five years in south west WA, adding more to the cost of irrigation.

The mulching trial carried out by Perth Region Natural Resource Management (PRNRM) was inspired by other trials that have shown grape growers could increase water use efficiency by using compost or mulch.

Compost stimulates vine growth, PRNRM's sustainable agriculture manager Keith Pekin said, so mulch was chosen as a preferable option.

Good quality wood chip mulch can also persist for two to three years where compost will be absorbed into the soil within a season, and importantly, mulch is also cheaper.

The mulching trials used telemetry to monitor soil moisture after vines were mulched, and site visits to ground-truth the machine records.

Mr Pekin said the results showed that water savings of up to 20pc are readily available by mulching vines.

Mulching also lessens the variation between maximum and minimum soil temperatures, which can have a beneficial effect on vine growth.

However, these findings alone won't cause instantaneous change.

According to Mr Pekin, the cost of mulching is high and although the cost of irrigation water is climbing, it's not yet high enough to make mulching cost-effective.

But with the near certainty water and energy costs will rise, and rainfall will continue to decline, there will be a time where mulching makes more sense than using extra water and growers will be able to refer back to this trial to evaluate cost-price benefits.

Mulching trials were also being



Trials in vineyards in the Swan Valley in south west Western Australia have showed water savings of up to 20 per cent are available by mulching vines.

undertaken in other parts of south-west WA, Mr Pekin said, including the use of compost to lift the fertility of some of WA's notoriously poor soils.

He said the Woolworths/Landcare funding was vital in establishing this baseline and ensuring that future practices change will be easier.



COMING SOON!

Take flight on your very own growing journey and be in with a chance of winning some exciting prizes! Registrations open soon at www.juniorlandcarechallenge.com.au






A thong washed up on a beach in the Mapoon community was transformed into Nemo.

Transforming ghost nets in the north

AN ABORIGINAL community near the top of Cape York in Far North Queensland has come up with an artistic way of recycling marine debris collected from their beaches.

GhostNets Australia (GNA) partnered with Tangaroa Blue, Conservation Australia Volunteers and Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council to conduct a beach cleanup at the Mapoon Community in Cape York last year and has received funding from Clovertech through Landcare Australia.

The collected debris was then used in an arts workshop to create eye-catching artwork displayed by Queensland Museum (QM) in Brisbane.

The arts workshop was facilitated by three professional artists with backgrounds in theatre design, film set design, puppetry and contemporary arts.

All of these facilitators have run successful ghost net workshops in Torres Strait and Aboriginal communities in the past.

The workshop involved the wider community including school children, elders, artists and rangers to work on a collaborative large-scale sculpture of a reef bommie.

After the initial two week workshop coral, fish and other marine animals continued to be fabricated by volunteers and artist Sue Ryan from Ghost Net Art Project collected marine debris and added to the bommie over the following couple of weeks. It was packaged and transported to Brisbane in early August for installation at the Queensland Museum (QM).

The display at QM is an educational display of which the ghost net bommie is a significant component.

According to museum staff it has been popular with school children.

This project has been the first time QM has incorporated an artwork into an educational display in this way and museum staff said the public response to the innovation had been so positive they were rethinking strategies for future displays.



Fibre artists, Sue Ryan and Gina Allain, demonstrate how abandoned fishing nets can be turned into works of art during a visit to the Mapoon community at the top of Cape York.

Ghost nets are fishing nets that are lost or abandoned at sea. They represent a major threat for marine fauna and an ongoing problem for indigenous saltwater communities across the top end of Australia.

Formerly known as the Carpentaria Ghost Nets Program, GhostNets Australia is an alliance of more than 22 indigenous communities from coastal northern Australia across the three states of Western Australia, Northern Territory and Queensland.

The program was established in 2004 with funding from the Australian government.

Since its inception, the program has supported indigenous rangers to remove over 12,000 ghost nets of varying sizes and to collect data on their type and location. This has resulted in the recovery of a proportion of the trapped wildlife, particularly marine turtles (52 per cent), and the prevention of the ghost nets from returning to the sea to continue their destructive life-cycle.

Less than 10pc of these nets have

been attributed to Australian fisheries.

The Ghost Net Art Project arose from the conundrum of what to do with the mountains of ghost net and other marine debris indigenous rangers were retrieving from beaches along Australia's remote northern coastline.

Commonly employed but not entirely satisfactory solutions were either to burn it or to bury it in landfill. Given the distances and remoteness involved economically viable recycling was seemingly not possible.

GNA's Ghost Net Art Project focuses on those communities that have been identified as "ghost net hotspots", sponsoring workshops facilitated by contemporary fibre and environmental artists with a view to engaging community members to create art, craft and functional pieces made from ghost nets.

The facilitators work with artists and weavers to develop new skills while encouraging the use of traditional techniques and themes using ghost net as an art material.



Indigenous students from Erindale College in Canberra planting a bush tucker garden.

Social enterprise to help grow confidence

LANDCARE Australia is using funding received through the Westpac Foundation's national innovation grant scheme to help seven community nurseries develop programs to benefit disadvantaged Australians.

The programs range from working with disabled adults in Tasmania and South Australia, disabled youth in Victoria, disadvantaged youth in NSW, indigenous youth in ACT, refugees in Queensland and long-term unemployed people in Western Australia.

The objective of each program is to help participants gain knowledge in plant propagation techniques, seed collection, plant and nursery maintenance, plant identification, weeding, control of pests, relationship of plants with native animals, practice in working sustainably, and skills including working as a team member, training others, communication, customer service, business skills and interpersonal skills.

The "village nurseries" program run by Greening Australia in the ACT is providing job skills and training support for disadvantaged youth and community groups (including long-term unemployed, the disabled and refugees) through a range of ecological, social and economic initiatives provided by community nurseries.

Notably, young indigenous people are gaining skills outside of the traditional school curriculum while learning about their cultural landscape and the existing historical and heritage areas in their home town.

They have learnt a range of confidence-building skills including propagating plants, setting up drip irrigation, developing an understanding of conservation land management including seed collecting, revegetation, pest animals and weeds, impacts that both flora

and fauna have on the environment along with the traditional Indigenous uses of plants and their significance.

Barossa Bushgardens in South Australia is a unique community project which grows local native species as a seed bank for future generations.

The harvested seed is available for revegetation projects in the Barossa.

Apart from producing local seed, a second aim of the Bushgardens is to serve as a sanctuary showcasing locally threatened species, and a third aim is to educate the wider community about regional biodiversity conservation and the part they play in its conservation.

The Village Landcare project, which sits within the broader Barossa Bushgardens project, seeks to engage people with disabilities with socially valued activities in their community.

The nursery is a hub for environmental education and community training programs to allow participants with disabilities to take part in the normal life of their local community.

"It's so rewarding to see the volunteers benefit personally, while benefiting the Bushgardens," project officer Arthur Mousamas, said.

A volunteer participant whose driver's licence was cancelled after being diagnosed with dementia was facing life in isolation until Carer's Link took him to the Men's Shed and the Bushgardens.

The Understorey Network in Tasmania, based in Hobart, manages a community native plant nursery that propagates plants primarily for Landcare and similar community conservation projects across the Apple Isle.

The project supports the further development of the nursery and engagement of disadvantaged members of the community at the site.



LEFT: Members of the Gugan Gulwan men's youth group learning about bush soap as part of the job skill program.

A big story about little penguins

A SPECIAL book has been published to help in the battle to protect the last colony of Little Penguins on mainland NSW.

The Little Penguins of Manly Wharf by Felicity Pulman is aimed at educating the public and raising awareness about how to look after these threatened tiny species.

Not only will readers see some great photos and meet Mr Stickybeak, they will discover all the facts you need to know including the threats they face (like losing habitat, attacks by dogs not on leashes and being disturbed from their nests).

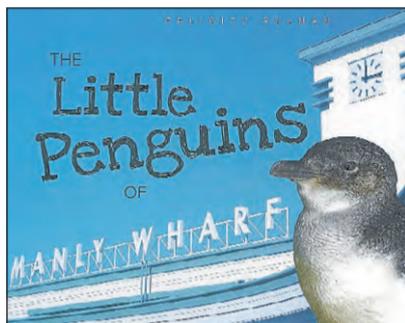
The roughly 60 pairs of Little Penguins at Manly Wharf are the only ones left on mainland NSW.

Once they were common, but now the only other colonies exist on islands off the coast.

This book that shows everybody has a role to play in looking after them, not just the "Penguin Wardens", a volunteer group supported by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and the Manly Environment Centre, who keep an eye on them at night.

Volunteers have been patrolling the penguins' nesting and breeding areas at night for more than five years making sure they are not disturbed.

The group also aims to educate people about how to look after the penguins.



Sometimes they feel like preachers or stern teachers – "Dogs on leash please! No flash! Don't touch, just look!" – but say it's all worth it.

People are excited about penguins living right next to the ferry and on some evenings a large crowd of people waits for the penguins to come back from the sea and head to their nesting areas.

There are a few favourites, like Mr Stickybeak who unfortunately keeps losing his partners due to dog attacks and, recently, a speedboat incident.

The Little Penguin is the smallest penguin species weighing between 1000 to 1200 grams, although they may sometimes be heavier, and stands about 30 centimetres tall.

Slate-blue colours the upper body with white on the underside including the throat, flippers are blue-black above with a white trailing edge and white below, the bill is black, the feet are pale with black soles, and the eye is silvery grey.

Their numbers are now so low that the population is in danger of becoming extinct.

The decline is mainly due to:

- loss of suitable habitat
- attacks by foxes and dogs
- disturbance at nesting sites.

The Little Penguins of Manly Wharf was published in 2013, with the support of funding partners Be Natural and Landcare Australia, and



Raising community awareness about the Little Penguins.

was distributed to local schools students as well as being available for sale in local bookshops in the Manly area.

"The goal of producing the book was to increase the awareness of the local community to the plight of the Little Penguin and let everybody know they have a role to play in looking after them," said NPWS Penguin Wardens Support Project senior ranger Mel Tyas.

The book opens with young Anna introducing herself and her friend Toby as NPWS volunteers on the team of Penguin Wardens who

help guard the Little Penguins at Manly.

Readers learn how dogs, fish hooks, plastic bags and bottles pose hazards to these creatures. Anna's grandpa says when he was her age, in 1952, there were as many as 500 penguins in the Manly area. By 1990 there were only about 60 left.

Mr Stickybeak lost his first partner when she vanished after a series of misfortunes. Then his second partner was hit by a powerboat.

Fortunately, he paired up with Mrs Silverwing whose mate had also died.

The new couple had successfully raised two lots of chicks at the time of writing of the book.

■ Contact Melanie Tyas, 0418 420 646 or email mel.tyas@environmentnsw.gov.au

● The book retails at \$24.95 and all proceeds go to caring for and protecting these extremely rare and threatened creatures.

■ To find out more about the penguins from the Manly Environment Centre, visit www.mec.org.au and to make a donation visit www.fnpp.org.au/little-penguins

Discovery day at Sandy Point

FITZROY River and Coastal Catchments (FRCC) teamed up with Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service, Fitzroy Basin Association (FBA) and a number of community groups including Captag, the Society for Growing Australian Plants, Birdlife Capricornia and the Queensland Frog Society to host a community

discovery day at Sandy Point, Yeppoon, in Central Queensland.

The project was supported by FBA through funding from the Australian government.

FRCC project officer Kelly Smith said Sandy Point was a popular fishing and recreation spot on Queensland's Capricorn coast as well as a unique roosting spot for migra-

tory shorebirds that travel over 25,000 kilometres each year from the northern hemisphere.

"Due to severe weather events such as Cyclone Yasi and king tides, the Sandy Point Spit suffered significant erosion and could no longer be accessed between mid and high tide from Farnborough beach," Ms Smith said.

"The good news is sand has started to re-deposit, reforming the spit, and it is hoped this will continue allowing the vegetation to grow and trap sand to reclaim the area that was previously washed into the sea – but for this to occur we need the community to help us protect the area.

"These natural changes have pushed drivers, shorebirds and boats into new areas but people can easily minimise their impacts and make a big difference to the area by driving and launching boats only on bare sand, sticking to the designated tracks and using the car parking area."

Kim Martin from Captag has been fishing at Sandy Point since he was a boy as a member of Keppel Light Gear Angling Club in the 1960s.

"Corio and Sandy Point has come



Allan Briggs from Birdlife Capricornia shares information on shorebird roosting sites.

under increased pressure during the years with impacts ranging from upstream land use to increased visitation," Mr Martin said.

"All of this can also have a direct effect on fish stocks and it is important these issues are addressed."

Attendees participated in tree planting aimed at stabilising degrad-

ed areas of the spit due to undesignated vehicle tracks, heard from Birdlife Capricornia representatives and participated in native beach scrub species identification workshops held by members of the local Society for Growing Australian Plants.



Fitzroy River and Coastal Catchments project officer Shelly McArdle and Capricorn Coast Landcare's Alby Wooler at the Sandy Point discovery day.



Celebrating to shape the future

Comment by
BRETT de HAYR

THIS year is a milestone for the Landcare Movement and its contribution to this country.

It marks 25 years since the landmark partnership between The National Farmers Federation (NFF), Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) and the federal government.

This unlikely partnership helped mobilise a generation and played a major role in the spread of the Landcare movement across the country and internationally.

This year provides us with the opportunity to pause and celebrate the remarkable achievements of the Landcare movement in 25 years and acknowledge the vision shown at the time.

Looking back, it is easy to underestimate the vision and drive that such a partnership required and the debt that is owed.

Landcare is now a movement made up of hundreds of thousands of people across the country from the city to the bush, old and young.

As a movement of many organisations, governments and individuals, it is controlled by nobody and owned by all.

Twenty five years on, it is all too easy to take Landcare for granted and the vast army of people who go about their work on farms, public spaces, traditional lands and schools across the country to literally help make this country a better place.

Much of this work often goes unrecognised except to those at the

local level who know exactly the contribution that Landcare has made to their community and their local area.

Landcare has contributed to not only improving our landscapes, but has also made important contributions to our communities, especially during times of stress such as fires, flood and drought.

Landcare has also helped to change the face of Australian agriculture – in 2012, 73 per cent of Australian farmers said that they were part of the Landcare movement.

While Landcare had its roots very much in the rural sector, over time it has spread to our coasts and cities as well as schools.

While this diversity within the movement has at times challenged some, it has also brought an inherent strength to the movement as a common link between our cities and the bush.

However, the 25th anniversary also provides the opportunity for all of us – politicians of all persuasions, farm leaders, the conservation movement, and the business community – to look forward to the challenges of today and the future and what this generation of leaders wants to be remembered for.

What is required for the next 25 years is an open question – but part of the answer must include people being engaged and involved – “ownership”.

People have been part of the problem – but they are also a key part of the solution.

The challenge ahead is too big for



either the community or government to tackle on its own.

The last 25 years has shown not only that it can be done, but that it must be done together.

This year the federal government will announce a new National Landcare Program and this could not be timelier to help give renewed focus.

We all have a role to play and cannot outsource responsibility to others.

While the Landcare partnership 25 years ago in 1989 was between the federal government, ACF and NFF

mobilised a generation – it was also hundreds of thousands of people in groups and individually across the country, who actually made the difference on the ground.

Let's all of us take the opportunity in 2014 to reflect and celebrate the achievements of Landcare – but the greatest recognition we could give is to mobilise a new generation to help meet the challenges of another 25 years of Landcare.

● Brett de Hayr is the National Landcare Facilitator.

In Brief

Victorian trust grants: Landcare groups in Victoria may apply for funding through the latest grant round being offered by the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust (HMSTrust).

The trust is offering one-off community grants of up to \$30,000 and community multi-year grants of \$30,000 to \$90,000 across two to three years.

Applicants must meet tight criteria – including being located in Victoria, and applications must be lodged by February 28.

Helen Macpherson Smith made her bequest of £275,000 in 1951 and by 2013, the trust had distributed a total \$99.6 million.

Beneficiaries have included sustainable gardens for regional communities devastated by the 2009 Victorian bushfires, sports programs for refugee children living in Melbourne's public housing estates, and intensive case management for disadvantaged women at risk of being drawn into street sex work.

The latest HMSTrust grant round introduces a new grants program and application system.

Landcare at Canberra Royal:

A Landcare, Catchment Group and Waterwatch stall will be held at the 2014 Canberra Royal Show, held from February 21 to 23, in the Leisure and Lifestyle Pavilion.

Groups involved include the Southern ACT Catchment Group, the Molonglo Catchment Group and the Ginninderra Catchment Group as well as ACT Landcare and Waterwatch.

The stall will showcase the great natural resource management work being done in the ACT region by volunteer Parkcare and Landcare groups.

Information about how to get involved as well as opportunities for landholders to improve biodiversity on their properties will also be available.

Delivering flexibility in online learning

THE NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) and Future Farm Industries Co-operative Research Centre (CRC) recently launched the EverTrain website and a range of online courses.

EverTrain is an e-learning training platform – with courses on managing carbon, soil biology, salinity and climate risk – designed for agribusiness, agricultural and natural resource management advisors and farmers.

The courses are based on the latest research and industry advice and include accredited courses and workshops that can be tailored to meet client needs.

Agricultural industries are facing a skills shortage so there is a need to provide training for people employed or seeking to join the

industry in more accessible formats.

EverTrain provides a flexible approach to learning that allows students, farmers and professionals who live in remote or isolated areas to connect with the latest knowledge. NSW DPI envisages that some catchment and grower groups will decide to do the courses as a group.

Online learning presents an opportunity for people to work at their own pace and in their own time.

Recently, 50 Local Land Services advisory staff across NSW completed the soil carbon and climate risk courses, illustrating the flexibility of online learning with the EverTrain system.

The training program has a

national focus and uses regional workshops to deliver locally relevant information.

The courses have been developed to reflect the latest research and are extensively peer-reviewed. For example, the Salinity Concepts NSW course has been adapted for South Australia as part of the Salinity Knowledge Exchange project.

It is also being adapted in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture and Food WA specifically to target the West Australian regions of South Coast, South West and Avon.

There are no barriers to participating in the courses – anybody can go online and register to do courses that interest them.

There is the opportunity to do

additional workshop sessions for some courses to supplement the online component of the courses.

The online component is completed first and then participants attend a workshop for the face-to-face component.

Field work and site visits can be incorporated into the workshop. For people choosing to do the accredited workshops, there is the option of undertaking assessment and to gain accreditation.

The five EverTrain courses currently available include

- managing carbon on agricultural land;
- managing climate Risk in Agriculture;
- salinity concepts NSW;
- salinity management NSW; and
- soil biology.



Online study provides flexibility for participants to increase knowledge at their own times, pace and location.



FLOATING LANDCARE

Protecting our urban waterways

This new initiative by Landcare Australia supports volunteer activities that help restore urban waterways, improve water quality, and engage more people in protecting the world's most precious natural resource...water.

Landcare Australia and a range of our corporate partners are committed to supporting projects that revitalise and regenerate coastal, freshwater and marine environments.

Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment Management Authority and Landcare Australia are working together to deliver the Floating Landcare program in the Hawkesbury Estuary and Pittwater, NSW.

For more information, please visit
www.landcareonline.com.au/floatinglandcare

Register for Tidy Towns

REGISTRATIONS are sought by March 1 for the Keep Australia Beautiful's Tidy Towns competition in Western Australia.

In recent years the submission process has been simplified – so any project that makes a difference to your environment and community is eligible for an award.

There are two dedicated staff ready to assist entrants reporting on things such as recycling, improving the appearance and facilities, reducing water and energy consumption, promoting community heritage and identity, conservation.

Encouraging young people to participate in the community and successful outcomes from youth-initiated or youth-led social or environmental action are also eligible criteria for the competition.

■ For more information phone Gail Dodd or Shirley Brindley on (08) 6467 5131 or email tidytowns@dec.wa.gov.au

■ Visit www.kabc.wa.gov.au/programs/tidy-towns/online-registration.html



South West Catchments Council (SWCC) chief executive Damian Postma, Member for Forrest Nola Marino, and SWCC chair David Gardner at the big South West Celebration held at Busselton late last year.

South West celebrates resilience and strength

CELEBRATION has brought together more than 100 NRM professionals, Landcare and community groups, government, private industry, grower groups, traditional owners and landholders to network, share ideas, increase knowledge and plan for the future.

The most recent event – in late 2013 – enjoyed a jump in attendance of 30 per cent on the previous year as its popularity continues to grow.

The regional event, hosted by the South West Catchments Council (SWCC), heard from keynote speaker Julian Moore – one of Australia's foremost

corporate sponsorship advisors to not-for-profits – who talked to the group about opportunities available for funding diversification to build Natural Resource Management (NRM) resilience.

Conference delegate and presenter Francis Smit, from the Serpentine-Jarrahdale Landcare Centre, attended the celebration for the first time.

"It was great to be a room full of like-minded and driven people striving for the same outcomes," Mr Smit said.

"I found the celebration extremely rewarding, not just from a work perspective but

because it was also lots of fun."

Local Member for Forrest Nola Marino also attended the event to show her support for the community-based NRM groups that help protect and conserve WA's south west environment.

The theme for the event was "Resilience – Working together to adapt, diversify and thrive!", in recognition of the fact the NRM and Landcare sectors are facing many challenges.

In his opening speech, SWCC chair David Gardner acknowledged the challenges faced by the NRM industry while commending those who work so hard to protect the

South West environment.

"The fact we are still here is the biggest testament to the strength and resilience of our industry and to the dedication, passion and commitment of our people," Mr Gardner said.

The event was held on November 14 and 15 last year at Bayview Geographe Resort, Busselton.

The project is supported by the South West Catchments Council, through funding from the Australian government.

■ To see presentations, photos and recordings, visit www.swccnrm.org.au or the SWCC Facebook page.

Wheat wins in the West

By KATE RASTON

THE valuable lessons of 24 West Australian Wheatbelt farming families working to improve the sustainability of their farms have now been put on paper.

The research varied from tackling wind erosion in Bodallin, comparing the efficacy of crushed limestone, lime sand and chalk lime at Kulin and investigating alternative fertiliser options at Quairading.

All research was the initiative of farmers who were faced with challenges replicated throughout the Wheatbelt and has now been documented in the Soil Health Guide.

Driving the trials has been the Wheatbelt Natural Resource Management (NRM) group.

The group's program manager for sustainable agriculture Dr Guy Boggs said \$4 million in funding, sourced from the Australian government, had

Incentives Program," Dr Boggs said.

"All of these projects focus on soils with poor health, they have few living organisms, show signs of soil erosion, crusting and soil compaction.

"Eventually, poor soil health results in problems with crop establishment, root growth and crop yields and then increasing amounts of fertilisers, pesticides, and tillage are needed to maintain yields on poor quality soil.

"That is why it is so important to maintain high soil quality."

Part of the research identifies the ongoing problem of soil acidity which the WA Department of Food and Agriculture last year estimated to be costing the WA farming community \$498 million annually from lost production.

Spreading lime has long been used as a management practice in tackling soil acidity and one of the trials featured in the guide tested the efficacy of different liming products.

Kulin farmer Brian Bowey tested

decent, trustworthy results on lime products," Mr Bowey said.

The trial used strip tests of 100 tonnes of different lime products on a 100-hectare paddock, at varying rates from zero to four tonnes a hectare.

Initial observations have found crushed limestone better on the loamy soil.

"At this stage I believe 2t/ha of crushed limestone seems to offer the best value for money, plus the product is easier to handle," Mr Bowey said.

"The project has encouraged us to increase the liming program."

While acidity was the focus for this Kulin farmer, wind erosion was the major challenge for landholders east of Merredin.

The Bodallin Catchment Group designed a broadacre trial (10.5ha) that compared four farming practices including full stubble retention, cultivation, brown manuring and cover cropping and their effect on ground-cover.

After hearing about the project idea, South Moorine Rock grower Clint Della Bosca willingly offered his time, equipment and paddock.

The project began in 2010 and the initial results can now be found in the Soil Health Guide.

"Being directly involved in the project allows for better understanding of its findings," Mr Della Bosca said.

"Brown manuring will work but timing is crucial. The earlier the better, in my experience."

Poor soil health results in problems with crop establishment, root growth and crop yields and then increasing amounts of fertilisers, pesticides, and tillage are needed to maintain yields on poor quality soil

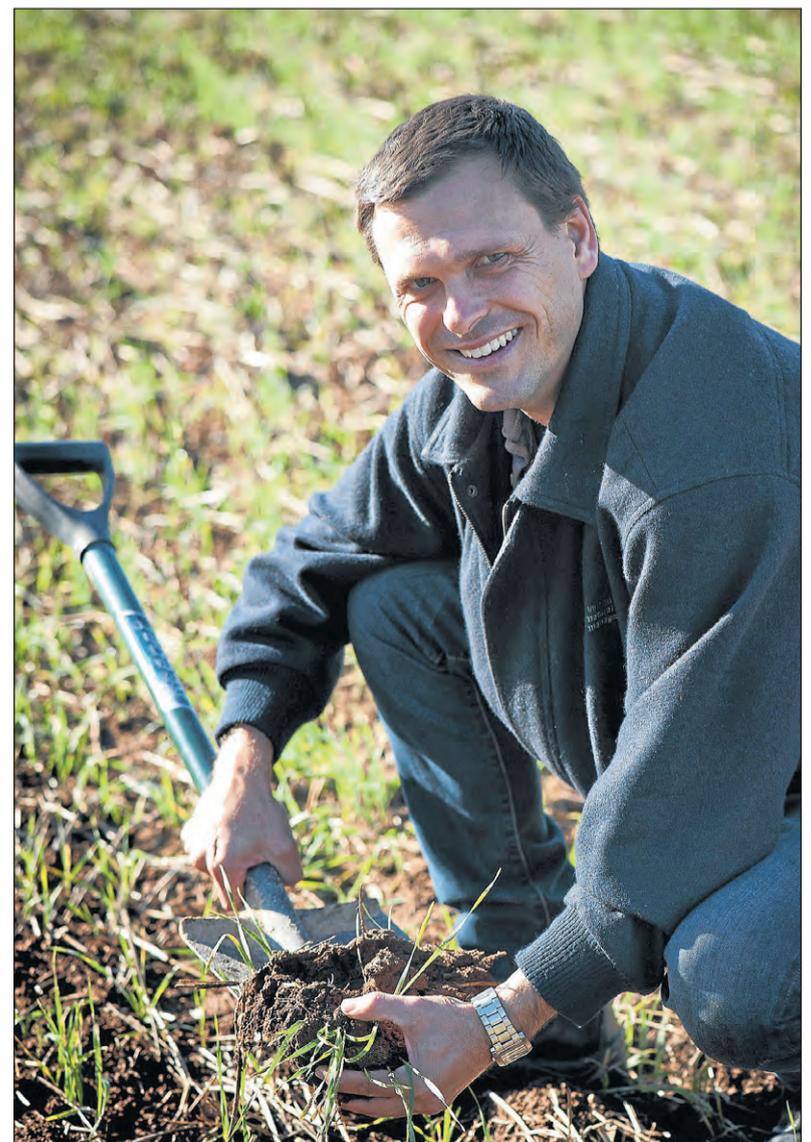
– Wheatbelt NRM group program manager
Guy Boggs

been spent during the past five years on these projects.

"There are now more than 150 trial sites all over the Wheatbelt funded through the Soil Conservation

lime sand, crushed limestone and chalk lime sourced from different suppliers.

"I was driven to conduct an independent trial as it's hard to get



Dr Guy Boggs from Wheatbelt NRM in Western Australia said there were more than 150 trial sites all over the Wheatbelt funded through the Soil Conservation Incentives Program.



Exploring Melbourne's Woodlands

THE Woodlands Historic Park – which forms part of the winding Moonee Ponds Creek catchment – has been the subject of long-term Landcare works aimed at protecting and restoring Melbourne's important nature corridor.

The public is invited to a community day in the northern suburbs site in late March to take part in the works or just enjoy the entertainment, fun and learning on the day.

Local energy distributor Jemena – which is partnering with Landcare Australia for the community day on March 23 – has been working alongside the local community, "Friends of" Landcare groups and local and State government, providing resources and employees via corporate volunteering days in a commitment spanning a number of years.

Work has included revegetation along the Moonee Ponds Creek on a Melbourne Airport leased section of

the park adjacent to Tullamarine airport, including erecting fencing to protect new growth from wildlife.

Along its course of about 25 kilometres the creek traverses a varying landscape from the near natural setting of Woodlands Historic Park, through the outer and inner suburbs of Melbourne to the Docklands.

The associated corridor trail provides a near continuous path between Woodlands Park and the city connecting these various broader open spaces and offers an opportunity to experience a microcosm of Melbourne's landscape.

Flowing from its source near Oaklands Junction and Greenvale and joining the Yarra River in West Melbourne, the Moonee Ponds Creek contributes as a major tributary to the Yarra. The creek drains a catchment area of about 145 square kilometres.

The non-profit Friends of

Woodlands Historic Park Incorporated was formed for people with an interest in the natural and historical values of the park.

They are supported by Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek, whose purpose is to "ensure the preservation, restoration, environment protection and ecologically sensitive development and maintenance of the Moonee Ponds Creek and adjoining catchment areas".

The Moonee Ponds Creek presents an opportunity to create a "green" corridor of some ecological value that, along with other significant waterways and open space throughout Melbourne, creates a significant network of biodiversity assets.

The results of substantial community, government and private sector works throughout this key natural and recreational asset of suburban and inner Melbourne have already been impressive, with increased sightings of birds and areas of high conservation value identified.

Jemena Community Partnerships manager Joanne Faggian says next month's community day at the park provides an opportunity for the community to find out more about their own broader backyard.

"The Woodlands Historic Park is a fantastic natural asset right on our doorsteps," Ms Faggian said.

"Regenerative activities not only help reinvigorate the area but also provide the opportunity for the community to come together and enjoy our natural assets."

■ **The Live. Grow. Explore. Community Day** will be held Sunday, March 23, from 11am to 3.30pm. For more details visit landcareaustralia.com.au or jemena.com.au



Exploring the natural environment at Woodlands Historic Park last year.



On-grounds work at Melbourne's Woodlands Historic Park at last year's event.

Tales from the lakes: Tuggerah landholders hit YouTube

LANDHOLDER stories from the Tuggerah Lakes catchment on the NSW Central Coast have been developed to inspire others to improve biodiversity and land management practices on their properties.

These engaging stories, called Stories from our Catchment, were developed as four minute YouTube style videos to outline practical projects developed by landholders in partnership with the Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority (CMA).

Tuggerah Lakes, three large interconnected lagoons covering about 77 square kilometres, form an important recreational and natural habitat in a rapidly developing coastal area.

Hunter-Central Rivers CMA board member Jeff Jansson said the stories demonstrated how a selection of eight landholders improved the way they managed natural resources on their property.

"Whether it was improving native vegetation and biodiversity or fencing livestock to protect waterways, all landholders had their own unique story about their project and why their patch of paradise is important to them," Mr Jansson said.

Kate Brydon, who has a unique property on the Somersby plateau boasting the Hanging Swamp, an Endangered Ecological Community (EEC), is one of the eight landholders to tell her story about why she part-

nered with the CMA to remove an infestation of weeds to improve biodiversity of vegetation along Bumbles Creek located in the Ourimbah Creek catchment.

Her story provides details of her project, provides an insight into why her property is special, and demonstrated how the CMA's Incentive Program gave her an opportunity to do something that she would never have been able to tackle by herself.

As well as eight individual landholder stories, the CMA produced an extended 10 minute documentary

about the Tuggerah Lakes project, which gives the viewer a birds-eye view of the entire Tuggerah Lakes estuary system before zooming in to show individual landholder projects.

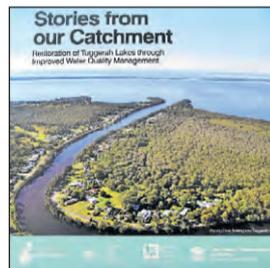
An event to celebrate the Stories from our Catchment series was recently held at the Salvation Army's Transformation Centre at Dooralong, one of the eight landholders involved in the videos.

The transformation centre's manager Marcus McDonnell said this event was a great opportunity to

bring together all landholders involved in the videos, and also provided the group with an opportunity to explore ways the CMA can provide ongoing support to landholders wishing to improve the way they manage their property's natural resources.

Support for the Tuggerah Lakes Project and the various landholder projects was made available through the CMA in partnership with Wyong Shire Council as part of the Tuggerah Lakes estuary program with funding from the Australian government.

■ **To view the resource, visit www.youtube.com/user/HCRCMA or, for a copy of a DVD, contact the Wyong CMA office, (02) 4352 5104.**



Protect our Little Penguins

Little Penguins are found along Australia's southern coast from Perth to Port Stephens. The Manly colony of Little Penguins in Sydney Harbour is the only remaining breeding colony on the NSW mainland.

The population of Little Penguins in Sydney's Harbour has dramatically decreased to around 60 pairs. Numbers are now so low that the population is in danger of extinction. The decline is mainly due to loss of suitable habitat, attacks by foxes and dogs, and disturbance at nesting sites.

Volunteers patrol the nesting and breeding areas at night to make sure Little Penguins are not disturbed. They also educate people about the penguins. Monitoring the colony and installing nest boxes increases the birds' breeding success and makes the captive-bred arrivals feel at home.



With your support we can continue this vital work.

Donate today and help Manly's Little Penguins

Visit www.fnppw.org.au/little-penguins



Landcare
Australia

Landcare In Focus

20th February 2014 ~ www.landcareonline.com.au

Turf's up on the playground

FIFTEEN schools will get new turf for free this term as part of the Turf Australia and Junior Landcare Perfect Patch of Green in-kind grants, taking the number of schools with new lawns under the program to 30 in the past two years.

Across the nation, a range of preschools, primary and high schools received the good news just before Christmas that they would have a fresh green area to replace tired, and, in some cases, unstable level areas.

Projects will include the revitalisation of unattractive weed-infested lawns, healthy green play areas making outdoors attractive for special needs children and makeovers for unstable grounds resulting from construction, fires, flooding, drought and water restrictions.

the outdoors but also had sustainability benefits.

"Turf has many environmental benefits – it is one of the best methods of soil erosion control, provides filtration for air and water and has great cooling properties," said Mr Muscat, who is also the owner of Greener Lawn.

"Asphalt on a hot day can be 20 degrees Celsius above natural turf, and synthetic surfaces have been recorded with temperatures so hot they can burn feet."

Landcare Australia chief executive Tessa Jakszewicz said the Turf Australia partnership meant 30 schools nationwide now had much-needed green areas which encouraged exercise, reduced erosion and increased appreciation of the natural environment.

Turf... is one of the best methods of soil erosion control, provides filtration for air and water and has great cooling properties

– Turf Australia president
Anthony Muscat

Prior to selecting recipients, local growers undertook site visits to ensure the area could be successfully turfed, and appropriate grass types were selected for the local needs.

Turf Australia president Anthony Muscat said natural turf coverings not only increased appreciation of

Recipients of the Turf Australia Junior Landcare Perfect Patch of Green 2013 grants were Lameroo Regional Community School, SA; Dubbo College, Delroy Campus, NSW; Bundaberg East State School, Qld, Somerly Primary, WA; Amsleigh Park Primary School, Vic; Mentone Park Primary School, Vic; Goulburn



Pitching in to boost school sports

AMSLEIGH Park Primary School in the Melbourne suburb of Oakleigh East is one of 15 lucky schools or community groups across Australia which were recipients of Turf Australia Junior Landcare Perfect Patch of Green 2013 grants.

Lilydale Instant Lawn, Anco Turf and Strath Ayr are donating the turf which will be used across an area of 900 square metres to improve the playing surface of the soccer pitch at Amsleigh Park Primary School.

The Victorian school often exceeds expectations for a school its size, having representatives in district, State and national competitions.

The condition of the soccer pitch has meant it is unusable for long periods – posing a risk of injury and increasing pressure on other areas of the school in its delivery of quality and diverse physical activity programs.

The barren area, low soil quality and loss of topsoil made the school dusty in summer and

muddy in the wetter months.

Principal of the school Michael Cormick, pictured on the soccer field, said the new pitch could not have come at a better time.

"This new turf will considerably improve the look of the school as well as provide students with a sense of pride in their school and enabling us to host interschool sports all year round," Mr Cormick said.

■ For more information on the partnership between Landcare Australia and Turf Australia, visit www.landcareonline.com.au

Pre School, NSW; Bains Road Pre School, SA; Possums Patch Children's Hub, NSW; Aspley Special School, Qld; Botany Public Schools, NSW;

Nannup High School, WA; Umina Child Care, NSW; Aroona Scout Group, WA; and Turrumurra North Public School, NSW.

■ To find out about 2014 Junior Landcare grants sign up to *The Junior Landcarer* or visit www.juniorlandcare.com.au

Recruiting BeachCarers at the Gold Coast

BY HIGHLIGHTING the connections between what happens in Queensland's Gold Coast catchment and the health of the region's iconic beach environment, BeachCare hopes to put communities on a more environmentally-friendly footing.

Landcare Australia and sponsorship partner Neutrogena Naturals are supporting BeachCare in its drive to get the community behind a program to preserve the environmental integrity of the Gold Coast's coastal zone.

Urbanisation has delivered a range of undesirable impacts to the area from development to wastewater run-off, litter and weeds.

Many of those issues have their origins away from the beach in the rapidly urbanising catchment where BeachCare is focusing its Landcare/Neutrogena-supported program,

Healthy Creeks = Clean Oceans.

The program will support university students, the local community and young people to play a part in taking care of the biodiversity of the landscape through Landcare activities.

The activities will include enhancement of the environment through on-ground works and helping residents better understand their surrounds and natural resources through community activities.

Healthy Creeks = Clean Oceans will initially focus on the Currumbin to Cobaki wetlands corridor.

This includes Flat Rock Creek, an area considered to be of national significance for nature conservation because of its high diversity of flora and fauna, and the fact it is one of the most highly-developed catchments in Australia.

Project activities will contribute to preserving the native biodiversity of the area by protecting important vegetation and plant species and providing habitat for a range of resident and migratory fauna.

The corridor is also important for local transient species in habitats on both sides of the border.

The group of volunteers aim to improve urban water management within Flat Rock Creek, with particular focus on protecting riparian areas to achieve improved water quality and sustainable conservation outcomes.

The project also aims to improve and protect urban bushland, urban wildlife and habitats of rare and endangered flora and fauna.

Volunteers will be sought through Griffith University's Student Linx program and Friends of Currumbin Volunteer Group.

Recruitment strategies will include an invitation to the local community to participate through advertising in Burleigh Heads LOHAS precinct, use of social media, and local media.

The project aims to get more than 1000 people involved, contributing more than 4000 volunteer hours to the project.

BeachCare is facilitated by Griffith Centre for Coastal Management with support from Gold Coast City Council.

The program emphasises the significance of the coastal zone, and develops strategies for the zone's sustainable management.

It encourages valuable community interaction in the management of beaches, foreshores, waterways and coastal areas through establishing self-sufficient dune care groups.



Naomi Edwards of the Griffith Centre for Coastal Management.



Taylors Eighty Acres. World's First 100% Carbon Neutral Wine

At Taylors we're committed to preserving our local environment and operating in a responsible and sustainable way. At our winery we've installed energy efficient refrigeration and carefully manage our water usage through the use of lined dams, storm water harvesting, vineyard mulching, drip-fed irrigation and the introduction of a state-of-the-art waste-water recycling plant. We also introduced light weight glass to many of our ranges to reduce associated carbon emissions. In September 2009 Taylors Eighty Acres became the world's first 100% carbon neutral wine based on a full lifecycle assessment compliant to ISO 14044. Since then we've been recognised with a number of significant environmental awards including The Drinks Business' Best Green Launch, the Banksia Award for Leading in Sustainability and the NAB Agribusiness Environmental and Energy Management Award. As of 2014 we've planted more than 10,000 trees nationally through Carbon Neutral and other community initiatives. To find out how we made Eighty Acres 100% carbon neutral and learn more about the many other environmental initiatives we've implemented visit www.eightyacres.com.au



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Grants boost for garden projects

RECIPIENTS of Coles Junior Landcare Garden Grants in 2013 have been busy completing projects and sending in reports – and another round is set to kick off soon for schools and youth groups.

Last year alone 260 separate groups were awarded grants of up to \$1000 – mostly to set up school gardens –

and inspiration was not in short supply.

From bush tucker food forests to pesticide-free orchards for children with special needs, the reports already in illustrate projects as exciting as they are educational.

Most States and territories were represented, and although not all applicants were successful last year, wannabe Junior Landcarers are encouraged to continue to apply for the numerous grants on offer each year through Landcare Australia.

Coles has partnered with Landcare Australia since 2001 with the aim of encouraging students to learn about the environment through “outdoor learning” in a hands-on, practical way.

Parents can support the program through purchasing the green, reusable Junior Landcare bags from Coles, with a portion of proceeds directed to Landcare Australia.

Since the Junior Landcare Garden Grants program began in 2008, a substantial 1800 projects have been awarded – about 300 annually – most of which have been for a wide range of individual school gardens – from Outside of School Hours (OOSH) centres engaging kindergarten children to high schools with more of an analytic and design focus.

For Milkwood Steiner School in Berrimah, Northern Territory, the



Watering in the manure.



Enjoying the local wildlife.

gardening grant has become a rallying point for the wider community in a regular conversation including events and activities centred on food and nutrition.

The school – which has propagated organic seeds from some of the plants – held five working bees with students making bricks from scratch, creating garden beds out of recycled pallets and with 10 raised garden beds installed to enable year-round harvesting regardless of the weather.

The school has hosted two events focusing on biodynamics: a workshop by Australian Biodynamic calendar author Brian Keats and a dis-

cussion facilitated by experienced biodynamic gardener from South Australia, Margit Bruvel, focusing on the importance of preparing and eating food together.

A workshop was also held at the school open day, where people had the opportunity to participate in the application of a biodynamic preparation, facilitated by local author, Di Lucas.

Alice Springs Steiner School also came to visit the site, camping on the school grounds to observe the project that has engaged each class through the gardening curriculum and with its own gardening area, complete

with wheelbarrow, hose and beds.

Milkwood now hosts a weekly conversation on nutrition and a monthly workshop on issues relating to food and health, aimed at the parent body.

A community café was planned to include food harvested from the garden as well as hosting seed swapping.

■ As part of Coles’ centenary celebrations in 2014, another round of Junior Landcare Garden Grants will be launching soon; details in the Junior Landcare upcoming e-newsletters or via Landcare Australia on Facebook.

A challenge for juniors to grow

APPLICATIONS open next month for the 2014 chapter of the Yates Junior Landcare challenge – which will ask children to see what they can harvest this winter and, importantly, tell their story.

It’s not necessarily about the biggest or the best but about the growing journey, with monthly prizes to be offered for the most engaging photo and story.

With online activities and resources such as handy tips to build on the on-ground experience about applicants’ seeds of choice – from the offerings of carrot, lettuce, radish, broccoli and spinach – a digital media element will

aim to encourage interactivity and bring the growing journey from people’s backyards into the homes of budding green thumbs everywhere.

Applicants will be asked to upload their growing journey to the Junior Landcare Challenge website.

The photo stories will also be shared via Landcare Australia’s social media as well as by bloggers and media partners with a youth or gardening focus.

The project aims to enable more people to engage in the excitement of producing home-grown food throughout winter and enjoying the

vegetables in soups, casseroles and other recipe creations.

The Yates Junior Landcare Winter Vegie Challenge is open to all children under 17 years of age.

People can enter as individuals, or as part of a family, school, community or youth group.

Registrations to enter the Challenge will open in early March.

■ Information on how to enter will be available soon at www.juniorlandcarechallenge.com.au

RIGHT: One of the 2012 Yates Junior Landcare Challenge winners, “The Essence of Life” by Amy Knie.



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Bob Hawke supports Major Day Out

FORMER Prime Minister Bob Hawke will publicly support Bushcare's Major Day Out in 2014 by speaking at an event in Sydney.

Mr Hawke will be a special guest at Willoughby Council's Bushcare's Major Day Out (BMDO) in the inner north of Sydney.

His appearance is likely to draw national media attention to Bushcare's work in restoring the natural environment in urban and coastal areas.

He has been a supporter of Landcare ever since he famously launched the "Decade of Landcare" initiative in 1989.

BMDO was started in 2010 by octogenarian Don Wilson and has quickly grown into a national event.

Mr Wilson is keen to enlist the support of well-known celebrities and leading politicians to increase Bushcare's band of volunteers across the nation.

BMDO was launched with a simple



Former Prime Minister Bob Hawke, who launched the "Decade of Landcare" in 1989, is a big supporter of Bushcare's Major Day Out.

premise – if more people could be attracted to the idea of volunteering to help care for the remaining bush across the nation, problems such as weeds and loss of habitat could be reversed and Australia's wonderful flora and fauna could flourish.

It's an idea common to all groups be it Coastcare, Beachcare, Dunecare, River and Wetland Care or Landcare.

In 2014, Landcare Australia's 25th anniversary year, Bushcare's Major Day Out (BMDO) will be a central event of Landcare week.

Hundreds of sites across Australia – Landcare, Bushcare or anything in between – are expected to turn out, attracting new volunteers and diehards alike to a common cause, care for the environment and Australia's precious bushland remnants.

"One of our thrusts this year is to generate as much publicity as possible for sites across the country," Mr Wilson said.

One of the lessons from 2013 was that site organisers that registered earlier on the BMDO website attracted more volunteers to their event.

In the month before the 2013 event, the BMDO website received almost 2000 visitors who looked at 25,000 pages. Many of these visitors were looking at the website to find out where they could volunteer their time.

Registration for Bushcare's Major Day Out in 2014 is already open. It's easy to register an event and there is lots of flexibility about the dates for individual groups to choose their own Major Day.

The promoted date is set for September 7, in Landcare week,



Bushcare's Major Day Out is attracting larger and larger crowds to events across the nation.

but site organisers are able to choose another date at about the same time if it better suits plans for their site.

One tip when registering would be to include an interesting photo of the site, the fun from a previous event or a cute photo of the local fauna, to attract interest and new volunteers.

The BMDO marketing team will be able to publicise the event on the site, on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

A useful Starter Kit of information,

tips, press releases, banners and goodies for volunteers is being prepared by BMDO and Landcare Australia, and will be available soon from the BMDO website.

"If you are responsible for a Bushcare or Landcare site, and you want to attract more volunteers to maintain it, register early for the September event," Mr Wilson said.

"Then, on the day, welcome and nurture the newcomers so they keep coming back and providing more help on an ongoing basis.

"The new volunteers we attracted to

last year's Bushcare's Major Day were keen."

According to Mr Wilson, that has been the aim of Bushcare's Major Day out since it was started.

"It only required being friendly and they jumped at the idea of joining a local group. The new recruits are now very committed regular bushcarers."

■ To register your site for 2014 visit www.bushcaresmajordayout.org

● Follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/BushcaresMajorDayOut or Twitter and Instagram @BushcaresMDO

Converting cow poo into power

CONVERTING cow poo into power could give remote communities in the Northern Territory cheap electricity and provide free gas for cooking.

A biogas project in Indonesia, which already has hundreds of local homes cooking with methane gas generated by cow manure, was a hot topic of discussion at the Territory Natural Resource Management Annual Forum in Darwin in November last year.

Co-ordinator of one of these biogas projects in Sumatra, Lisa Wood, works for Indonesian cattle importer, AGRO Giri Perkasa, which is about to install two reactors in the backyards of homes in Sumatra as part of its program to contribute to the local community.

At the forum Ms Wood explained the simple process which involves building a reactor underground out of bricks and cement that has a tank, holding dome and slurry pit.

Cow manure is mixed with water and shovelled into the reactor where it creates methane gas as it ferments.

The odourless gas is captured in a dome and is piped into burners inside the home where it can be turned on and off using a tap.

As the methane gas is released during cooking, more slurry fills the tank.

As methane builds up before the

slurry is pushed out, where it can be used as odourless liquid fertiliser or dried and used as fish food.

Ms Wood said 50 kilograms of manure, created by two to three cows, can provide enough gas for eight hours of cooking.

She said the biogas process is used all over the world including Vietnam and Nepal and there was the potential to use waste from other animals and even humans, instead of cow manure.

As part of the project, Ms Wood said they were looking at constructing a larger reactor, more than 10 times bigger than the domestic reactors, next to their feedlot which would create enough gas to generate electricity.

"This could be used at a lot of cattle stations in the Northern Territory but it could also be a good solution for generating gas for cooking and electricity in remote communities," she said.

More than 200 people heard about the stories, achievements and challenges at the recent TNRM forum at the Darwin Convention Centre and celebrated their successes at the inaugural Northern Territory Natural Resource Management Awards and NT Landcare Awards.

TNRM is one of 53 regional bodies Australia-wide that provides support to land managers to help manage



Lisa Wood (pictured with an Indonesian farmer) says cow manure is a potential source of gas for cooking, cheap electricity, liquid fertiliser and fish food.

natural resources at a grass roots level. It has set the priorities for natural resource management in the NT across the next five years under the Northern Territory Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan.

Between 2011 and 2013, TNRM funded 90 projects and has worked with and supported 115 groups and organisations undertaking activities to manage and protect our natural resources including urban and pastoral Landcare groups, Indigenous

ranger groups and organisations, conservation and research bodies, local government and industry groups.

The inaugural Northern Territory NRM Awards 2013 attracted 27 entrants while 24 submissions were received for the NT Landcare Awards.

Making Poo Power

- A reactor comprising a tank, holding dome and slurry pit, is built underground
- Manure is mixed with water and shovelled into the reactor, creating methane as it ferments
- Gas is captured in the dome then piped

- into burners which can be turned on and off using a tap
- The manure of two to three cows – about 50 kilograms – can provide enough gas for eight hours of cooking
- Process is being used in Indonesia, Vietnam and Nepal