

Dakalanta's tonne of seed

WHAT does a tonne of native seed look like?

James Walsh can't tell you yet, because the ambitious project he's working with on South Australia's Eyre Peninsula has so far only collected about 600 kg of the 1190 kg of locally sourced seed it plans to harvest.

But the man overseeing the 20 Million Trees Programme for Landcare Australia does know that a mere 160 kg of seed not only filled the tray of his 4WD ute, "there was some on the back seat".

That mixed seed - and the 590 kg yet to be harvested - will be sown into the 1190 hectare Dakalanta Sanctuary over two years, as pioneering stock for the reclamation of land run down by more than a century of sheep and rabbits.

When the sanctuary is recolonised with native species, it will more able to support native bird and animal species like the Southern Hairy Nosed Wombat.

Mr Walsh is running the program for Landcare Australia, one of three services providers engaged by the Australian Government to deliver large revegetation projects under the 20 Million Trees Programme.

Landcare is working in partnership with the Australian Wildlife Conservancy and WildEyre, a consortium of regional nat-



Ceduna Aboriginal Corporation employees Jake Dunn (left), Spencer Benbolt (middle) and Adam Coleman (right) collecting native seed pods.

ural resource management organisations.

It seemed symbolically appropriate to sow 1190 ha with 1190 kg of seed, but that leaves the problem of how to obtain that much seed, and have it be of a local origin. Collecting and direct seed-

ing such a volume of locally sourced seed is a formidable task. Landcare Australia is being assisted by Greening Australia, Trees for Life, Eyre Native Seeds and importantly, the Ceduna Aboriginal Corporation.

Because of the project, the

Ceduna Aboriginal Corporation has added five members to its seed collection team and employed 12 people to collect, sort and process seed for the project.

Landholders within a five kilometre radius have agreed to turn off all artificial water-

ing points for two years after revegetation. In exchange for the sanctuary's nearest landholder moving to a more sustainable, rotational grazing regime and undertaking some destocking of paddocks for two years, the project is improving fenc-

ing to exclude stock and providing 2000 tubestock of Sheoaks (*Allocasuarina verticillata*) and Mealy Saltbush (*Rhagodia parabolica*) to this property owner.

Those plants will restore some productive capability to degraded land.



Ideas for times of drought

Drought feedback in Vic

THE Victorian Government has gathered public feedback on how to support drought affected communities. Comments were invited through an online forum. Ideas were posted, and

members of the public could vote on ideas that appealed to them. There is \$10 million available to implement the most practical ideas. Visit: oursay.org/victorian-drought

In to bat for native grasses

A VALIANT effort by three community land protection groups has addressed a decline in native grasses along a Woorndoo roadside corridor in western Victoria.

In need of significant manpower to remove the bulk of tenacious capeweed, Woorndoo Land Protection Group, Basalt to Bay Landcare Network and the Warrnambool Norfolk Venturer Scouts Group collectively worked on the mass removal and composting of 150 kilograms of Cape Weed from the roadside corridor and on adjacent crown land, creating a space to ensure rem-

nant native grass recovery.

The restoration of native grasses is of critical value to the community at large. They are essential for climate resilience, land sustainability, and as a feed source.

Dramatically diminished over the past 150 years, native grass species have been grossly underrepresented in conservation reserve systems.

The corridor was identified as of importance by native seed specialist, David Franklin of the Woorndoo Land Protection Group.

Landcare takes effort. The Warrnambool Norfolk Ven-

turer Scouts Group won the Day in the Life competition, July 2014. The competition acknowledged the efforts of the Landcare community undergo regularly to protect their local natural environments. Without such work, little patches of native Australia would be lost.

Note from Landcare Australia: We would like to sincerely apologise, this project was accidentally omitted from the Landcare Australia 'In Our Hands' book, printed to celebrate our 25th anniversary. It has since been added to the electronic edition of the book.



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Preserving grape 'character'

DR MIKE McCarthy has gathered some important new data about the potential for evaporative cooling to help grape vines cope with heatwaves, thanks to this year's hot summer.

'We had everything ready to go last year, then the Riverland had such a cool January that the fruit in both of our trial sites had ripened and been harvested before the heat set in,' he said.

Dr McCarthy, a Principal Scientist with the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI), is leading a three-year research project to investigate whether the use of mi-

cro-sprinkler irrigation can generate a more favourable mesoclimate (the climate of a particular vineyard site) that will counteract intense heat events. The evaporative cooling work is part of a larger project funded jointly by Wine Australia and the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, through the Filling the Research Gap program.

'We run workshops with growers in places like Mil-dura and they say to me "the vineyards seem to be able to cope with one hot day and a second day okay, but if we have two or three consecutive hot nights that is when

we are starting to see the impact of heatwaves," he said.

'The other thing they are saying is that if they have a heatwave in January or early February, the nights are short in terms of darkness and that does not give the vines a chance to restore their turgor before the next day.'

It's not just about vine health. 'We know from flavour chemistry that a lot of flavour compounds are pre-synthesised between fruit set and veraison, so again the hypothesis is that if we can cool the vines at night we can make sure synthesis continues and is not degraded during this critical period

for varieties like Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay and even Cabernet.'

That is why the project has expanded to include trial sites in the Coonawarra. Dr McCarthy admits to being surprised at how enthusiastically local growers came on board. 'They said that if they get hot nights in February and March, their expression was that it "burns off Cabernet character". That means potentially very high value Cabernet fruit turns does not turn out so well.'

In the Coonawarra, Treasury Wine Estates viticulturist Allen Jenkins is co-ordinating the trials, comparing

the impact of under-canopy sprinklers with overhead sprinklers that can cool the whole canopy.

In the Riverland, only under-canopy systems are being used while a series of sensors keep track of temperature throughout the canopy when the micro-sprinklers are in operation. Dr McCarthy controls them from his home in the Barossa, making decisions based on information from automatic weather stations.

A comprehensive range of data is being collected and will be used to develop a heat transfer model to quantify the effectiveness of the

approach under a range of conditions. Results are due later this year.

'Growers are reacting positively—watching when heatwaves are coming and taking action,' he said. 'The climate change message is getting through but also we've been pushing the concept that if growers can better understand and manage extreme events they are going to be in a better position to go forward.'

'It's about being proactive in terms of water, if that is their preferred option, or being proactive in terms of putting on some of these sunscreen sprays.'

Do you have a story to tell?



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

We seek submissions of stories or story ideas from across the Landcare network discussing your successes and learning opportunities. The objective is to highlight the wonderful and diverse ways in which "Landcare" is interpreted and implemented around Australia.

The publication is distributed to a wide readership of over 350,000 – which provides you a great opportunity to have your story heard across Australia.

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

One article of between 150-600 words saved as a Microsoft Word document or a PDF.

1-3 high resolution (must be at least 1MB in size and more than 300dpi) images that clearly illustrate the accompanying article.

Full captions for each attached image, explaining who is in the photos and/or what they illustrate. Please also ensure that permission to publish is obtained from all people appearing in the photos.

Contact information or weblink for readers seeking more information about your story.

The themed topic for the May issue is **Revegetation and integration of biodiversity with food/fibre production.**

Article Deadlines:

May Edition
8 April

August Edition
22 July

November Edition
9 September

Think you've got a great tale to tell? Then pitch us your idea, or submit an article to lif@landcareaustralia.com.au

Due to space restrictions we unfortunately cannot guarantee that all submissions will be included.



Harvesting near Kulin. The Wheatbelt NRM online dashboard tells landholders about the state of their natural resources, and environmental health trends.

Dashboard insight for NRM

NATURAL resource management group, Wheatbelt NRM has developed a new web-based platform to strategically guide future understanding and priorities for the management of the natural resources of the Avon River Basin and surrounding Wheatbelt regions in Western Australia.

The dashboard tracks soil acidity, vegetation cover, salinity and dryness to assist the Wheatbelt communities to better manage the health of their local environment.

Wheatbelt NRM CEO, Natarsha Wood said the

Dashboard brings together information about tree plantings with data from the Department of Agriculture and Food WA, satellite data of fires, our local tree nurseries and the government vegetation clearing approvals. The collated data provides a better picture on the trees potential impact on remnant vegetation cover."

Other indicators accessible on the dashboard include on financial viability, waterway acidity, eutrophication and sedimentation, population trends and soil organic carbon.



Wheatbelt NRM CEO, Natarsha Wood, with the smartphone "dashboard".



Erin Kennedy

Training for a different approach

IN HER gap year after finishing school in 2013, Erin Kennedy worked on her family's NSW North Coast farm and completed a Diploma of Agriculture through Ruralbiz. As a result, Erin shifted her emphasis from livestock to business and sustainability. Such training, using assessments based on the student's own property or enterprise, is available to anyone, of any age, who wants to become more professional in their approach to agriculture. For more information, go to www.ruralbiztraining.com.au

Landcare's big picture

**BY BARNABY JOYCE,
MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE**

THIS year presents tremendous opportunity across the agriculture portfolio, as we seek to build upon the platform laid in 2015. Last year, most notably, we had the launch—and commenced immediate implementation—of the \$4 billion Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper. This has led to significant commitments delivered, followed by tangible benefits, but it is only the beginning.

The Ag White Paper has laid out a path to a stronger and more profitable agriculture sector, and we will continue to deliver for farmers, businesses across the supply chain, regional Australia and the economy. Importantly, this government is delivering significant environmental benefits through the agriculture portfolio.

The Landcare movement would be well-aware of the interconnectedness of

agriculture and the environment. Sound environmental management is essential for our farms, the economy which benefits from agriculture, and for the broader community to continue to enjoy the way of life to which they are accustomed. The Ag White Paper has set aside considerable resources to support farmers and rural communities to prepare for, manage and recover from drought—with a nearly \$3 billion investment to boot.

This includes \$250 million in 2015–16 to continue access to existing drought-specific concessional loans schemes and \$1.8 million to fund additional rural financial counsellors in drought-affected areas. The \$35 million, four-year Drought Communities Programme will invest in local infrastructure and employment projects in drought-affected areas.

Another \$25.8 million has been provided for programmes to manage pest animals and weeds

in drought-affected areas. This will assist landowners to deal with the impact of feral animals on livestock and pasture.

A robust biosecurity system is an essential part of environmental management, keeping out exotic pests and diseases and helping to reduce the impact should they reach our shores.

Last year saw a massive step forward with the biggest overhaul of biosecurity legislation in the nation's history. We saw the successful passage of the Biosecurity Act 2015, which replaced the century-old Quarantine Act 1908. The new laws come into effect this June, and will ensure our biosecurity system is modern, flexible and responsive, and continues to protect our agricultural industries, environment and the economy. We also saw the opening of the state-of-the-art \$379.9 million Post Entry Quarantine facility near Melbourne, with cat, dog, horse, bee and plant

facilities now operational. Another significant development last year was the welcome return of water policy to my department.

Landcare members know the importance of water, including its role in our food and fibre production, our environment and biodiversity, not to mention our way of life. Managing our water resources is a major priority for the Australian Government, with \$500 million set aside in the Ag White Paper to set up a National Water Infrastructure Development Fund. We will continue to work with all parties to ensure our water management delivers the triple bottom line—social, economic and environmental.

The government continues to invest in research and development efforts. We're continuing the \$200 million Rural R&D for Profit Programme which aims to fund innovative research partnerships to deliver real, tangible benefits to farmers. These R&D projects will, for exam-

ple, improve irrigation practices, biological control of weeds and pests, and using the latest imaging and robotic technologies to improve yield from some tree crops.

Finally, last year the Government approved funding for nine additional agriculture projects under the 25th Anniversary Landcare Grants programme. This saw almost \$150,000 in funding for projects across NSW, Victoria and Queensland to tackle a range of natural resource management issues, delivering lasting benefits both for the agricultural sector and the environment. They are in addition to the 291 projects worth \$5 million that were announced in December 2014.

This is just a snapshot of last year's achievements across a portfolio full of potential. The Government won't rest on its laurels, we will build upon this foundation and continue to drive success across the agriculture portfolio.

Mallee native shrub guide

MALLEE farmers looking to grow native forage shrubs for stockfeed now have a comprehensive ready-reference tool to help with their decision-making and practices.

Mallee Catchment Management Authority (CMA) chairperson Sharyon Peart said the new field guide, Native Forage Shrubs For Low Rainfall Areas, was the result of 10 years of research.

"Many farmers have moved out of livestock due to changed farming practices and climate changes, but those who are retaining stock are doing so because they make a valuable contri-

bution to the viability of their operation," Ms Peart said.

"However, they have identified the need for a hardy, reliable, and nutritional feed source to help manage feed gaps at certain times of the year and to support their work in reducing erosion and improving farm health.

The new guide brings together the information collected by on-farm and formal research trials into native shrubs. It presents the costs and benefits of natives in a simple, user-friendly way.

Ian McNabb has been planting forage shrubs across his property at Car-

warp, south of Mildura, for more than 20 years.

"We started planting shrubs because we have a lot of salty country, which is unsuitable for anything else and we wanted to limit the spread of these areas," Mr McNabb said.

"Usually we fence off small isolated salt-affected areas where nothing else will grow and plant the shrubs in rows about two metres apart. But in larger areas we are planting the shrubs up to six metres between rows," he said. "We've been able to turn about 600 hectares of useless ground into grazing country."

Rebuilding at Kilmore

AFTER fires swept through the Kilmore area in February 2014, the Upper Goulburn Landcare Network (UGLN) drew on experience the South West Goulburn Landcare Network earned after fires in 2009.

With volunteers drawn from corporate and community groups, the project rebuilt 4.4km of burnt fencing and erected another 13.8km of new fences. Much of the work protects the ecologically important riparian land along Kurkuc and Prices Creeks.



Price Waterhouse Coopers volunteers were among 337 volunteers from the corporate and community sectors to help rebuild after the Kilmore fires.



WE. WANT. YOU.

YES, YOU.

We at **Landcare in Focus** are always open to your article submissions, now we want to hear what it is **you** like about the publication.

Our 2016 readership survey is underway, and we're hoping you will take 10 minutes to help us identify what's important to you.

Hurry!
The 2016 **Landcare in Focus Readership Survey** closes 30th April

www.landcareonline.com.au/readersurvey

The annual Landcare in Focus readership survey is **NOW OPEN**

www.landcareonline.com.au/readersurvey



Landcare leaps into 2016

BY TESSA JAKSZEWICZ

LATE 2015 and early 2016 have been an exceptionally busy time for the Landcare Australia team. The work and events that we have been involved in recently will set a fast and productive pace for 2016.

We held the inaugural Landcare Australia Thought Leadership Strategy Forum in Sydney on 9 December 2015. The Forum brought together the 15 members – who have an expansive array of skills, knowledge and expertise across a number of key areas – to provide strategic input to Landcare

Australia on issues related to engagement, education, fundraising, and science.

The information and discussion that came out of the forum will assist Landcare Australia in achieving its vision of providing a balance between sustainable production and environmental management. Our next biannual forum is in May.

Also just before Christmas, Minister Joyce announced \$632K of funding for the Landcare Australia organised Peel River anabranch remediation project. This brings the full commitment from project partners to more than \$1.2million.

The project will work to stabilise the serious erosion along the banks of the Peel River and Wallamore anabranch and help re-establish the native habitat that has disappeared as result of agricultural activities over the decades.

Over the past 10 years, multiple agricultural properties – mostly dairy farms – have lost productive land to the erosion. Recommendations for bank stabilisation work are being reviewed by project stakeholders, and once consultation is complete engineering works will begin.

This year we will again host

the biennial National Landcare Awards and Conference, which presents a fantastic opportunity for Landcarers from across the nation to come together and share knowledge, project experiences and information about sustainable practices. We are working with the National Landcare Network and NRM Regions Australia to make this a compelling event.

We've now locked the event in for 21-23 September in Melbourne, with the Awards dinner scheduled for Thursday 22 September. Save the date and book your flights early.

In late November, Land-

care Australia received the good news that 107 of our Green Army Round 4 project applications had been successful.

On page 10 you can read about some of the Green Army projects that Landcare Australia has already helped to successfully deliver.

We're particularly excited by the focus of the Round 4 projects on protecting or remediating Australian heritage sites, and improving the habitat health of Australian threatened species.

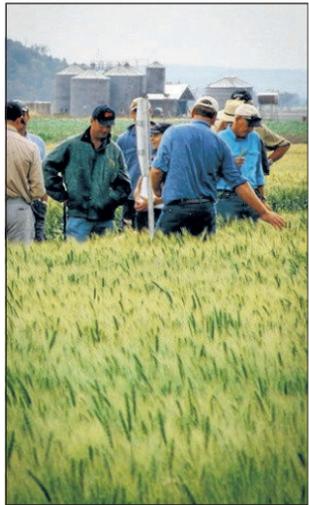
Win an iPad

In early 2015, Landcare Australia's inaugural readership survey provided inval-

uable insight into who you are, as a reader of this publication, and what you want to read about.

Designed to be completed in under 10 minutes, we're hoping that every reader will take the time to answer our 2016 questions – and go in the running to win an Apple iPad. We're looking for opinions on the authors you like to hear from, the style of article that is easiest to read, and the topics you want to see covered.

The 2016 survey is live now through until 30 April, and can be found at www.landcareonline.com.au/readersurvey



The Landcare Advisory Committee sits between policy and practice.

Advisory program extended to 2017

THE National Landcare Advisory Committee has been extended until September 2017 to provide advice to the Ministers for the Environment and Agriculture and Water Resources on how best to implement the Australian government's \$1 billion National Landcare Program.

The committee members are drawn from across the land sector community. They bring with them a diverse set of skills and experience in rural community development, Indigenous engagement, conservation, agriculture, landcare, local government, science, fisheries, finance and water reform.

Further information on the committee and its activities can be found at nrm.gov.au/national-landcare-programme/board-and-committee



Sarah, Samuel, and Jim Viner on a lookout over Tressa Vale.

Couple build resilience at Gympie

JIM and Sarah Viner have adapted their grazing management to increase productivity and improve the health of soil and pasture on their 728 hectare beef farm.

Based 30 kilometres west of Gympie on Tressa Vale, the Viners run 300 head of Brahman Charbray breeders.

They consider land resilience to be integral to their long-term success.

Before they took over in 1996, the land had been annually grazed and burnt. The Viners introduced cell grazing, and developed off-stream watering sites for stock to reduce grazing pres-

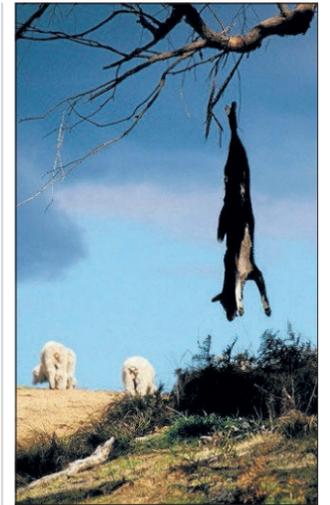
sure on the creek. In 2004, they were recognised with a Primary Producer Landcare award.

Now, as weather patterns become more extreme, the Viners are building in more economic and climatic resilience. Mr Viner is developing 36 hectares of irrigation, with

three centre pivots, to grow Rhodes grass for seed and hay, and background weaners through winter.

For more information, contact Jim and Sarah Viner jhviner@bordernet.com.au; P: 07 5484 9290; M: 0428 849 290

– CLAIRE MACTAGGART



Alert system aims to give farmers the advantage in a long-running battle.

Warning of dogs before strikes

THE Wild Dog Alert System aims to firmly place livestock producers and land managers on the front foot to manage wild dogs.

By combining automated recognition of camera trap images with real-time messaging, the system can notify producers that wild dogs are on their land before livestock attacks occur.

Wild dog control has often been reactive, with landholders and contractors forced to 'chase' dogs, sometimes for months, only after livestock have been maimed and killed.

The Wild Dog System Alert will give farmers a 'first strike' capability in their fight against wild dogs, so they can act before dogs strike.

For more information visit pestsmart.org.au/wild-dog-alert

Caring for a quarter of SA

LANDCARE funding has enabled the employment of two Aboriginal Landcare Facilitators within the Alinytjara Wilurara Natural Resources Management (AW NRM) Region.

The group services a region that spans over a quarter of South Australia, or more than a quarter of a million square kilometres, and its Board is the only all Aboriginal NRM Board in Australia. All members are influential and respected regional leaders who recognise

that having some of the most unspoilt and beautiful land in Australia presents unique opportunities to drive environmental and cultural conservation, and build economic advantage.

In addition to their roles working for the AW NRM, the two young Aboriginal Landcare Facilitators employed by the region are both currently participating in Conservation and Land Management studies.

Nathan Williams, employed through the South

Australian Department of Environment Water and Natural Resource (DEWNR) and based in the southern Alinytjara Wilurara area, is midway through his Certificate 2.

Walter Tjami, employed through the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Council and seconded to support development and delivery of the APY Pastoral Program, is nearing completion of his Certificate 3.

Through sharing their experiences and knowledge at state and national confer-

ences, the two also actively promote the importance of, and opportunities for Aboriginal people to determine, and be involved in Landcare programs. Although their work environments differ, as young Aboriginal Landcare Facilitators, both Walter and Nathan are committed to supporting the development of sustainable work practices within the region's local communities.

Nathan has been employed by Natural Resources Alinytjara Wilurara for over

three years, and is responsible for the implementation of Landcare programs across the Region. He has been instrumental in the development and delivery of highly effective land management programs in Maralinga Tjaratja at Oak Valley, and Yalata.

By providing community members with regular on-ground training Nathan has significantly improved the capacity to undertake independent delivery of safe and effective NRM work in

the region.

Like Nathan, Walter is required to act as a cultural advisor, interpreter, community liaison, and negotiator amongst traditional owners, and to be actively involved in the delivery of hands-on operational activities. With the commercial viability of the APY pastoral industry challenged by prevalent feral herbivores and an absence of a strong work culture or skill base within the region's Aboriginal population, Walter's role is the key to success.



Volunteers with Friends of the Great South West Walk collect invasive coastal wattle that will be weaved into mats and laid down to control erosion.

Restoring the Great South West Walk with wattle

FRIENDS of the Great South West Walk, and wattle, are restoring a section of the magnificent 256 km walking track to ensure that future walkers can negotiate this section of southern Australia's coastline.

In an area along the trail north of the Blowholes at Cape Bridgewater, referred to as Peacock's blow, a sandy section of the coastline was breached by the very strong winds the area is noted for, to the point that the walking track was threatened.

Friends of the Great South West Walk cut swathes of

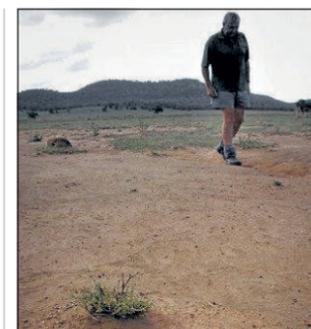
coastal wattle that were infesting a nearby farm, and with teachers and students from the Wesley College, laid the wattle in intertwined mats over the degraded area.

The mats cut wind strength, and as the wattle branches lose their leaves they help to form a soil base where natural seeds can germinate and help to bind the soil.

This method of erosion control has already been successfully applied to other flatter areas of the coastline on both sides of the Blowholes at Cape Bridgewater.



Volunteers are restoring the eroded landscape on the southern Australian coastline with new plantings of reused wattle.



Australia has come along way in soil conservation in the past few decades.

Soils are the basis of life on planet

THE end of 2015 marked the end of the International Year of Soils.

The year raised awareness on the importance of soil and how fundamental it is for human life.

Soil is a critical component of the natural system and underpins production of food and fibre.

The International Year of Soils was celebrated through a number of initiatives and events, including an address by former Governor-General, Major General Michael Jeffery at a World Soil Day event in Melbourne on December 5, 2015.

"... it is possible that impending global food and water crisis may be the most significant challenge humanity faces this century and it all devolves around how we look after our soil," General Jeffery said.

In building soils, we address many economic, social and environmental benefits for Australia, he added.

"May I suggest in all seriousness that to 'save the planet, we must save the soil.'"

■ Visit fao.org/soils-2015/en



Shelter can be critical risk for farm business

FAILURE to address lack of shade and shelter for livestock and crops in Australia is no longer acceptable practice.

Having sufficient shade and shelter for Australian livestock and pasture crops is a critical risk for agriculture. It is clear that organisations across the agricultural sector are aware of the risk. But are the individual businesses making the necessary changes?

The answer is both yes and no. Farmers care about their businesses and their livestock, and their land. And they care about how those factors combine to provide an income to support their family, community, and environment.

Traditional clearing of native vegetation in Australia to establish European based agricultural pastures and practices has been demonstrated to have had various negative impacts on soils – from acidification and salinisation, through to erosion and structural degradation.

The challenge then is to identify the full range of benefits provided to companies and individuals from properly functioning ecosystems in ways that are tangible and can easily be included in decision making.

Land managers across Australia have been provided free access to a short report which collates knowledge and experience gathered by both researchers and the agricultural industry that debunks the notion that planting shade and shelter is a loss of productive land.

The Economic Benefits of Native Shelter Belts Report (EBONS) Issue 3 / 2015 was produced for The Basalt to



The only shade in Woolsthorpe. The Economic Benefits of Native Shelter Belts Report produced by Basalt to Bay Landcare highlights lack of shelter is a major risk for farm enterprises.

Bay Landcare Network to provide the agricultural industry and individual land managers with an educational resource that could potentially bring about changes in thinking and practice.

Teaching farmers how to make better decisions for financial security, animal welfare, environmental

protection and prosperity, biosecurity, increased land value and liveability, fire management, and global food security may seem like an impossible task.

But the introduction of native shade and shelter has been demonstrated to have the potential to address, in part, all of these risk fac-

tors and at comparatively low cost.

Strategically placed permeable shelterbelts have been shown to protect crops and pasture from the effects of drying winds, and to assist with disease, pest and weed control.

Being aware of how to implement a sufficient and

responsible shade and shelter plan on your property not only benefits livestock and crops, it ultimately reduces business risk, and protects the long term sustainability of the environment for generations to come.

Download your free copy of the EBONS Report at www.basalttobay.org.au



A successful farm tour in NZ.

Better farmers ask a lot to learn

TOP-performing farmers share at least one common trait – they ask a lot of questions.

This is the leading observation of Bruce Hore, who operates a New Zealand-based company that specialises in affordable tools for sustainable agriculture, AgriGanics.

Seven years ago, he set up his company to meet increasing demand from farmers for better ways to farm.

In 2015 AgriGanics brought together farmers, researchers and consultants for the inaugural World Wide Agriculture conference hosted in Canterbury, New Zealand.

The conference focused on the importance of understanding the production platform to sustainably optimise production capability and performance.

AgriGanics will host a second conference, in late July in Traralgon, Victoria, with a mix presenters including scientists, consultants, and farmers from across Europe, the United States, New Zealand, and Australia.

To learn more visit the conference website at www.wwag.co.nz



Members of the Finnis Pasture Group check over a pasture trial.

Eyeing pasture performance

THE Finnis Pasture Group in the Eastern Hills district of South Australia has established two large pasture trials to investigate this issue.

“For years, people have been looking for a perennial pasture plant that will persist and survive,” said Colin Wilson, a founding member of the Finnis group.

“The group decided to establish a local independent trial to assess persistence, productivity and performance in local conditions.”

Trials were established on sand over clay soil, and data collected at the end of spring 2015 shows:

- Holdfast phalaris established slightly (5%) better than Sirosa phalaris and Uplands cocksfoot.

- There was less sub clover in the Holdfast plots (46%) compared to the Sirosa (55%) and Uplands (53%) plots.

- There were more total weeds in the clover only control (33%) plots compared to Holdfast GT (23%), Uplands

(19%) and Sirosa (18%) plots.

- Food on offer was highest for the two phalaris treatments, which produced 1600 kg of dry matter/ha compared to 1450 kg DM/ha for the sub clover control and 1300 kg DM/ha for Uplands.

- Lower ground cover for the Uplands plots (48%) compared to around 55% for the rest.

The group has been examining questions like this since some members did a Pro-Graze course six years ago.