

# Caring for our Country refreshed

Comment by JOE LUDWIG, Minister  
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

THE Budget handed down in May positioned Australia for the future, with announcements like the funding commitment for Caring for our Country.

The flagship program supports government priorities of protecting and conserving our biodiversity and promoting the adoption of sustainable farm practices.

The government announced the program would receive \$2.2 billion over five years from 1 July 2013 to ensure natural resource management projects will continue after the current five-year program ends.

It will ensure the thousands of volunteers, farmers and community groups – like you – who work to make a difference to their local environment through Caring for our Country can continue to have the support they require.

For the first time, the government will recognise the complementary yet separate roles farmers and environmentalists play by delivering Caring for our Country through two specific streams: one dedicated to sustainable agriculture and the other to the environment.

Funding of \$700 million over five years from 2013 has been provided to the Sustainable Agriculture stream for a mix of small and large grants and partnerships with regional groups and industry groups including a focus on:

- encouraging more innovative and sustainable resource management practices

in agriculture and fisheries

- reducing the impact of agriculture and fisheries on the resource base
- co-ordinating national management, information and surveillance of established and sleeper weeds and pest animals of agricultural significance
- eradication of new pest incursions, and
- building community capacity and regional leadership.

This change is a positive one and recognises the role our farming communities play in keeping our land productive.

It is a win for our farmers and for the sustainability of our farming land into the future.

The announcement follows a review of the first phase of Caring for our Country which found the program is on track to meet all of its five year outcomes and is supporting the community to protect and conserve our environment and increase the adoption of sustainable land management practices.

The purpose of the review, initiated in late 2010, was to consult widely with the community on what was working well under Caring for our Country and what could be improved in the future.

More than 4000 individuals and groups contributed their time, experience and expertise to provide feedback to shape the next phase of Caring for our Country, to commence in July 2013.

The Caring for our Country Review found that the one-size-fits-all approach of the current funding processes did not suit all

project types or the innovative sustainable agriculture outcomes aims.

The new specific streams of environment and sustainable agriculture will better support groups and their projects.

The report made a number of other recommendations and the next phase of Caring for our Country will draw on the findings of the review.

It will focus on activities that address emerging priorities in natural resource management and strengthen the focus on the marine environment.

The next phase of Caring for our Country will complement the Clean Energy Future reforms including the Biodiversity Fund, Carbon Farming Futures and Action on the Ground.

The government will shortly release the broad framework for the next phase of Caring for our Country. I expect that funding will be delivered through a range of mechanisms; including small grants, strategic investments, expression of interest processes and regional base-level funding.

It was clear from the review that communities wanted to continue to help shape the next phase of Caring for our Country and the government is committed to ensure that national priorities are closely informed by local on-ground priorities and the deep knowledge of the land of communities across Australia.

Further publication consultation will be announced shortly on the details of the next phase of Caring for our Country.

You will be invited to contribute to the



consultation process via written submissions, face-to-face meetings and online forums.

I encourage you to have your say in this process to ensure Caring of our Country continues to support your community and communities across Australia to make a difference to the environment and our productive spaces.

Further information including discussion papers will be made available on the Caring for our Country online forum at [www.caringforourcountryreview.com.au](http://www.caringforourcountryreview.com.au)

## So ... do you plant here often?

COMBINING dating and doing a good deed is behind a recent initiative launched by Landcare Australia.

Landcare for Singles was first run by the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges Landcare Network last year, to address recruitment issues for Landcare groups in the area.

The network ran two planting days, attracting more than 100 participants – 95 per cent of whom were completely new to Landcare.

An after-party was also held, to give the “singles” an opportunity to further mingle.

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Australian Government  
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry



## National Landcare Conference

3 – 5 September 2012 • Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre

### Call for abstracts close on Tuesday 12 June 2012

On behalf of the Landcare community the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) is calling for abstracts for the National Landcare Conference 2012. To learn more about the National Landcare Conference call for abstracts or to submit your abstract visit [daff.gov.au](http://daff.gov.au)



## In Brief

**Landcare's future:** The "Community Call for Action" which builds on the "Australian Framework for Landcare" has been released.

The Framework was developed in 2010 to support the resilience and growth of the Landcare movement up to 2020.

It provides a vision and aspirations for the future of the movement as well as highlighting Landcare achievements to date.

The Community Call for Action represents the second stage.

It provides the "how" and calls for response action from Landcare stakeholders and partners that will have benefits long into the future.

The document reflects community views, and the actions proposed reflect requests made by the community.

It is based on written submissions from community groups and Landcare and natural resource management organisations to the draft Landcare Framework Action Plan.

It also takes into account the feedback from extensive consultations undertaken in 2010 for the Australian Framework for Landcare.

The Australian Landcare Council which has overseen development of the Community Call for Action encourages all Landcare stakeholders and partners to take up the call for action by developing and making their own strategies, plans for action and commitments to Landcare.

You are invited to submit your commitment to Landcare via the Australian Landcare Council website: [www.daff.gov.au/natural-resources/landcare/council](http://www.daff.gov.au/natural-resources/landcare/council) or the council's secretariat at [alcsecretariat@daff.gov.au](mailto:alcsecretariat@daff.gov.au)

**Call for abstracts:** On behalf of the Landcare community the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) is calling for abstracts for the National Landcare Conference 2012, themed "Landcare – the future in our hands".

The conference, held from 3 to 5 September at the National Convention and Exhibition Centre in Sydney, will bring together people that are interested in creating sustainable landscapes for the 21st century.

This includes Landcare and community groups, land managers and farmers, industry, regional bodies and government representatives from across Australia.

Abstract submissions will close on Tuesday 12 June 2012.

To learn more about the National Landcare Conference call for abstracts or to submit your abstract visit the DAFF website.

**See for yourself:** Are you interested in learning how Community Action Grants are helping local communities make a positive difference to their landscape and waterways?

Short films are now available from [www.nrm.gov.au](http://www.nrm.gov.au) which provides a snapshot of projects funded under the first round of Community Action Grants as part of the Australian Government's Caring for our Country initiative.

# Sydney stage for star carers

**S**YDNEY is preparing itself for a Landcare invasion in September when 88 inspirational finalists descend on the city for the 2012 National Landcare Awards.

To be held at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre in Darling Harbour on September 4, the biennial awards ceremony will see finalists from 12 categories representing eight States and Territories recognised as local environmental heroes.

The categories are wide-ranging, and include innovative environmental learning programs in the Westpac Education category and the implementation of pioneering Landcare work in the agriculture sector in the Australian Government Innovation in Sustainable Farm Practices Award, among others.

This year also sees the second year of the People's Choice Award, which will be presented to the finalist who receives the most votes

from the general public in the run-up to the big day.

Voting will open on World Environment Day, Tuesday, June 5, and will close at 4pm (EST) on Tuesday, August 4, and will take place through the Landcare Australia website.

As anyone who is involved in Landcare will be aware, Landcare Week also takes place during the first week in September, and while the National Landcare Conference and Awards are taking place,

groups across the country will be hosting events and inviting their local communities to get involved in Landcare for a few hours, a morning or a day.

Resources for groups who would like to promote their events can be found at [www.landcareonline.com](http://www.landcareonline.com), and we encourage groups to share their events details with us by emailing them to [events@landcareaustralia.com.au](mailto:events@landcareaustralia.com.au), so we can promote them through our online events calendar.



Russell Ford and Rice Research Australia are finalists from NSW in the Innovation in Sustainable Agriculture category.

# Singles mingle while doing green deeds

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Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges Landcare Network volunteer Kim Boswell said the planting days were run with the idea of replacing "speed dating" with "speed planting" allowing participants to meet a bunch of people, while doing some good for the local environment.

"The inspiration to create the event came from a desire to do something new and exciting for Landcare," she said.

"I was seeking a new and innovative way to attract a younger audience to assist with environmental projects in the region."

Such was the success of this event, that Landcare Australia launched

the program nationally, developing a project kit for groups and networks to draw inspiration from, and running a national series of events.

The project kit provides a comprehensive guide on how to run a Landcare for Singles or Coastcare for Singles event and suggested branded artwork to help promote an event and attract registrations.

Ms Boswell said the kit uses the inaugural Landcare for Singles events as a guide.

"However, your event can be adapted or changed to suit the resources your group or network has available," she said.

"You may have a major planting project in the pipeline and simply

use an event like this to attract the volunteer numbers necessary to get your plants in the ground.

"If your group or network wants to run a planting event but needs more resources, why not see if you can team up with a local organisation that may need help with a planting project such as your local CMA, NRM Authority or Council?"

"Volunteer planting days for singles promise a win-win scenario for everyone involved.

"We have heard of two couples emerging from events so far."

Ms Boswell said since the initial planting day there has been a great deal of interest in the events nationally.

"I worked with Landcare Australia

to put together the project kit and its been great to see it take off around the country," she said.

"We've had Darwin, the Gold Coast, Canberra and Perth events so far, and 200 participants across all those events, with most of them hugely oversubscribed.

"In Canberra they had as many people on a waiting list as they had attending."

This year, there are events planned in NSW, while the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges Landcare Network plan to run the project again this year.

■ **To download the project kit or for more information visit the resource section of [www.landcareonline.com.au](http://www.landcareonline.com.au)**

## Perfect Patch of Green

**Turf Australia is committed to making a positive difference to the environment for schools and youth groups.**

Turf Australia is giving your school and youth groups the opportunity to win a free green makeover. 15 schools or youth groups across Australia have the chance to have their sports field or recreational area revitalized with new turf. Applications close 31st July 2012.

To enter the Turf Australia Perfect Patch of Green Junior Landcare program visit [www.juniorlandcare.com.au](http://www.juniorlandcare.com.au).



# Fertiliser rethink saves thousands

By CARLENE DOWIE

**A** KING Island dairy farmer is saving between \$50,000 and \$60,000 a year by applying only the fertiliser required to maintain soil fertility on his farm.

Gary Strickland, who milks 400 cows, discovered he was applying too much fertiliser during a drought five years ago.

To overcome a cash-flow problem, he decided to not apply any fertiliser to his pastures, apart from nitrogen.

"I didn't put fertiliser on and I thought the sky was going to cave in," he said.

"But nothing happened.

"So I did it again the next year and nothing happened so I continued that way."

A project run by the King Island Natural Resource Management Group in 2010 confirmed that the soil fertility levels on his farm were indeed adequate.

As part of that project, soil scientist Dr Bill Cotching took multiple soil samples from every paddock on the farm and had them tested.

Mr Strickland said the tests took three months because the samples were thoroughly dried first.

"And the reason why that is important is that if you are looking at parts per million and the soil sample hasn't been dried out properly, then the weight of those parts per million is a smaller proportion," he said.

Mr Strickland said soil tests from fertiliser companies were showing that more fertiliser was needed.

"We hadn't put fertiliser on for four years – apart from nitrogen and for



Dr Bill Cotching explains how to take representative soil samples in a fertility and nutrient budget workshop.

crops – and they were telling us we were crazy," he said.

But Dr Cotching's samples showed many paddocks had high levels.

"We found when got the results back from Bill Cotching I nearly died because more than half the farm was toxic in potash and phosphorus," Mr Strickland said.

Mr Strickland's experience prompted the King Island NRM group, of

which he is a member, to run a project for other dairy farmers on the island.

Group administration officer and project officer Ana Pimenta said funding for the project had come from the island's milk processor Lion through Landcare Australia.

The project started last October with Dr Cotching taking soil samples on the six farms involved in the project.

He also conducted a workshop about soil drainage and fertility and held a field day to show farmers how to take representative soil samples.

He then prepared individual reports and nutrient budgets for the farmers.

"The project showed that farmers do need to do soil tests and nutrient

budgets so they can apply the right amount of the right fertiliser," Ms Pimenta said.

"They can have the best result for their farm and we also don't lose nutrients to the waterways."

Ms Pimenta said farmers at the workshop were really interested in results and were keen to take on messages.

Mr Strickland said the environmental outcomes were important.

"We are trying to have a clean green image all the time and promote that," he said.

He and his wife, Helen, have been involved in NRM on their farm for a number of years.

In the past decade they have up-

graded their effluent system, fenced creeks, planted trees and improved laneways.

They have also put a covenant on 44 hectares of native bushland on their 365ha farm.

Mr Strickland said he would advise all farmers to obtain independent, quality soil testing before making decisions about what fertilisers to apply and to ensure there was enough time for soil samples to be dried.

"Make sure you get good soil sampling," he said.

"I would say that would show for most of the dairy farms over here that their soil levels are pretty adequate."



## Crops part of simple farm system

**GARY** and Helen Strickland (pictured) operate a simple farm system on their King Island dairy farm.

Mr Strickland said the aim was to make the most of the relatively mild climate and available moisture.

The farm split calves to meet the factory requirement for year-round production, with about 100 cows calved in the autumn and the remainder in the spring.

About 50 hectares of the effective milking area of 225ha is sown down to permanent pasture, which is irrigated from a large on-farm irrigation dam that collects run off and receives water from the effluent ponds.

Crops are grown on about two-thirds of the remainder in rotation with pastures.

The crops – including forage maize, chickpeas, oats, sugar

fodder beet and turnips – provided the bulk of feed from mid-to-late January to July and are all directly grazed.

They receive no irrigation and are "a good way of shifting moisture", Mr Strickland said.

A paddock where pasture was in need of renovation would typically be sown down to turnips, then chickpeas and oats, then maize and then back to pasture in the fourth year.



### Woolworths grants now available for sustainable agriculture projects

Woolworths and Landcare Australia are providing grants under its Fresh Food Future program to help farming groups develop or implement sustainable farming practices.

The grants will support farmers in the adoption of technology or practices to improve water use efficiency,

nutrient management and their carbon footprint. The grants will be awarded to farming groups and each grant can be up to a maximum of \$16,500 to implement a project which addresses one of these key areas.

**Grants open June 4th.**

For more information or to apply please go to [www.landcareonline.com.au](http://www.landcareonline.com.au)



# Trees for Mum blossoms

ON THE 10th anniversary of the Trees for Mum initiative, Landcare Australia and Trees for Mum have announced a partnership which encourages the broader Landcare community to get involved with the program.

Through this partnership, Landcare groups, Bushcare groups, or any other community and environmental care groups will be able to host Trees for Mum events in their local communities.

Trees for Mum is a series of Mother's Day memorial tree-planting events which was created in 2002 by friends and colleagues, Lauren Adlam and Deena Raphael.

The first event took place with the support of Sydney's Manly Council and attracted more than 150 people

to Manly Lagoon Park to plant commemorative trees.

Landcare Australia CEO Heather Campbell sees clear benefits for Landcare groups in hosting Trees for Mum events.

"Trees for Mum events are all about family and provide fantastic opportunities for Landcare groups across the country to show families in their local communities what Landcare is all about by encouraging them to get involved," she said.

Groups interested in getting involved in Trees for Mum next year can download a project kit outlining how to run an event, and promotional templates from the resources section at [www.landcareonline.com.au](http://www.landcareonline.com.au)

Lauren Adlam said that from its beginnings, as a novel and practical

way of honouring mums, Trees for Mum has since grown into a national celebration of all mothers.

"For those of us whose mums have died it's a chance to remember and reflect, while for those blessed to have a living mum, planting a tree is a meaningful gesture.

"It is also a great opportunity to nurture the environment and create living and lasting legacies for all the wonderful mums out there."

More than 20,000 participants have taken part in Trees for Mum since 2002, at a variety of locations across the country.

Trees for Mum has been more far reaching than Lauren and Deena could have ever predicted when they planned the inaugural, potentially one-off event.



**NARDIA SHERIFF** was involved in Trees for Mum in Melbourne from 2005, until she moved to Mildura in North-West Victoria in late 2008, where she was determined to continue with the concept.

A chance meeting between Nardia and the local area Landcare co-ordinator Kevin Chaplin in 2009 was all it took to establish a partnership that is now in its fourth year.

As a result, Trees for Mum Mildura continues to grow from strength to strength.

Having lost her own mother to breast cancer in 1998, Nardia told Kevin about the project.

Landcare and the Mallee Catchment Management Authority (CMA) offered to

supply the trees for the project that year.

A suitable location was found in the Kings Billabong Wildlife Reserve through the local Friends of the Kings Billabong Group and with the permission of Parks Victoria.

The notion of creating a planting site in a national park is somewhat different to models at other planting sites, where strong support has been sought and provided by local councils via their tree planting programs.

In 2012, Landcare and the Mallee CMA took their commitment to the Mildura event to a new level.

Nearly seven months pregnant, Nardia conveyed her concerns that she wouldn't be able to co-ordinate the event in 2012

without additional support.

Immediately, the Mallee CMA mobilised the local Landcare group to take on the co-ordination and set up of the Kings Billabong planting site.

Taking advantage of the new Trees for Mum and Landcare Australia partnership, Mallee CMA and Landcare were able to use the project kit while Nardia was able to activate media coverage through her networks. Co-ordination of the event was virtually effortless.

This year, more than 200 people headed out to Kings Billabong to plant their tree in honour of their mums, grandmothers and aunts, and a further 200 received a tree to take home and celebrate or honour their mum.

**LAUREN ADLAM**, co-founder of Trees for Mum, attended the Trees for Mum event in Mosman – the suburb's ninth such event, with 400 trees planted.

"Trees for Mum in 2012 continued to be a rewarding and emotional event," Ms Adlam said.

"With ten planting sites nationally, we were slightly down on the number of sites we had hoped, however, the event saw many hundreds of trees planted for many mums and gave people a positive purpose to their Mother's Day."

"We are thrilled with our partnership with Landcare Australia and through our co-

developed project kit, and with the benefit of greater lead-time for planning, we are confident that 2013 will see many more planting sites nationally, allowing many more trees to be planted for our mums.

"We are also confident local communities and Landcare groups will embrace the concept of Trees for Mum wholeheartedly, creating annual events for everyone to look forward to.

"This year, with limited time for planning we were thrilled to see Landcare groups in both Mildura and Woodend in Victoria, working in partnership with our Trees for Mum volunteers, to host planting sites."

# Bushlink working wonders in corporate environments

A PROGRAM which allows the corporate world and the disabled workforce to work together for the benefit of the environment is proving a raving success, with corporate volunteers planning to make it a regular partnership.

Bushlink was developed by Northside Enterprise, a community based non-government organisation serving young people with intellectual and/or multiple disabilities on the northern beaches and lower North Shore areas of Sydney.

The program, which has been running for three years, allows those with disabilities the chance to make an income and improve the environment by planting trees alongside a corporate sponsor.

Prior to employment, employees complete a specialised TAFE course in horticulture to equip them with the knowledge and skills of their work environment.

Corporate Volunteer Days also give employees a wider variety of employment options and allows them to give back to the community by improving the environment.

Bushlink co-ordinator Cathy Hockey said businesses enjoy the program as it removes them from their normal activities to get involved with a program they find extremely rewarding.

"Businesses get more out of it because they get to socially integrate with people with disabilities, which is something they might not usually get to do," she said.

"This works both ways – they learn from each other – our employees



Bushlink celebrates its win in Project Local competition.

teach the volunteers how to plant and look after trees."

But Ms Hockey said the program could only run through sponsorships or grants to subsidise pay for their employees.

"A group pays us to come in and work, like they would a team building day," she said.

"We do this as a way for our disabled employees to earn money."

Ms Hockey said Bushlink currently has a number of contracts within the Northern Beaches area, but are always

looking for more sites and sponsors to keep the program running.

"We source locations ourselves through networking and by writing letters," she said.

"To date the Corporate Volunteer Days have been held around the Northern Beaches – around picnic areas, bushland reserves and parks.

"We could potentially go further afield, like Chatswood and Lane Cove areas."

Ms Hockey said this would mean organising a site with the relevant coun-

cil, "which wouldn't be hard to do."

Commercial real estate firm, CBRE, were involved in a recent volunteer day, something they take part in a number of days each year.

CBRE's senior manager of their Brookvale office Patrick Kelleher said his team of four had a wonderful time and that it was a great insight to see what Bushlink's employees get up to.

"Not only did we feel like we were helping the environment, we were helping the community and the workers," Mr Kelleher said.

"It was rewarding for us to see them implement the knowledge and skills they have learnt in the last 12 to 18 months."

Mr Kelleher said the Bushlink employees helped his staff prune, weed and clear debris from Manly Dam, in the Manly Warringah area of Sydney.

He said CBRE was planning another volunteer day for later in the year, and there would be more volunteers to help out.

– PENELOPE KILBY

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MANLY DAILY

# Carbon 'test' set to reward savvy farmers

A group of farmers around Cowra, NSW, has committed to Australia's first soil carbon project.

The 11 landholders are participants in a soil carbon pilot project that is independent of the Federal Carbon Farming Initiative, but which will still pay farmers for carbon they sequester over a five-year period.

The pilot project is being run by the NSW DPI, Lachlan Catchment Management Authority and Office of Environment and Heritage.

It aims to test a "market-based instrument" for soil carbon sequestration – that is, the benefits and pitfalls of providing farmers with a financial incentive to sequester soil carbon and the processes that need to be put in place to make it happen.

The farmers were given the option of signing three different forms of contract under the pilot.

NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) research agronomist Dr Warwick Badgery said the farmers could have opted to be paid for just being part of the project, providing they stuck to a prescribed management practice – either using conservation tillage, or maintaining a permanent pasture.

Instead, almost all opted for an outcome-based payment, in which they will only get paid for the soil carbon they actually sequester, but with the option of using their own practices to achieve the result.

Most farmers took this option because they wanted to maintain

flexibility over their management, Dr Badgery said.

A third "hybrid" contract is also available.

Farmers can use both the strategies outlined in the other two contracts, and have payments split between each method.

A quarter of the payment will be made to farmers at the end of the first year.

The remainder will be made when the pilot concludes in five years time.

For farmers on outcome-based contracts, the sum of that final payment will be directly tied to how much carbon they have sequestered.

Across the 11 participating properties, baseline soil sampling has been carried out to a depth of 30 centimetres.

The same sites will be sampled at the end of the pilot to determine soil carbon gains or losses.

If the participating farmers increased their levels of soil carbon, they achieved a double win, Dr Badgery said.

They are paid for their gains and, because of the beneficial effects of carbon on soil fertility, they get increased productivity.

"All farmers involved in this project are required to participate in annual reporting and monitoring and provide updates throughout the year," Dr Badgery said.

"When complete, this project is estimated to save 7819 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent from being released into the atmosphere."

The pilot program follows an extensive soil carbon testing program



NSW Department of Primary Industries research agronomist Dr Warwick Badgery says a DPI soil carbon project will benefit farmers in more ways than one.

by NSW DPI across the Lachlan and Central West catchments.

The tests were all on pastured land, and have the partial aim of comparing carbon accumulation under rotational grazing systems with levels under set stocking.

Those results wouldn't be available

until the end of the year, Dr Badgery said, but an early pattern is that higher carbon levels appear to be correlated with higher use of phosphate fertilisers.

■ **More information about the Soil Carbon Pilot Program can be viewed at [www.lachlan.cma.nsw.gov.au/ourprojects.aspx](http://www.lachlan.cma.nsw.gov.au/ourprojects.aspx)**

## Tackling fertiliser pollution

THE invention of synthetic nitrogen fertiliser has revolutionised farming, but with some adverse side-effects.

Nitrogen fertiliser is often used inefficiently.

That can lead to pollution of groundwater and waterways, and significant emissions of the potent greenhouse gas, nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O).

Researchers working with the Primary Industries Climate Challenges Centre (PICCC) are examining how enhanced efficiency fertilisers (EEFs) might help us direct more of this essential element toward food production, while lessening pollution of air and water.

The researchers are investigating the fate of nitrogen in EEFs amended with urease and nitrification inhibitors.

Results have been encouraging.

Inhibitors can reduce N<sub>2</sub>O emissions from fertiliser in a range of soils.

In one Victorian cropping soil, emission reductions of 65 to 98 per cent were recorded.

However, the effect of EEFs depends on complex interactions with plant growth, soil conditions, water management and climate.

The PICCC team ran a field trial on ryegrass pasture in south west Victoria to identify all potential losses of nitrogen from different EEFs applied over an eight-month period.

The trial measured direct (N<sub>2</sub>O, methane, carbon dioxide) and indirect (ammonia) greenhouse gas emissions, as well as soil mineral nitrogen responses, and biomass quantity and quality.

Results indicated that climatic conditions – soil moisture and rainfall – influenced the level of ammonia loss from surface-applied urea, with high losses over autumn and low losses over spring.

Application of a urease inhibitor (Agrotain) reduced ammonia loss under both situations by between 40pc to 70pc.

Using nitrification inhibitors (DCD and DMPP) reduced the amount of nitrate found in the soil and reduced N<sub>2</sub>O emissions to varying degrees, with greatest reductions occurring in spring when emissions from untreated fertiliser were higher.

The results showed that targeting inhibitor use to particular times of the year increased the benefit gained from paying the premium for inhibitor-coated fertilisers.

## Carbon farming explained

RELEASED in March, the Carbon Farming Handbook guides landholders through the processes and terminology of the Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI).

The CFI is a complex entity.

It comes with many new terms and concepts, and the handbook sets these in the context of the wholly new carbon marketplace.

The handbook sets out how landholders and farmers can improve their land and farm sustainability while also generating carbon credits that can

be sold on domestic and international markets.

The CFI, which opened for business in December 2011, encourages farmers, land owners, local government and other stakeholders to generate extra revenue by reducing agricultural and landfill waste pollution.

Several methodologies are already approved under the CFI, including flaring landfill gas, methane in piggeries, planting native tree species

and reducing pollution from savanna fires.

Further methodologies are currently being developed with the CSIRO, universities, other research bodies and the federal government, working together to create dairy cattle food supplementation, enhanced efficiency fertilisers, manure management and soil carbon.

With the serious risks associated with climate change threatening the future of Australian agriculture and food

production, farmers and landholders have an important role to play in our nation's clean energy future by increasing the land sector's resilience to climate change and improving long term farm productivity.

The Australian Government, over the next six years, will support the land sector by investing \$1.7 billion dollars of carbon price revenue to support the CFI and other programs to improve productivity, sustainability and profitability.



## GOAT ISLAND RESCUE CORPORATE VOLUNTEER CHALLENGE DAY

Landcare Australia would like to thank their Corporate Volunteer Partners, Workplace Giving Partners and their employees who volunteered to help bring back Goat Island to its former glory. 137 corporate volunteers contributed over 600 hours and collected over 25 cubic meters of weeds in one day to help restore the historical Goat Island in the middle of Sydney Harbour.

**Thank you for your tremendous effort!**

For more information about Landcare Australia's Workplace Giving and Corporate Volunteer Program visit [www.landcareonline.com.au](http://www.landcareonline.com.au)





Yarra Valley Equestrian Landcare Group president Kerry Rollins says the group is helping property owners to make better management decisions.

## Healthy land, happy horses

By JAMIE-LEE  
OLDFIELD

THE Yarra Valley Equestrian Landcare group (YVELG) believe healthy land means healthy horses and are helping members achieve just that.

The group is uniquely based on a subject topic rather than a geographical area.

President Kerry Rollins said she became involved in the group with the aim of learning how to improve her property.

"It is quite common in the Yarra Valley for people to move onto a property for a small period of time and then move on, because they often don't have the experience needed to look after it properly," she said.

"We are aiming to educate landowners and help to get horse owners thinking about things and find ways to improve their properties."

Founded in May 2011, the group has already hosted four field days for members and the

general public in its inaugural year.

Bushfire preparation, native grass use, permaculture and chemical use are just some of the topics the group has covered so far, with a further four field days planned for this year.

Ms Rollins said the YVELG tried to incorporate a number of

for everybody," she said.

"For example at our next field day a master farrier will be discussing the pros and cons of shoeing and bare-foot trimming, so people can decide what is best for them."

The YVELG has grown to about 50 members and is hoping more of the equestrian community will

members to not only use best practices on their own land but also the land they access.

The Yarra Valley Equestrian Landcare group held a field day on March 31 at Tibooburra, Hottle Creek, where they discussed blackberry control, management techniques for handling wet weather and barefoot trimming for horses.

"We try to give people timely information, so with a Melbourne Water representative talking about handling the wet coming into winter, it gave attendees who have issues time to learn and get their properties prepared," she said.

"One of our aims is to have a website with a library that will feature the information from the speakers at our various field days, giving people access to a great body of information.

"I am not a landcare expert and I have learnt a lot myself since the group started – after employing ideas gained from various speakers my property is looking the best it ever has."

**I am not a landcare expert and I have learnt a lot myself since the group started – after employing ideas gained from various speakers my property is looking the best it ever has**

– Yarra Valley Equestrian Landcare Group president Kerry Rollins

different ways to tackle issues in their education program, to ensure there was something for everyone.

"We are not stuck in one ideology, we realise people all have different ideas and we try to cater

become interested this year, with four field days planned in 2012.

While their main aim is land management education, the group also discusses how to grow and maintain horse riding trails in the Yarra Valley, encouraging

## Illawarra on plant watch

EVERY two months, Landcare Illawarra makes a request of the wider community: look out for certain plants that may be fruiting.

The group has embarked on a revegetation program, the Illawarra Woodland and Rainforest project, and is ensuring its plantings have maximum genetic diversity with maximum local provenance by harnessing the eyes of the whole community.

After negotiations with the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service in 2008, the group gained approval for a region-wide seed collection licence.

This has allowed group members to collect seed from two endangered ecological communities (EECs) in the region south of Sydney: the Illawarra Subtropical Rainforest and Illawarra Lowlands Grassy Woodland.

With the help of a large group of community members, Landcare Illawarra has been able to collect over 400 seed lots from a range of species from both of these ecological communities.

Landholders, local councils and Landcare/Bushcare groups have had access to the propagated seed and have been able to introduce these species and extend the range and diversity of plants within these ecological communities across the Illawarra.

Clearing for farming and more recently, urban development, has affected all levels of biodiversity.

For some species, most of their original populations and therefore large amounts of their genetic diversity has been lost. This is further compounded when remnant vegetation becomes isolated in the urban/rural matrix.

The issue of genetic diversity in plants that we used in our revegetation projects has become a recent focus for Landcare Illawarra.

The growing concern is that further environmental change will be profound. Given that individuals and species are adapted to their environment through the interaction of their genes, and genetic diversity is what natural selection acts on, Landcare Illawarra began to ask the question: do our species have the means to cope with the effects of predicted climate change?

A project officer worked with local experts to produce a discussion paper that includes species' profiles, as well as locations that catch local botanists' attention because of their insularity.

The Illawarra Woodland and Rainforest project has since attracted the attention of others, including the University of Wollongong, local Illawarra councils and Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority.

The project has also been successful in attracting funding from a range of State and Federal funding initiatives.

In 2011 alone, 18 sites have been included in tree planting events. These plantings included private landholders and farmers who have decided to enhance and extend the area and quality of their remnant vegetation on their properties.

This project will work towards helping improve the biodiversity of these ecosystems and strengthen the genetic diversity over the long term. Hopefully, that will mean the plant communities have greater resilience to change.

■ For more information on the project, contact Landcare Illawarra project officer Richard Scarborough. Email richardscarbrough@dodo.com.au or call 0438 988 387.



## It's time to plant the seed

National Tree Day is the ideal time to inspire your local community and future generations to value and care for the environment (as much as you do).

**GET INVOLVED** and register to run a tree planting site or activity. Showcase your work to the wider community. Recruit volunteers. Make a difference.

Visit [treeday.planetark.org](http://treeday.planetark.org)  
or call 1300 88 5000 to get started

National Tree Day **Sunday 29 July**  
Schools Tree Day **Friday 27 July**

national  
tree day  
**PLANETARK.org**

# Caring for land key to ag's future

EVERYONE involved with the land has an opportunity to shape the future of Australian agriculture through the Blueprint for Australian Agriculture.

The Blueprint is an initiative of the National Farmers' Federation (NFF) on behalf of the agricultural sector.

"Australia's 140,000 farmers and the other 1.6 million people involved in agriculture and its related industries in Australia play a vitally important role in feeding and clothing our country and the world," NFF President Jock Laurie said.

"Agriculture is one of the most important industries in terms of our contribution to not only the economy, but also society, and there is real need to develop a vision of the role this industry needs to play, what it needs to achieve in the future and how we are going to make this happen.

"The Blueprint for Australian Agriculture provides the opportunity for all people involved with Australia's

food and fibre sectors, from production to consumption, to raise the issues and challenges facing agriculture and the opportunities they think are critical to its continued success.

"At the end of the day, we want to see a strong and sustainable agricultural industry right across Australia, and we are calling on all who have an involvement with, or interest in, agriculture to help us achieve this through the development of the Blueprint."

Mr Laurie believes environmental management will be one of the key issues that emerge from the Blueprint process.

"Farmers are at the frontline of delivering environmental outcomes on behalf of the Australian community, with 94 per cent of our farmers actively undertaking natural resource management," Mr Laurie said.

"We believe the challenge of how farmers will produce more food and fibre in order to meet the growing world population, with less impact on



National Farmers Federation president Jock Laurie says Landcarers should have their say in The Blueprint process.

water, soil and the environment; and the greater community understanding of the role farmers play in caring for the environment, are among the key issues facing farmers in the future.

"These are not new issues – these are the reasons the NFF and the Australian Conservation Foundation partnered more than 20 years ago to

start the Landcare movement – yet they continue to be important.

"We encourage all within the Landcare movement to have their say on the issues, challenges and opportunities facing Australia's food and fibre production and environmental management as part of the Blueprint process. We want to hear from you."

To contribute to the development of the Blueprint, fill in the online survey, talk to one of the 24 NFF member organisations or contact your Regional Landcare Facilitator.

■ For more information or to complete the survey visit [www.nff.org.au/blueprint](http://www.nff.org.au/blueprint) or contact the NFF on (02) 6269 5666.

## Melbourne students delve deep into native garden life

RACV has helped students from four schools in Melbourne's eastern suburbs to roll up their sleeves for a Gould League environmental sustainability program.

As part of RACV's partnership with Landcare Victoria, the RACV funded the Educating Future Generations program run by the Gould League's Environmental Sustainability Education Centre.

The initiative involved 340 students from Keysborough Secondary School, Spring Parks Primary School, Noble Park English Language Centre and Dandenong High School.

The students were taught about healthy soil and composting and experienced the world through the eyes of the many small creatures that live in native gardens.

They discovered the wealth of life hidden inside common native plants and discussed the role of different habitats and food plants in gardens.

The students propagated seeds and learnt to identify plants by exploring different plant parts under a microscope and by using a dichotomous key.

RACV Manager Community Rela-

tions and Heritage, Heather Shanhun, said that RACV was thrilled with the success of the Educating Future Generations program and its ability to educate younger generations about environmental sustainability.

"The project gave students a fantastic opportunity to learn about their environment and provided them with the motivation, skills and resources to plant and maintain a native habitat garden within their school grounds and to share these skills with their families and communities," said Ms Shanhun.

The first part the three-part pro-

gram was to give the schools a Gould League starter kit, which included a gardening kit with a selection of native plants local to the area.

In the second stage, students visited the Gould League Environmental Sustainability Education Centre in Moorabbin.

The students participated in practical workshops exploring indigenous and native plant species and garden design.

They also learnt about recycling food and garden waste through composting and use of worm farms.

For the final part of the program,

the Gould League held full-day workshops at each school, where students designed and created their own natural habitat garden and constructed watering and feeding systems to ensure their garden thrived.

The Gould League is an independent non-profit charity, dedicated to environmental education and training in sustainability for schools and the community.

Established in 1909, the Gould League programs assist individuals, families and communities to adopt more environmentally sustainable lifestyles.

## Steel fence passes flood test at Clunes

IN A land of drought and flooding rains, and some pretty rough country, good fence design is essential.

So Jock Leishman found when he was contemplating 10 kilometres of flood-damaged fencing on his sheep and cattle property near Clunes, NSW.

Following the January 2011 floods, which flowed hard on the heels of the 2010 floods, Jock had a clear idea of what stood the test.

"I was very pleased and actually a bit surprised to see that the new steel assemblies I had recently installed remained standing, while all my pine end assemblies were completely washed away. They were only built two or three years ago," said Mr Leishman (pictured with a steel end assembly in background).

"I had installed around 30 Ezyslot strainers and Adjusta-Stay from Waratah and I was impressed that they stood up where the pine assemblies

didn't have the strength."

"I only looked into steel end assemblies because they can be put in manually. We have some very rugged country where it's impossible to use the tractor – as long as there is some moisture in the ground, these posts are very easy to install."

The Ezyslot strainers and Adjusta-Stays use two steel posts driven at angles into the base of the assembly to provide extra support under the surface and stop the post shifting under pressure from stock.

The experience has pushed Jock towards 100 per cent steel for all his replacement fencing.

Waratah fencing has worked with Landcare groups since the inception of Landcare in Australia. Support for Landcare over this time has been not only financial, but has included a significant contribution by the Waratah Fencing regional team toward fence design and training of volunteers and contractors.





NT Fisheries boat and crew help collect rubbish from the water, 2011.

Photo: Lyn Lambeth, OceanWatch Australia



Volunteers help sort and record collected rubbish on Fishermen's Wharf, 2011.

Photo: Katherine Sarneckis, Northern Territory Seafood Council

## Clean-up transforms Darwin Harbour

TO THE visitor, Darwin Harbour is a pristine tropical blue waterway in a setting of mangroves.

The professional fishing community was reporting a different story in 2009, when the concept of a Darwin Harbour Clean-Up was conceived.

At meetings of the Northern Territory Seafood Council, the peak body representing the seafood industry in the Northern Territory, fishers were reporting that rubbish was threatening marine and birdlife, creating boating hazards and fouling beaches.

The first clean-up was designed to gauge the extent of the problem.

With funding from the Coastcare program, the first Darwin Harbour Clean-Up day was held in July 2010 and collected two-and-a-half tonnes

of rubbish from the coastlines and waterways of the harbour.

The success of the first Darwin Harbour Clean-Up day, which saw the involvement of 93 people from more than 20 organisations and businesses, led to many requests for this to become an annual event.

In 2011, Territory Natural Resource Management (TNRM) again supported the activity through their Coastcare Program and the clean-up day was organised by the Northern Territory Seafood Council and OceanWatch Australia, a not-for-profit organisation that works to advance sustainability in the Australian seafood industry.

In the 2011 Darwin Harbour Clean-Up day, more than 90 people on land and in boats collected just over a tonne of

general rubbish from Darwin Harbour's coastlines and waters.

Thirty six government, non-government and private agencies worked together on planning, promoting and undertaking the clean-up activity, re-forming partnerships strengthened from the first year and creating new ones.

The event is now considered to be a popular community and business fixture on the busy Top End Dry Season calendar.

It is held on a weekday to take advantage of the huge government and business support – allowing many workers and resources to assist as part of their workday.

For example, Darwin Port Corporation provided boats, crane, forklifts, skip bins and staff allowing safe and professional removal of heavy items from the water.

Data from the next clean-up in July 2012 will be an interesting measure of the effectiveness of a ban on single-use plastic bags, introduced to the Territory in September 2011, and the new deposit scheme for drink containers.

A Darwin Harbour Clean-Up section has been added to the Northern Territory Seafood Council website ([www.ntsc.com.au](http://www.ntsc.com.au)) to further highlight the event and its achievements. Videos of the 2010 and 2011 clean-up days have been posted on the SeaNetNT YouTube site ([www.youtube.com/user/SeaNetNT](http://www.youtube.com/user/SeaNetNT))

In October 2011 the Darwin Harbour Clean-Up Partners were recognised at the Northern Territory Landcare Awards, winning in the Coastcare category, and have now been entered in the 2012 National Landcare Awards.

## City families get taste of bush life

CITY families pulled on their boots and headed bush to farms all across the country this weekend, with 539 families participating in FarmDay 2012.

Held on the last weekend in May each year, the initiative proudly supported by Meat and Livestock Australia, encourages farming families to open their gates and host a family from an urban area, in an effort to reconnect the city and the country and foster a greater understanding of the origin of our food and fibre.

Tania and Chris Parker and their two children Austin, 7, and Emma, 4,

from Hamilton in western Victoria, run a sheep property and have been involved with Landcare for more than 15 years.

They have participated in FarmDay for four years and say it is a great way of showing city families the real aspects of farming life.

The Parker's property "Summit Park" is nestled among majestic rolling Red Gum plains and home to flock and stud Texel sheep.

Tania and her family said the visit by the Wilkinson family from Melbourne on FarmDay made them appreciate the genuine interest city people have about the country.

The Parkers enjoyed showing their new found city friends around their property looking at 450 year old Red Gum trees and the regeneration of their seedlings. Protecting these magnificent old trees is important to the Parkers, and is part of the future development of the property.

"We wandered down the lane past the kids' favourite tree, through the paddocks, handled some sheep, talked about pasture renovation, watched the working dogs in action and visited Snowy the Maremma sheepdog, who lives in the paddock with the sheep and protects them all year round," Tania said.

"The kids were amazed by the open spaces and getting to know all the different animals they usually don't have the chance to interact with – the

sheep, our two calves, the work dogs and the chooks.

"They got to know more about our way of life – that we can combine farm work with off-farm work, (Tania works at the Glenelg Hopkins CMA) and still have wide open spaces for the kids to grow up in and enjoy while appreciating the natural environment," Tania said.

City family, Darren and Ana Wilkinson and their two children Ethan, 3, and Cooper, 5, from Point Cook in Victoria, and are more accustomed to the sights and sounds of bustling Melbourne.

Upon hearing about FarmDay, Darren thought it would be a great opportunity to experience rural Australia.

"Visiting the Parkers was a great way of getting the kids out and about, broadening our knowledge about agriculture and connecting a bit more with the industry," Mr Wilkinson said.

Founder of FarmDay, Deb Bain, a lamb and wool producer from west of Ballarat says FarmDay is a proven way of increasing the connections between the city and the country and developing a further understanding of life on the land.

"It's so exciting to hear the stories of FarmDay – of friendship, a lot of fun and a further understanding of what is part and parcel of being a primary producer," Ms Bain said.

"Over the years we have found peo-



Austin (7) and Emma (4) Parker, and Cooper (5) and Ethan (4) Wilkinson climbing a favourite tree at the Parkers' property, "Summit Park", 12km from Hamilton, Victoria.

ple from urban areas are very curious and want to know more about their rural neighbours – like the Wilkinsons, they are often prepared to pack up the car, travel hundreds of kilometers and make a real effort in reconnecting and understanding.

"Thank you to every farmer across the country who signed up to be a host for 2012 and thank you to every urban family in making the effort to understand a little more about the great work Aussie farmers do," Ms Bain said.



**CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY**

Landcare in Focus is proudly supported by the Australian Government Caring for our Country program and published by Landcare Australia Limited.

The next edition of Landcare in Focus will be published on Thursday, August 2, and will be a special National Landcare Awards and Landcare Conference edition.

If you would like bulk copies of this issue, please email us at [enquiries@landcareaustralia.com.au](mailto:enquiries@landcareaustralia.com.au)

## Landcare Week 2012

3rd-9th September

[www.landcareonline.com.au](http://www.landcareonline.com.au)

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From the rural and remote areas of Australia, to the coast and urban centres, there are farmers and volunteer groups in local communities who are restoring and protecting our environment.

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Landcare Week celebrates the people, places and projects all over Australia that are making a difference.

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If you are organising an event during Landcare Week, please contact us so that we can help promote it on our website and with our media contacts. Send all details to [events@landcareaustralia.com.au](mailto:events@landcareaustralia.com.au).

Landcare Week campaign resources to help groups promote their events are available to download on the Landcare Australia website [www.landcareonline.com.au](http://www.landcareonline.com.au).

# Fresh ideas for NZ carers

By MARGIE JENKIN,  
executive Officer,  
Landcare Tasmania

Across the Tasman, they talk about Landcare too. The New Zealand Landcare and Catchment Management Conference was held in Hamilton earlier this year, hosting 200 people, including landcarers from Fiji and Australia.

Delegates were encouraged to understand and respect the land, observing cause and effect from season to season, and year to year.

It was noted that science doesn't tell us what to do but describes what is, and models what might be.

With a strong empathy for the land and consideration of the science, production and conservation opportunities can be recognised and realised.

Delegates heard that no problem is solved by the same consciousness in which it was created.

New Zealand is grappling with some major issues, including climate variability, introduced species, water quality and maintaining industry production and a healthy environment.

New approaches require fresh and bold thinking and significant courage (sometimes in the face of adversity).

With commitment, patience and tenacity, individual landcarers and community groups reported great on-ground success environmentally and socially.

But the challenges are huge.

New Zealand is grappling with some major issues, including climate variability, introduced species, water quality and maintaining industry production and a healthy environment.

The importance of people working together was a reoccurring theme, particularly in the face of large scale environmental challenges and limited resources.

Collaborations between Australia and New Zealand were discussed at the event and there is an intention to share information across the Tasman in the future.

Congratulations to the New Zealand Landcare Trust for delivering a highly engaging conference.

■ Visit [www.landcare.org.nz/](http://www.landcare.org.nz/) for presentations from the event.



Little River Landcare Group's Pip Job wants women to realise they are necessary decision makers and should have a say in environmental outcomes.

## Empowering women to care for the land

SOMETIME after she signed up as Education and Projects manager for Little River Landcare Group (LRLG) in Central West NSW, Pip Job realised her successful events weren't attracting many women.

Maybe, she reasoned, women were just not that into kicking tyres, discussing weeds or arguing over sheep drenches.

"I wanted the women to feel free to share their thoughts, without the prejudices of their husbands," Pip recalls.

So in 2005, she ran Little River's first "Women in the Landscape" event.

About 40 women attended. Afterward, the firm consensus was that it had to be an annual event.

The last few LRLG Women in Landscape forums have attracted 100 to 120 women.

Pip has tapped into a need among rural women to talk on their own terms about living on the land.

In farming, Pip observes, women still tend to play a traditional role.

They tend the family, keep up the house and garden – and then help in the yards when required.

"I wanted to showcase what other farming women are doing and can do within their farming business," Pip said.

"I wanted women to see they are necessary decision makers and that importantly, women have the right to influence decisions that have environmental outcomes.

"After all, if you are a partner in the business, should you not have an equal say?"

Other things have flowered from this female gathering.

In 2007, Christine Weston, a farming woman from Cumnock and former NSW Women of the Year, attended the LRLG Women in Landscape event.

It helped give her the confidence to pursue an idea she had been hatching, which became the Rent A Farmhouse Scheme.

The scheme increased the Cumnock community by a whopping 30 per cent, saved the school and brought much needed reinvigoration to a tired, drought-worn community.

In 2010, it was suggested the main gathering be followed by an informal women's day dedicated to pursuing a topic that had caused great interest: the resilience of Australian women.

A guest speaker suggested it had its roots in the first European women to settle Australia, a role that required formidable courage and resilience.

Her suggestion tapped into a vein of interest about the role of women in the Central West – who the pioneers were, their lives, their hardships.

Later that year LRLG held a casual "Pioneering Women" day.

"The event showcased the power of what we have created and that as women, collectively, we can come together and inspire each other," Pip recalled.

There are profound moments, too.

"I have seen women who have had husbands suffering from depression or who had committed suicide come together to form tight bonds," Pip said.

"I have seen clusters of women exchange ideas from other communities and develop ideas that can help their own small rural village or organisation prosper.

"The opportunities are endless.

"The most unpredictable component of the event is the synergies that come from it.

"This emerges from a combination of speakers, the attendees, and what women feed back to the group."

In 2008, Pip took her idea to three other Landcare groups.

With \$55,000 from the Federal "Recognising Women Farmers" program, she introduced them

to the power of women together.

Watershed Landcare at Mudgee had 110 women attend, who increased the group's membership by 60 per cent in a night – and increased its female membership by 80 per cent.

Macquarie Valley Landcare at Trangie attracted 100 women, which evolved the idea toward social support, essential for a community that had suffered considerably during the drought.

At Bell River Catchment Community at Molong, 120 women attended the first meeting, successfully reviving Landcare in an area where it was dying.

Pip also introduced a men's event at LRLG.

The second event, held this year, hosted about 60 men.

The 2012 women's event, held last month, was the fifth in the series.

Early on, it became evident that the strain of raising funds for an annual event would take Pip away from other Landcare activities.

"Women in Landscapes" has now become a biannual event, and Pip hopes similar gatherings will spring up around the country.

All it needs, she said, is passionate Landcarers.

# Better protection in new alliance

**N**EW links have been forged between the Landcare community and regional natural resource management (NRM) organisations.

The National Landcare Network (NLN) and the National NRM Regions' Working Group have signed a statement of purpose that aims to build an enduring productive relationship between the organisations.

The strategic partnership will mean that the parties collaborate on effective working partnerships nationally, regionally and locally.

The intention is to eliminate duplication of effort and find synergies in how the organisations approach the protection of natural resources across Australia.

The NLN is the national advocacy and representative body for Landcare, a grassroots movement which enables local communities to take responsibility for their local environment.

The National NRM Regions' Working Groups is the representative body of Australia's 56 regional NRM organisations.

It focuses on the development of regional landscape plans and investments which align regional community visions and actions with government directions.

National Landcare Network chairman David Walker recognises the benefits of both organisations working collaboratively.

"Landcare has a fantastic record of getting landholder and wider commu-

nity "buy in" toward recognising, learning about and addressing the land degradation and conservation issues that confront them on their farms and in their local areas," Mr Walker said.

"Regional bodies have the responsibility to co-ordinate NRM policy and actions at a regional scale and feed their regional plans into national targets.

"Both roles are equally important but clearly different and we need to make sure we work together effectively."

Dr Sarah Ryan of the National NRM Regions' Working Group believes that together the organisations can more effectively address environmental challenges.

"Members of Landcare and the boards and staff of regional NRM groups are all highly committed to

achieving the best possible restoration and protection of our environment, but we've come from different backgrounds and have different perspectives and ways of working," Dr Ryan said.

"This initiative aims to capitalise on the fact we share the same mission but have complementary skills we can bring to landscape care.

"Even the process of working up our statement of common purpose has increased my understanding of the needs and strengths of people in Landcare, and I hope exposed more of our thinking to Landcare.

"Regional NRM bodies will be promoting more such discussions around the country as we implement the agreement."

The agreement will see both organisations working together to improve the way Landcare and regional NRM bodies work together at all scales across Australia.

They will also work together on the formulation of policy at national and State levels and stronger community input at regional and local levels.

Both organisations share the common objective of fostering communities that are aware, engaged and active in ensuring Australian landscapes are healthier, better protected, better managed, more resilient and provide essential ecosystem services in a changing world.

Through this agreement they will be in a position to work together to realise this objective.



## Young scout makes little things count

SCOUTS have always had an affinity with the environment, but these days getting involved in environmental activities also helps Scouts earn the coveted Landcare badge.

Earning the badge involves lots of side benefits, according to Bridget Moyle, a young Scout of the Killarney Heights Scout Troop.

Bridget's Landcare badge was a vehicle for her to enjoy and explore the natural world with her friends.

"My advice to people interested in gaining a Landcare badge would be to find a local area that they have a desire to improve and then regularly attend to the site so they can appreciate the difference they can make" Bridget said.

Bridget's involvement in Scouts and Landcare activities has made her an environmental champion for her generation.

"I am concerned about the large amount of waste which is created by society, in the form of over-packaging of products and plastic bottles," she said.

"Incorrect disposal of this waste and the harm this causes to wildlife and the environment is very worrying and needs to be changed.

"It is a great feeling knowing you can have the ability to make a difference, even on a small scale."

"Seeing the change you can make in a short period of time is incredibly satisfying."

Considerable change is made possible through Landcare and other environmental activities, in Bridget's view.

"Community activities like these also enable you to meet other local people and gain a better knowledge of the natural environment of your neighbourhood," she said.

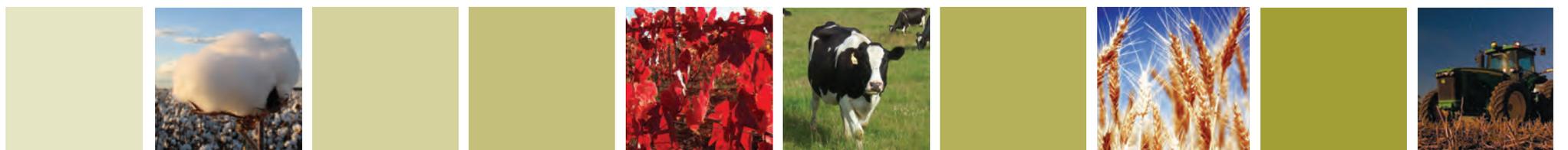
Scouts can earn their Landcare badge by participating in any three nationally accredited environment events that are either supported or run by Landcare Australia.

■ For further information on eligibility and how your Scout group can get involved, please visit [www.juniorlandcare.com.au](http://www.juniorlandcare.com.au)

## You're invited to contribute to farming's future.

The Blueprint for Australian Agriculture is a road map for the future of farming and the agricultural supply chain.

The NFF is currently developing the Blueprint on behalf of the agricultural sector, and to do so, we need your input. If you have an interest in or involvement with agriculture, you're invited to take part in this important process. To have your say on the issues and challenges facing the sector now and in the future, and to help us map out where we want to be in the future and how we're going to get there, visit [www.nff.org.au/blueprint](http://www.nff.org.au/blueprint) or call the NFF on 02 6269 5666.



## Whopper watermelons

FROM small things, big things grow. Six year old Wyatt Kahler can attest to this, having won the Yates Junior Landcare Watermelon challenge with his whopping 20-kilogram watermelon.

Wyatt was one of more than 40,000 participants in the challenge which was launched last September by Junior Masterchef winner Isabella Bliss and her sister, Sofia.

"Getting out into the garden and growing your own food is one of my favourite things, and you can make some really tasty treats from watermelons," Isabella said.

The Yates Junior Landcare Challenge has run for the past four years and continues to inspire children to get their hands dirty and grow their own food.

"I am absolutely thrilled to see how enthusiastic these kids are about gardening and learning about where food comes from," said Yates communications manager Judy Horton.

"It's fantastic to see the joy the kids get from getting outside and seeing what giant outcomes they can achieve from such small seeds."

Wyatt's watermelon was grown in Basin View, NSW, and had a circumference of 83cm.

Cooran State School in Queensland won in the group category of the competition, also with a 20kg watermelon measuring 77cm in circumference.

Competitors were also judged on their creativity.

Claire and Simon Jung from Lyneham, ACT, won in this category with a photo of their watermelon wrapped in a beanie and scarf.

Ms Horton believes the competition has the potential to influence children's behaviour over their lives.

"Hopefully this will help them have a real appreciation for the natural environment around them and the food they eat for years to come," she said.

Finalist Karina Venn, from WA, is pictured with her 18kg monster melon.

— AMANDA PERRY



## Green dream for schools

NEW green turf to encourage children to play and learn outdoors is being offered to schools and youth groups across Australia through a joint initiative of Junior Landcare and Turf Australia.

Under the "Perfect Patch of Green" program, professional turf growers will lay up to 100,000 square metres of new green turf at 15 play areas, school grounds or sports fields.

Landcare Australia CEO Heather Campbell highlighted the appeal of new turf for children. "It will further encourage kids to get outside and appreciate the natural environment around them," she said.

"It will be great to see outdoor spaces being transformed to a green environment where kids can get excited about playing and learning in the outdoors."

Preschools, kindergartens, primary and high schools across Australia can nominate a site, as well as any youth group or community organisation whose main focus is supporting young people.

Entrants must satisfy the judges that the new turf will greatly enhance the students and their environment, will be regularly maintained now and into the future, and that they have developed innovative ways to involve the wider community in the maintenance of the grass area.

The school or group must commit to the laying of the turf between September 2012 and February 2013.

The total area to be laid must not exceed 68m wide by 100m long.

The program closes on July 31, 2012, and recipients of the grant will be announced in September 2012.

— AMANDA PERRY

■ For more information on how your school or group can apply for a green makeover, visit [www.juniorlandcare.com.au](http://www.juniorlandcare.com.au).

## Greystanes growing garden skills

THE joys of gardening are being discovered by the 1st Greystanes Scout Group in Western Sydney, thanks to funding from Coles and Junior Landcare.

The group recently received a Coles Junior Landcare Garden Grant worth \$1000, which has allowed the Scouts to build an edible garden and start a composting system at their Scout hall.

The group's Assistant Cub Scout Leader Julie Overton said the garden project had helped the young Scouts to learn about their responsibility for the environment and sustainability.

The vegetables that are now flourishing in the garden are used by the

Scouts in their food preparation, campfire cooking and other learning experiences.

The vegetable garden was designed as a hands-on learning tool for the Scouting community to learn life skills.

As well, the Scout members have also been able to use this project to attain their Scouts Landcare Badge.

Ms Overton said the group has been surprised by the impact the grant has had on the group.

"What we didn't expect was that the benefits of receiving the grant have been much greater than the monetary value," she said.

"The grant has opened many doors in the community and we

have had many offers of help either financially or in-kind including Holroyd City Council, Yates, and our local Coles store in Merrylands to name a few.

"It has also offered us a huge opportunity to promote Scouting in our local community on numerous occasions."

The next round of applications for the Coles Junior Landcare Garden Grant program is now open.

All schools, childcare centres, preschools and community groups that involve young people are eligible to apply.

■ Visit [www.juniorlandcare.com.au](http://www.juniorlandcare.com.au) for further information.



1st Greystanes Scout Group with The Veggie Lady Toni Salter.

## Coles Junior Landcare Garden Grants Now Open

Since 2008 Coles has been providing School Garden Grants of up to \$1,000 to schools and youth groups to help create gardens in their grounds or community, such as bush tucker gardens, water wise gardens or veggie gardens.

These programs encourage students to learn about the environment through "outdoor learning" in developing their own school gardens.

To apply please visit [www.juniorlandcare.com.au](http://www.juniorlandcare.com.au)

coles

Junior  
Landcare



# Goat Island gets corporate revival

Employees of companies that support Landcare Australia swapped their iPhones for gardening gloves in March, taking to wheelbarrows and rakes to help restore Goat Island.

Lying in Sydney Harbour west of the Harbour Bridge, Goat Island has had a chequered past.

At various times it has been the source of the sandstone used in some of Sydney's finest buildings, the principal gunpowder store for NSW and the headquarters for the Sydney Water Police.

On March 9, it was overrun by 135 employees from 15 companies who support Landcare Australia.

They worked at various activities to restore the island's natural landscape, while getting some active outdoor experience and practice at working as part of a team.

In a day, the Goat Island Rescue initiative contributed more than 600 hours of intensive bush regeneration.

The initiative emerged from an invitation by Landcare Australia to 15 of its corporate and workplace partners, suggesting they contribute a team of employees to the restoration of Goat Island in a unique opportunity to learn about volunteer work and environmental

issues in the middle of the city.

After the dirty work, an afternoon session focused on environmental education, including guest speaker Chris Lee from Beyond Zero Emissions, who spoke about his organisation's latest campaign to reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases.

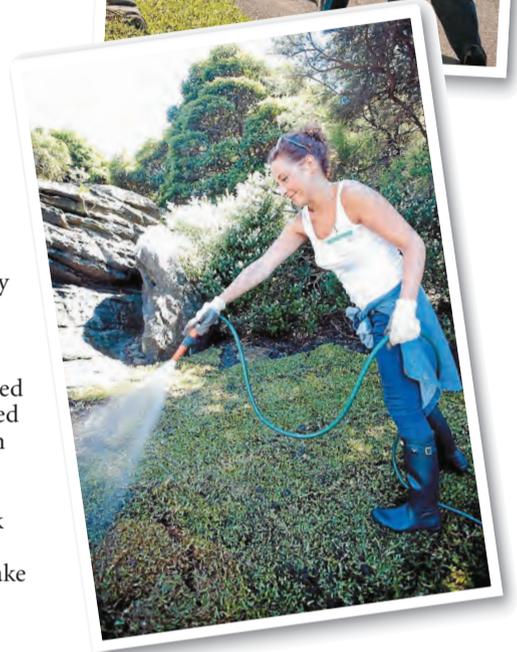
A hands-on experience with animals such as Joanna the Goanna from the Australian Wildlife Display provided some insights into why native habitats and biodiversity corridors are in need of protection.

Jeff Cottrell from Willow Warriors demonstrated his expertise and energy while encouraging volunteers to get into a kayak in order to learn about his group's work of removing weeds from riparian systems in NSW and ACT.

Throughout the day, activities were lead by volunteers and volunteer rangers – people that volunteer on a regular basis to help protect and repair their "backyard".

The materials, plants and resources required to make the day a great success were supplied to the event's co-ordinators, the Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife, by event sponsors Be Natural and MobileMuster.

Landcare Australia would like to say thank you to all of the employees that came along and provided energy, time and smiles to make the day such a positive outcome for the island.



## River restoration relief flows in from WA Water Corp

RIVER restoration work along the Harvey River in Western Australia's Lake Clifton has begun again, thanks to support from the WA Water Corporation.

The corporation helped out the Harvey River Restoration Taskforce (HRRT) with heavy equipment, in the form of a 20-tonne excavator, to re-contour an eroded bank on the western side of the river, at the Old Bunbury Road Bridge crossing.

The Harvey River is the southern most of the three major waterways which drain into the Ramsar Listed Peel Harvey Estuary.

The Harvey River mouth was listed as an internationally important wetland in 1990 under the International Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar Convention).

It forms part of the Peel-Yalgorup wetland system, the most important site for waterbirds in south-west Australia, and provides habitat for many rare and endangered species and communities, including migratory fish and birds.



The Harvey River Restoration Taskforce has been working to revegetate the river to improve wildlife habitat and control bank erosion.

HRRT chairperson Jennifer Stringer said the corporation's support had helped the community organisation take giant strides in its restoration efforts.

"Without such support we would be unable to implement the scale of work we have to date," Jennifer said.

"And we'll be doing further work at

the project site this year thanks to a Natural Resource Management grant provided by the State Government."

Water Corporation Regional Manager Scott Moorhead said the corporation welcomed the opportunity to work with the agencies involved to provide a long term benefit to the region.

"Performing the erosion repairs in

conjunction with the Harvey River Restoration Taskforce has achieved a positive environmental benefit that can be viewed by any that take the opportunity to enjoy the walk trail," he said.

"I'm pleased John Moon and Dave Fergusson from our drainage team were able to lend their expertise to a good cause."

The lower Harvey River project is a joint initiative between the Harvey River Restoration Taskforce, Main Roads WA, Shire of Waroona, Peel Harvey Catchment Council, Water Corporation and Department of Water, and, more recently the South West Catchments Council.

With assistance from their project partners, the Harvey River Restoration Taskforce has been working to revegetate this section of the river to improve wildlife habitat and control river bank erosion.

The restoration work includes the installation of a rock riffle, three rock-protected wetland inlets, and habitat for aquatic fauna.

More recent work has involved the installation of an interpretive trail describing Indigenous and European cultural history, and the ecological significance of the area.

The interpretive trail can be accessed from the Tognella Rest area located at the junction of the Forrest Highway and Dorsett Road in Lake Clifton.



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# People's Choice Award

Voting opens Tuesday 5th June until Tuesday 4th September 2012  
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