

Awards celebrate the bigger picture

THE State and Territory Landcare Awards are open for nominations, offering dedicated Landcarers one of their best opportunities to inspire those within and outside the movement with their own passion.

Landcare awards recognise individuals and groups, National Landcare facilitator Brett de Hayr acknowledges, but in the wider picture it is really about celebrating the volunteer ethos that drives Landcare.

"People in the rural sector, and especially in Landcare, can be reticent about stepping forward for an award because personal recognition isn't part of the culture," Mr de Hayr said.

"But the awards recognise that there is real-life effort, made by real people, doing things that are seldom recognised in places that are seldom recognised.

"We're celebrating what the individuals represent, as much as their own efforts.

"That's why we ask people to nominate – because it's about inspiring others, and putting a face to real-life examples of Landcare."

This year's state and territory awards follow on from the highly

2013 State and Territory Landcare Award Categories

- Individual Landcarer Award
 - Landcare Facilitator or Coordinator Award
 - Innovation in Sustainable Farm Practices Award
 - Partnerships with Landcare Award
 - Junior Landcare Team Award
 - Westpac Agribusiness Innovative Young Landcare Leader Award
 - Indigenous Land Management Award
 - Coastcare Award
 - Qantas Landcare Innovative Community Group Award
- Visit www.landcareonline.com.au for more information, criteria and entry forms. Entries close on June 30, except for the Northern Territory, where they close on August 31.

successful 2012 National Landcare Awards and will decide the finalists for next year's national awards.

The awards also help to put together fragments of endeavour from across Australia and stitch them into a visible whole.

"Sometimes the academic side of the environmental movement accuses Landcare of not being strategic in its conservation efforts," Mr de Hayr said.

"They say that all these little pieces of work are happening in isolation – but forget that all the little pieces come together to make a whole.

"The awards are about connecting those dots.

"People can also forget that governments don't control much of our landscape.

"If we want conservation work to happen in these areas that are not in the national reserve, it's up to people like those who volunteer for Landcare."

Last year's hugely successful national awards were a turning point for the movement, Mr de Hayr believed.

"It showed Landcare has become comfortable with its diversity," he said.

"It's gone from a fairly fixed identity to something that addresses the amorphous nature of the Australian landscape – which is why it is better described as a movement than an inflexible organisation."

In the survey Mr de Hayr conducted last year, about three-quarters of the landholders responded that they felt part of the Landcare movement.

That's not because they all participated in Landcare in traditional ways, Mr de Hayr said, but because "people take out the bits that resonate with them".

"People find their own path into Landcare," he said.

Increasingly, social media is helping Landcare tell the story of that diversity.

However, Mr de Hayr said, for sheer media power, it was hard to beat the sense of collective action conveyed through the Landcare Awards.



Spotlight vital for change

CHRIS Scott, winner of the 2012 National Individual Landcarer award, said that winning the award was a "great honour".

As well as being a committed hands-on Landcarer in the NSW mid-north coast, where he lives, Mr Scott has for years worked at a state and federal level "telling the Landcare story" to politicians and bureaucrats.

It was this advocacy and representation that earned him the award.

"To be selected from among the amazing finalists was important recognition, not just for me but for the teams I work with at a state and local level," he said.

"The award was also valuable in a really practical way; the publicity that winning a national award generated has highlighted our local activities, attracting appreciation and support for what we do in and

with our community."

Mr Scott recognises the importance of selling the Landcare story and celebrating Landcare's achievements.

"We're coming out of the wilderness," he said.

"When politicians turn up at events like the National Landcare Awards, they are amazed at the feeling and the passion they see there. And they want a part in it. The awards are a window into the movement."

Back home in the Manning Valley, Mr Scott is still planting trees.

"The fact that there is the National Landcare Awards, and that someone from Wingham won something in them, may have given us a brief glow of prestige," Mr Scott said, "but after that, you just keep doing the work."



Volunteers encourage people to enter the 2013 State and Territory Landcare Awards.

Landcare Australia's new CEO

LANDCARE Australia has appointed Tessa Jakszewicz as the new Chief Executive Officer, replacing Heather Campbell who held the position from 2009.

Ms Jakszewicz began her new role on April 22.

Ms Jakszewicz brings a wealth of

experience across a number of sectors.

For the past six years, Ms Jakszewicz has been Deputy CEO with the Antarctic Climate and Ecosystems Cooperative Research Centre in Tasmania, where she played an integral role in securing funding and

leading the organisation's science team.

Ms Jakszewicz also holds the position of non-executive director on the Board of Hydro Tasmania, Australia's largest renewable energy business and water manager.

Prior to her current roles, she held senior management and marketing

roles within the information technology and telecommunication industries in both Australia and the UK.

Ms Jakszewicz's previous experience ranged across industry, the not-for-profit sector and research into environmental sustainability, all of which have been informed by

her MBA and Master of Science qualifications.

She is very well placed to lead Landcare Australia Limited in its important roles of promoting the Landcare ethic and assisting the movement through the raising of resources and support for projects.



2013
State & Territory
Landcare Awards



Nominations Now Open!

Do you know an inspirational individual or community group working to protect and restore their local environment? Nominate today!

www.landcareonline.com.au

2013 State & Territory Landcare Awards proudly supported by:



Soil vital for strong food future

By Minister For Agriculture
JOE LUDWIG

SOIL is a vital part of our agricultural productivity and its true value is now in the spotlight.

For too long it was overlooked but now farmers and land managers are realising how important it is for the quality of the food and fibre we produce, as well as the long-term sustainability of our land.

Last year, the Prime Minister announced Major General Michael Jeffery as an advocate for soil health to raise public awareness of just how important soil is.

Through this role Major General Jeffery is also driving the development of soil research and development priorities in consultation with soil scientists, industry and a range of other key stakeholders.

Major General Jeffery has shown strong leadership in this area.

His passion for regional development and the future of our rural industries is an asset to him fulfilling this role.

Improving the profile of soil health and research in this field demonstrates the Australian

Government's commitment to the long-term sustainability of the agricultural sector in an ever-changing climate.

It also reflects the importance our government places on effectively managing Australia's natural resource base as we meet global challenges such as climate change and demand for food.

The global demand for food is unrelenting, bringing enormous opportunities for farmers and land managers.

There are challenges too.

We need to address productivity, while ensuring our natural resources are sustainable and resilient.

This is why the government has committed to continuing Caring for Our Country to 2018 and why we've introduced a Sustainable Agriculture stream.

We want to deliver investment across all forms of production, including agroforestry, grazing, horticulture, fisheries and aquaculture.

While in Western Australia in March I visited table grape producers Tony and Allyson Kuidid at their property in the Swan Valley.

Tony and Allyson have a strong interest in ensuring their production activities don't adversely impact the environment and are closely involved with the Caring for our Country initiative.

I was at their property when I announced the Sustainable Agriculture stream aims, which include sustainable food production, innovation, land management and a skilled community.

Caring for Our Country has already delivered positive outcomes and this new Sustainable Agriculture stream will deliver more between now and 2018.



Minister Ludwig with table grape producers Allyson and Tony Kuidid from Belhus in the Swan Valley, Western Australia.

That includes increasing use of sustainable land management practices, improved ecosystems, resilience to climate change and increasing the number of people with knowledge and skills to manage our natural resources.

That brings me back to soil.

Natural resource management groups across the country get together to share their knowledge and ideas and that same week, I joined Major General Jeffery and others at the Talkin' Soil Health: Invention and Innovation in Soil Management conference held in

York, Western Australia, hosted by Wheatbelt NRM.

This event was an opportunity for farmers, extension officers, researchers and support staff to share soil management stories and learn from practical and shared experiences.

The conference addressed a variety of issues including soil biology, management techniques to address soil degradation processes, soil building techniques and the future of agriculture.

Organisations like the Wheatbelt NRM and the work they do with

local farmers and land managers will help us meet our objectives of the Sustainable Agriculture stream.

I look forward to continuing to meet with and work with groups who do this great work in the Wheatbelt region of WA, as well as in other regions right across this country.

The government is supporting you to build a strong future for agriculture and for natural resource management.

If you haven't already, I encourage you to read Sustainable Agriculture stream – strategic directions 2013-18 available at www.nrm.gov.au

Sustainable Ag

Caring for Our Country's Sustainable Agriculture stream will:

- promote sustainable production of food
 - promote innovation in Australian agriculture and fisheries practices
 - reduce the impact of weeds and pests on agriculture
 - improve management of agriculture and fisheries
 - foster a skilled and capable Landcare community.
- Visit www.nrm.gov.au

Council meet

THE 55th meeting of the Australian Landcare Council was held in Canberra on March 18 and 19.

The council finalised their response to the Community Call for Action, identifying how the council will engage with and support Landcare into the future.

This commitment will be available on the council's webpage shortly, accompanied by responses received to date from other Landcare stakeholders.

Two council research projects – Indigenous Land Management in Australia and the Multiple Benefits of Landcare and Natural Resource Management – have now been completed.

The council will be publishing these reports on their webpage and preparing fact sheets to communicate the outcomes to a broader audience.

A paper written by council member Ella Maesepp entitled *Engaging the 20-something year old in Landcare* is now also available on the council's website, as well as the National Landcare Conference website.

The council would like to acknowledge the contribution and commitment to supporting the Landcare movement of the Hon. Kim Chance and Dr Pamela Brook, both of whom recently resigned from the council.

The council would also like to recognise the significant contribution to Landcare of Heather Campbell, who recently stepped down as CEO of Landcare Australia Limited.

■ For more information on the council's activities, visit www.daff.gov.au/natural-resources/landcare/council

Conservation improvements widespread

THERE have been noticeable improvements in the way our productive lands are being managed, according to new data, released by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

The government, through the Caring for our Country initiative, has funded a range of projects to improve soil condition and better manage on farm biodiversity assets.

These improvements in sustainable farm and land management practices have been monitored through various Censuses and the ABS' biennial Agricultural Resource Management Surveys of agricultural businesses.

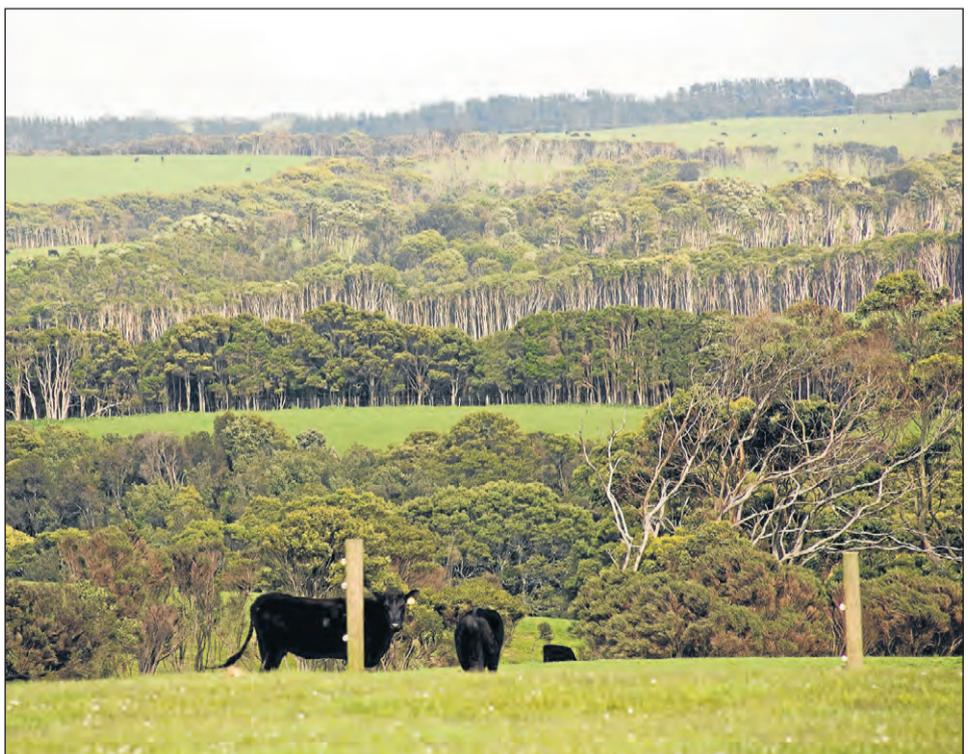
The results are published as a series of fact sheets and show good progress is being made.

The fact sheets contain natural resource management data for each state/territory and each major industry including dairy, horticulture, grazing, cropping and general biodiversity (across all industries).

The number of broadacre cropping farmers using no cultivation (apart from sowing) has increased from 46 to 56 between 2007 and 2010.

In Western Australia, the adoption rate was as high as 78 per cent in 2009-10.

The number of beef and sheep graziers actively monitoring ground cover levels increased from 70pc to



79pc between 2007 and 2010.

The horticulture industry has also improved groundcover levels, with almost a third of all horticulturalists using alternate or cover crops to maintain ground cover levels between their main horticultural plantings in 2009-10.

There is room for improvement in

addressing soil acidification, though.

About 50pc of Australia's agricultural land has a surface soil pH below the optimal level needed to prevent subsoil acidification.

In 2010, between 13pc and 23pc of all farmers across all reported industries were actively managing soil acidification.

Land managers are encouraged to test for soil pH and nutrients and regularly lime soils as well as increase groundcover to reduce erosion risk and increase carbon storage.

■ To find out how your state, region and industry is faring, visit www.daff.gov.au/nrmfactsheets

LEFT: Between 2007 and 2010 ground cover monitoring grew from 51 per cent to 81 per cent in North West Tasmania – the biggest increase in the state.



A group of 20-something volunteers from Perth plant 14,000 trees on a farm near Katanning, Western Australia.

Creating opportunities for Gen Y-ers that care

LANDCARE and other community groups across the country often express frustration about the difficulty of engaging generation Y – the twenty-somethings – and list succession as one of their most pressing issues.

A new report called *Engaging the 20-something year old in Landcare* covers many of the issues critical to getting Gen Y-ers involved in Landcare.

Author of the report Ella Maesepp has been involved with Landcare as a facilitator and volunteer for over 10 years.

Ms Maesepp works on a mixed farming enterprise with her husband in Western Australia and was appointed to the Australian Landcare Council at age 29.

Ms Maesepp said the report was based on her personal experience and drawn from conversations

with peers and younger people.

“I drew on my own experience and what I have learned from talking to young people, and those who work with young people in Landcare, specifically about successfully engaging the 20-somethings in Landcare,” Ms Maesepp said.

“Older Landcare members can feel that young people lack good community and environmental values.

“However, 20-somethings do have these values, they just express them in different ways that may not be as readily recognised.

“Being part of a committee is not a priority for many of today’s 20-somethings – this does not mean that they don’t support Landcare, just that the way they want to do it can often be different to previous generations.

“Landcare groups need to think differently when it comes to engaging with Gen Y.”

Infrequent but repeated engagement with 20-somethings over time would ensure they have a positive Landcare experience that can be built upon, Ms Maesepp said.

“It is an investment in the future.” The report notes 20-somethings would prioritise time for activities that meet their goals in one of four key areas – pushing boundaries; relationships career and business; and personal comforts (including social media).

Groups such as Landcare seeking to engage with 20-somethings should consider how their engagement strategies, and the activities and opportunities they offer young people, align with these four areas.

“Young farmers undertaking Landcare on their own properties are an important group of generation Y within Landcare,” Ms Maesepp said.

“The health of their land is central and they tend to engage either individually or through groups in activities that affect their own farm.”

National Landcare facilitator Brett de Hayr said Gen Y represented many of the social changes being seen within the community.

“Community based movements such as Landcare will need to continue to adapt to these changes,” Mr De Hayr said.

“Landcare has been around now for nearly 25 years, and it is rapidly embracing new ways of doing things and tools such as social media which will help to ensure its ongoing support from the community across the country.”

■ For a copy of the report *Engaging the 20-something year old in Landcare*, visit www.landcarefacilitator.com.au

Join in soil talks without leaving home

AUSTRALIA has some of the oldest and most fragile soils on the planet, but they are the cornerstone of our farming systems.

All the resilience and adaptability of Australian farmers will be needed if the country is to resolve the challenges of producing food and fibre for growing global populations while repairing and improving our landscapes.

A series of webinars (internet-based seminar) have been developed in a collaboration between Soils for Life and the National Landcare Facilitator, to help farmers and others with an interest in land management.

The webinars aim to drive a national conversation around soil health, as well as share information and ideas.

Former Governor General and soil health advocate Michael Jeffery, leading scientists, and farmers from across the country, who are implementing changes on their farms, will be in attendance.

This is a great opportunity to listen to leading figures in the area of soil health and join the interactive question-and-answer session.

Anyone involved in managing our landscapes, including farmers, advisers, Landcare and farming systems groups, consultants, NRM Groups/CMAAs and government departments, should register for these webinars.

The free webinars will run over three consecutive weeks, starting May 22, allowing people from all over the country to join in without having to leave home.

The sessions will be recorded and a link will be sent to all those who register. If you can’t attend on the day, you won’t miss out.

■ For more information or to register visit www.landcarefacilitator.com.au

The Details

Part I – Wednesday, May 22 12.30 (AEST): Healthy Soils – why is this important, what is the science telling us and a view from on the ground

- Michael Jeffery – former Governor General and Soils Advocate: Why is the issue of soil health important?
- Mike Grundy/Neil McKenzie – CSIRO scientists – What are the components of healthy soils and the outcomes required?
- David Marsh – grazer and Landcare coordinator – The view from “on the ground”.
- Q and A

Part II – Wednesday, May 29:

How do we practically regenerate our soil health? (diagnosis, identifying the limiting factors, making change, observing, adjusting methodology)

Part III – Wednesday, June 5:

How do we measure and extend effective practises to achieve strategic aims?

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



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That’s why, since 2008 more than 1500 grants have been provided through the Coles Junior Landcare Garden Grants program, to help Aussie schools and community groups establish their own garden projects.

coles.com.au/helpingaustraliagrow





The Swan River Trust Alcoa Landcare Program recently got together to celebrate 15 years of partnership.

SALP's long-lasting Landcare legacy

OVER 15 years, the unique partnership between Alcoa of Australia, Swan River Trust and Perth Region Natural Resource Management has grown into one of Australia's longest running landcare programs.

To date, the Swan River Trust and Alcoa Landcare Program (SALP) has funded more than 1000 projects across the Perth metropolitan area.

Through the years, SALP volunteers have generously contributed more than 155,000 hours, worth about \$3 million, to many on-ground activities.

They have planted two million trees,

revegetated almost 1800 hectares of degraded land and installed more than 5800 kilometres of fencing since the program's inception.

By providing funding to community groups, SALP has supported many activities that have protected surface and groundwater and biodiversity in coastal, wetland, riparian and terrestrial vegetation sites.

This has led to the improvement of Perth's wetlands, creation of suburban recreational areas and restoration of native animal habitats.

The program has also helped make positive changes to people's lives by providing local families and volun-

teers with meaningful career paths that have sometimes culminated in senior roles with State and international environmental organisations.

Alcoa's managing director Alan Cransberg believes this community and volunteer involvement has played a key role in the success of SALP.

"Many volunteers have been with SALP since the start and the success of the program can be attributed to their commitment," he said.

"A wetland restored, a piece of bush protected, a stretch of river stream-lined, a drain transformed, a habitat created, an attitude changed and a

vision shared – that's their legacy.

"Programs and processes come and go but it's people that make a difference and at Alcoa we feel privileged to partner with such a dedicated group."

This year, Alcoa of Australia also celebrates its 50 anniversary since starting operations in 1963; an achievement that has seen Alcoa proudly invest in Western Australian communities for half a decade.

Through the years, Alcoa has contributed to the nation's economic and social prosperity, through royalty and tax payments, local purchasing, jobs and wages, but it's the regional

communities in which Alcoa operates that are the real beneficiaries.

Each year, Alcoa invests approximately \$5 million in a variety of community programs and dedicates thousands of hours in volunteering time.

This investment offers Alcoa the opportunity to give back to the community and demonstrate its gratitude in the support of the local communities in which it operates.

Alcoa is grateful for the opportunity to be a founding member in the SALP partnership and proudly recognises the contribution it has made to our great state.



Help out and discover the outback

QUEENSLAND Water and Land Carers Group (QWALC) is taking an innovative approach to a prickly problem, calling on travelling volunteers such as grey nomads and backpackers to help stamp out destructive weeds.

In a new community project in Muttaborra, north of Longreach, QWALC has set its sights on eradicating three types of nasty weeds – the black (prickly) acacia, parkinsonia and the rubber vine.

QWALC vice-chair Rhonda Alexander said the flexible conservation program, running from April to June this year, was aimed at volunteers of all ages and backgrounds.

"The Muttaborra Weeds Project is a great opportunity for volunteers with both a green heart and a green thumb to be part of something very special," Ms Alexander said.

"It's not only a chance for participants to explore a new part of Queensland's outback, but they can also know they're helping conserve Queensland's environment."

The project is important for the future of grazing lands, not just in Queensland, but across Australia, as these weed species can spread easily through cattle and birdlife, via vigorous seeds.

"We're calling on all volunteers who are keen to help protect Queensland's environment to register for the scheme," Ms Alexander said.

"It's a great opportunity to make new friends and have fun in Queensland's outback."

QWALC believes the project could appeal to a range of people, including grey nomads, backpackers, caravaners, campers and volunteer enthusiasts in general.

"Muttaborra is located 120 kilome-

tres north of Longreach and, in the cooler autumn months of April to June, will offer some spectacular scenery after the summer rains," Ms Alexander said.

"It's also situated in the heart of dinosaur country – one of the world's richest sources of fossilised dinosaur bones.

"All participants will receive training and lunch each day, so this really is a great chance to give something back while off the beaten track and help protect the land for our future generations."

The Muttaborra Weeds Project has two more meeting dates: May 6 and June 1.

Participants must register with Green Nomads, an initiative of QWALC, before being part of the project.

■ For more information or to register go to www.greennomads.com.au

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Addressing soil acidity in WA

HUNDREDS of growers in Western Australia are learning more about soil acidification and how to manage it on-farm, through a successful soil monitoring and testing program.

Soil acidification is a key challenge for graingrowers in the state's sandy southwest.

With \$978 000 funding from the Australian Government's Caring for Country initiative to date, the Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia (DAFWA) have implemented the highly successful Improving Soil Acidity Management program, which seeks to improve early identification and management of soil acidification.

The Problem

SOIL acidification affects about 50 per cent of agricultural land in Australia and DAFWA estimates it results in between \$400 and \$500 million lost productivity annually.

The 2007 National Land and Water Resources Audit identified soil pH as a key indicator of Australia's soil condition.

The audit stressed that a decline in pH (soil acidification) affects the sustainability and productivity of farming systems, as well as biodiversity and the ability of the soil to provide valuable ecosystem services.

Soil acidification contributes to poor plant growth, and the inefficient use of soil nutrients and can lead to some metals (such as aluminium) being mobilised at toxic levels.

The secondary effects of soil acidity include low levels of groundcover and poor soil structure, which increases the susceptibility of soil to wind erosion.

Acidification develops slowly, has subtle symptoms and can lead to irreversible damage if not addressed.

Although naturally occurring, soil acidification can be accelerated by agricultural activity.

Acidification of the subsoil (the layers under the topsoil, or below approximately 10 centimetres) is of particular concern.

While growers in Western Australia regularly sample their topsoil to inform their fertiliser decisions, relatively few of them sample the subsoil layer for acidity.

The health of subsoil layers has long-term implications for soil health, agricultural productivity and the provision of ecosystem services.

Soil acidification in the subsoil layer is more difficult to remediate than acidity in the topsoil.

Intensively managed grazing land is of moderate to high risk of experiencing soil acidification.

Land which is regularly fertilised is also at risk, particularly in soil types that have a low resistance to pH change.

Farmers with this land profile have been encouraged to monitor their subsoil for changes in acidity.

Understanding the pH profile of the soil (to 30cm depth) allows for a more precise lime recommendation.

The amount of lime used national-

ly has been steadily increasing, but remains far below the levels required to recover and maintain soil at target pH levels.

Better information about the extent of problem acidity will allow farmers to apply the right amount of lime at the right time, to effectively manage soil pH.



While growers in Western Australia regularly sample their topsoil to inform their fertiliser decisions, relatively few of them sample the subsoil layer for acidity

Supporting growers to find a solution

THE impact of soil acidity can be managed if growers are aware of their soil's condition and are informed enough to develop effective management plans.

The Improving Soil Acidity Management program seeks to address this, in conjunction with other Caring for Country programs.

To improve soil acidification monitoring and management, DAFWA, in collaboration with soil sampling service provider Precision SoilTech, has been running the Improving Soil Acidity Management program since April 2011.

The program aims to support growers to monitor and improve management of soil acidification in WA.

The program is carried out in three stages.

Growers first attend a preliminary meeting where baseline information on their current practices is collected. Then they can participate in on-farm soil sampling and testing.

Finally, workshops are held to interpret soil sampling results and grow-

ers are consulted in the development of a 10-year soil acidity management plan.

Growers are taught how to calculate the amount of lime needed and how to choose the most cost-effective lime source.

These results can be applied on the individual grower's property and management suggestions can be shared and applied to other growers in the region.

The soil sampling component of the project is a key driver of grower participation and learning.

Sampling costs are shared.

The program pays for the collection and analysis of samples from the 10-20cm and 20-30cm subsurface soil layers, and the grower pays for the collection and analysis of the topsoil (0-10cm) layer.

Testing the soil between 10cm and

30cm depth is an important practice that enables growers to reduce the risk of subsurface soil acidification.

The Improving Soil Acidity Management program shows structured learning and a demonstration approach to this challenging issue can achieve great results.

The partnership approach means vast improvements in soil monitoring and management of soil acidification are expected, which will increase land productivity and environmental health.

To date, the program has provided advice to more than 1000 growers and assisted more than 300 growers to adopt improved soil acidity management practices.

The program is expected to run until June 30, 2013, and has been highly successful in achieving the Caring for Country objectives of improving management practices and improving knowledge and skills.

Caring for our Country has a suite of similar programs running across the country.

These initiatives seek to increase the uptake of sustainable farm and land management practices that will deliver improved ecosystem services.

The primary means to achieve this is in collaboration with farmers, to build their knowledge and skills required to deliver better stewardship of the land.

■ For more information about Caring for our Country, visit www.nrm.gov.au

Agreements a win-win for conservation and ag in NT

SINCE Northern Territory landholders began signing up in September, 12,000 hectares of the Territory has been placed under 15 conservation agreements with Territory Natural Resource Management (Territory NRM).

Territory Conservation Agreements (TCA) are voluntary.

Landholders approach Territory NRM with a site proposal for land with high conservation values.

Several pastoral properties and some rural blocks are now being managed under these agreements.

Most of these special sites include wetlands and swamps which are a haven for native wildlife, including vulnerable species and a spectacular array of birdlife.

Garry Riggs, a pastoralist from Lakefield Station, said the main aim of the Lakefield TCA was to protect and manage the station waterholes as a vital water source and habitat for native species.

"It means we can protect our water holes, manage our land better through grazing management and look after these habitats," Mr Riggs said.

Not only is this TCA helping to sustain native wildlife on the station, but it has also led to a positive impact on the station's bottom line.

Under their TCA, the Riggs received \$48,000 funding towards fencing off the Flying Fox wetlands to reduce the impact of cattle, and are undertaking improved grazing management techniques, partially through the provision of alternative watering points for cattle.

This has led to significant savings in one season through increasing water efficiency, and through the use of water soluble supplements rather than dry supplements.



The Riggs Family from Lakefield Station with Indonesian exchange students.

The 10-year agreements are voluntary and worked out between the landholders and Territory NRM.

Management actions may include:

- site conservation
- planning grazing and fire management
- weed eradication
- soil erosion and stabilisation

- revegetation
- improvement of water resources and quality.

Territory NRM executive officer Karen May said the success of the program could be attributed to the approach taken by Territory NRM staff.

"We're here to help. Our staff will

work with land managers to draw up site plans and develop management actions and support them through the TCA process to make it as painless as possible."

Ms May also noted that increasingly, land managers were looking at innovative ways to improve production and incorporate conservation

into their management techniques.

"TCAs are not about locking up land, but improving land management practices in the long term, leading to sustainable use and long term benefits for the landholder and the environment."

■ Visit www.territorynrm.org.au/funding/tcas for more information.

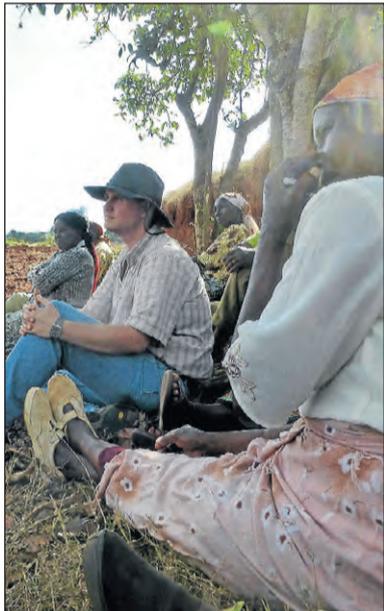
Landcare in Africa – not so different

By CLINTON MULLER

ON THE surface, sitting in the shade of a silky oak discussing conservation cropping and agroforestry practices with a Landcare group doesn't seem all that far from the discussions I used to have with Landcare groups in Queensland and Victoria.

Put into perspective that I'm sitting in the semi arid hills of the Machakos district, just east of Nairobi in Kenya, surrounded by Mamas dressed in colourful kangas and a World Food Programme vehicle driving around assessing food security, and the reality is the world I'm in is a far cry from home.

Through the Australian Volunteers for International Development program, an Australian Government,



Clinton Muller with Landcare group members in Machakos, Kenya.

AusAID initiative, I've been fortunate to be placed with the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), working with the African Landcare Network and Landcare International.

From my experience, I've found that whilst there are significant differences and challenges for Landcare in Africa, there are many similarities to the Australian model – and not just because of the prolific use of Australian trees.

For those interested in a brief history of Landcare in Africa, the movement was first established in 1997 in South Africa as a whole of government program following a study tour of representatives from the South African government to Australia.

Landcare next appeared in Uganda in 2001 through ICRAF researchers who shared their experiences with the community engagement model from the Philippines. They identified value in applying the approach to address common environmental problems of soil erosion, degrading wetlands and biodiversity loss in Uganda.

The successful results of Landcare in Uganda prompted an expansion of the model into neighbouring East African countries including Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Rwanda. Growing interest and adoption of Landcare eventually culminated in the formation of the African Landcare Network in 2006. Now more than 16 African countries have engaged with the movement across the continent, from Liberia to Zambia.

The African Landcare Network operates similarly to the State based Landcare networks in Australia.

Rather than CMAs or regional NRM bodies, the network engages at a country level, with individual countries demonstrating varied



African Landcare Network members at the 5th Biannual RSA Landcare Conference, Mafikeng, North West Province, South Africa. Standing, from left: Rob Youl, Australian Landcare International; Ndeshi Munisi, Tanzania; Awadh Chemangei, Uganda; Alexandre Kayitare, Rwanda; Edward Kateiya Kenya; Joseph Mutua Kenya; Arnold Musoki, Zimbabwe; Richard Musoyo, Zambia; Wakulira Mathias, Uganda; Clinton Muller. Front, from left: Anderson Kawejere, Malawi; Marie Assumpta Adusabire, Rwanda.

Landcare models including whole of government, chapter (network) based, and NGO or project based groups.

Individual Landcare groups within countries work on a range of activities, focussed largely around sustainable agriculture systems as in Australia.

However, the extra pressures of food insecurity and the need to improve livelihoods plays a much more significant role in the focus of groups in Africa.

Like Australia though, each group often has their own specific area of interest.

One of my first tasks was to compile

a leaflet for Landcare in Nigeria on their work to conserve an endemic Nigerian monkey species known locally as nsombo ebok through educating local farmers on the species and revegetation activities.

Another group in Zimbabwe has been working on gully restoration projects to address the loss of cropping land through active soil erosion to address issues of food security.

As sitting on a hill discussing Landcare projects appears, on the surface at least, like the activities of Landcare groups in Australia, in Africa there is an underlying sense of importance and urgency.

The collective efforts of community groups to address challenges around land degradation, agricultural productivity and water quality has much more immediate outcomes – securing food resources, supporting reliable and potable water supplies and wealth-earning potential.

This reflection does not diminish the importance of securing Australia's resources for the future through Landcare.

It does, however, highlight the importance of Landcare as an internationally relevant model to empower communities to work together to achieve great things.

Book to help boost on-farm biodiversity

CONSERVING and enhancing native biodiversity on farms brings many benefits as well as providing many challenges.

Nature and Farming, co-written by University of New England professor Nick Reid, explains why it is important to sustain native plants and animals in agricultural landscapes, and outlines the key issues in developing and implementing practical approaches to safeguarding native biodiversity in rural areas.

The book considers the range of ecological and agricultural issues that determine what native biodiversity occurs in farmland and how it can be secured.

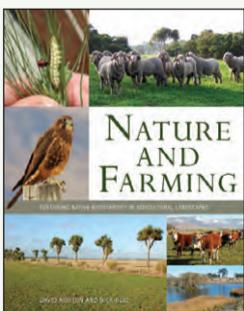
Inspiring case studies are presented where innovative approaches towards integrating biodiversity and farm management have been successful, resulting in win-win outcomes for both nature and society.

In the integration and synthesis of these case

studies lies the kernel of a new paradigm for nature conservation on farms.

Nature and Farming:

- Explains why the issue of native biodiversity decline in agricultural landscapes is of such importance;
- Describes in plain English the theory of biodiversity in farmscapes;
- Presents inspiring examples of native biodiversity conservation in Australian and



New Zealand rural landscapes, demonstrating that the variety of successful approaches are as diverse as the biota they conserve;

- Provides a wealth of ideas, and inspiration, for practitioners (farmers, on-ground conservationists) and policy makers;
- Provides evidence-based advice for the rural community, conservationists, decision makers and society generally about moving forward in terms of sustaining native biodiversity and securing its conservation in farming regions.

■ Visit www.publish.csiro.au

Flora and fauna roaming the ranges

ACROSS the fragmented farm landscapes of south-west Western Australia, a partnership has built a wildlife corridor to allow species to freely move between the Porongurups and the Stirling Ranges.

Mt Barker Chicken, Landcare Australia and the Oyster Harbour Catchment Group got together to construct the protected wildlife corridor north of Albany.

Over the three years the project took place more than 100km of fencing was erected to protect streams and remnant native vegetation, and to protect 50 ha of newly-planted native vegetation.

The landscape linkages help give a safe passage to native birds and animals moving between the national parks.

Endangered species of note in the project area include the Brush Wallaby (Black Glove Wallaby), Carnaby's Cockatoo, Carpet Snake, Bardic Snake, Western Quoll, Mallee Fowl, Firetail Finch, Echidna and Blue Tongue Skink, with many others.

Oyster Harbour group has an ongoing project to collect local provenance seed to support the revegetation of the diverse soil types within the project area.

Many of these species are locally indigenous, like Stirlings Orange Buttercup (*Hibbertia selkii*) Pretty Yate (*Eucalyptus talyuberlup*), and Kamballup Dryandra (*Dryandra ionthocarpa*).

The project has involved university and high school students, landholders, local Noongar people, and the local junior football club.



Medical students helped plant seedlings in winter 2011.

A very successful Ranges Link information day was held in late 2011 where a wide range of people attended, including Mt Barker chicken staff, to learn about the project and its achievements.

"Mt Barker Chicken is committed to

environmental sustainability in the region and we are very proud to be able to support these crucial projects which will reconnect the ecological areas between the Porongurup and Stirling Ranges," said Mt Barker Chicken's general manager Mark Rintoul.

Woody Yaloak sharing success

By National Landcare Facilitator BRETT DE HAYR

IN THE long Landcare tradition of groups sharing information and learning from each other, the Woody Yaloak Catchment Group (WYCG) in Victoria is widely recognised as one of the most innovative and successful.

The group formed in 1992 with the merger of four existing Landcare groups.

Now it encompasses seven groups which remain autonomous, running their own local activities and projects when required, but with co-ordination for funding and reporting mainly through the WYCG.

The Woody Yaloak catchment is near Ballarat, in south west Victoria and covers about 120,000 hectares of land.

It is also home to more than 200 commercial farms and a large population of small lifestyle block owners.

In the group's own words, "The WYCG acts as a broker. We create and deliver programs at the catchment level to achieve desired outcomes for government and landholders".

"Our 'hook' is productive catchment management. That is, undertaking production and conservation activities in parallel."

Since its inception, the WYCG has achieved a high level of landholder

participation – on average, 65 per cent per year.

This has been a critical factor in the success of the WYCG.

Like many areas of Australia, most land in the catchment (80 per cent), is privately managed.

For things to happen, it mostly needs to occur on private land.

As WYCG pithily puts it: "If private landholders are not engaged, then we're stuffed".

During the 1980s, it became evident to landholders in the catchment that degradation of the natural resource was undermining the productive capacity of the area.

Salinity, erosion, vermin and weeds were impacting on agricultural production and reducing farm profitability.

The initial four Landcare groups formed the WYCG in 1991, and three more Landcare groups formed in the mid 1990s.

Together they developed a plan to accelerate the adoption of on-farm Landcare solutions.

The plan involved erosion control, rabbit control, tree planting and establishing deep-rooted perennial pastures.

From the beginning the group had a strong focus on its motto, "productive catchment management".

The structure and function of the Woody Yaloak Project has evolved over time, constantly changing and



LEFT: The Woody Yaloak Community celebrated 20 years in 2012.

adapting to maintain its relevance to the community and meet the challenges presented by the political and social climate.

The WYCG says performing the brokering role is not that hard if you follow a few simple extension rules:

- Nobody likes having things done to them without their consent (private individuals, business or government). Programs need to be built with the end users involved at the start, not at the end.

- Ask, don't assume. Never try to guess what is the best way to get a result – make the effort to find out.

- "If you show an interest in me I'll show an interest in you" – building enduring partnerships and trust is a two-way street. If we want people to be interested in our

programs, we need to be interested in their local needs.

- Never lose sight of why the group formed in the first place and stay true to these reasons. Chasing funding that doesn't meet the core objectives for the group is a recipe for disaster.

The WYCG runs a simple test: "if you get it wrong – people don't participate."

The WYCG is able to demonstrate the effectiveness of its philosophy with a string of impressive results.

Landholder participation in Landcare activities increased from less than 20pc in 1992 and now sits at over 65pc.

In its first five years of operation alone more than 4000ha of pastures were sown, 135ha of trees established, 2000 rabbits killed and

40ha of erosion stabilised.

The impact on farmers has also been significant.

In 1990, the gross income of farmers in the Woody Yaloak catchment was estimated to be 20 per cent below farmers in the South West Victoria Monitor Farm Project; 10 years later, the gross income of Woody Yaloak farmers was estimated to be almost 10pc higher than farmers in the Monitor Farm Project.

In 1990, 55pc of the group's landholders said they had made no progress or very poor progress in Landcare, but by 2000, the "no" or "poor" progress response reduced to only 5pc.

The WYCG is currently updating this survey and the results are expected in the next few months.



Volunteers helping to fence off a waterway at Glenburn.

Support flows for Black Saturday rebuild

THE "Black Saturday" fires of February 7, 2009, devastated large parts of the Upper Goulburn Landcare Network region.

Since that time the Landcare network has been helping the community and natural environment, working closely with landholders to undertake the mammoth task of rebuilding and rehabilitating a charred landscape.

The projects are ongoing, but to date the projects have involved 5660 volunteers contributing 6567 volunteer days to achieve great outcomes.

The Landcare Network received funding through the federal government's Caring for our Country and Recycling for Recovery programs.

The fencing project Fencers without Boundaries has recently finished the last year of a major fencing effort to protect native habitats such as waterways, native vegetation and revegetation sites.

After more than three years of hard work, many volunteers have contributed to:

- The removal of burnt fencing and rebuilt 246 kilometres of fencing on fire-affected properties

- Revegetated 128 hectares of land with 38,290 trees and shrubs

- Treated 375ha of land for woody weeds

- Installed 417 nest boxes to provide shelter and nesting sites for native birds and animals

In addition, hundreds of landowners have attended field days, farm chemical user and weed identification training courses to enhance their natural resource management skills and knowledge.

Other projects the network has undertaken following the fires include:

- Managing pest plants and animals on private land following the fires, a focus on significantly reducing existing and new pest populations provided native species the chance to establish and out-compete pest species during the regeneration phase of fire recovery.

- Managing your patch of bush proj-

ect: provided information of best practice land management in a post-fire environment and supported communities with one-on-one, independent, sustainable property management planning.

- The Lorax project: propagating of seedlings of local provenance for use in our revegetation project to help areas devastated by the fires.

The fire recovery effort has been able to put tens of thousands of dollars back into the local community and small business by sourcing local hotel and bunkhouse accommodation, catering for volunteers, and buying quality tools, hardware safety wear and PPE from local suppliers.

The success of these projects has demonstrated the power of volunteerism.

The overwhelming support from local businesses and corporate organisations, plus an enormous number of volunteer hours contributed to the rebuilding, has significantly assisted the region and the morale of fire-devastated communities.

Perfect Patch of Green Grants

Turf Australia in partnership with Junior Landcare is giving 15 schools or youth groups the opportunity to experience a real green makeover for children and young people to enjoy.

The natural turf will be supplied and laid by local turf growers to make a positive difference to "outdoor classrooms", including play grounds to kids sport areas.

For more information and to download the Perfect Patch of Green Program Expression of Interest Form visit www.juniorlandcare.com.au



In Brief

Help the honey bee: Every Australian can help boost the survival of honey bees and protect the food we eat that depends on their pollination services, by growing the right plants and trees.

A new guide is now available, highlighting pollen and nectar planting choices from the backyard to the bush which will provide food for honeybees.

Everyone can make a difference by considering bees when they are planning small and large scale planting.

Chairman of the Pollination Program Research and Development Advisory Committee Gerald Martin says there's increasing public concern for the well-being and survival of global honey bee populations, so this guide is timely.

"Three-quarters of agricultural production is reliant on pollination by bees to produce fruit, vegetables and seeds and honey bees are coming under increasing pressure from urbanisation, bushfires, changing agricultural practices and changing land management practises," Mr Martin said.

"Pests and diseases are an ever increasing threat, including the deadly bee pest Varroa mite which has wreaked havoc across the globe.

"Australia is one of the last countries free of the mite but it is accepted by scientists that it will eventually reach our shores.

"Small hive beetle and American foulbrood are major pests that our beekeepers already have to manage."

The guide lists herbs, shrubs, trees and other plants, broken up into suggestions for domestic gardens, streetscapes, urban open spaces, rural environments and stationary beekeeping, and further categorised by type of climate.

Growing plants that provide food for honey bees can be accomplished at any scale, from a pot of herbs on a balcony to thousands of hectares of revegetation or pastures.

Many of these plants are also beneficial to a range of other insects, birds and small mammals that live on nectar and pollen.

The guide has been developed with funding from the Honeybee Program, which is managed by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC).

Bee Friendly – A planting guide for European honeybees and Australian native pollinators is available to download free from the RIRDC website at www.rirdc.gov.au/pollination. Hard copies can also be ordered online.

LIFE needs your input:

Does your group need some new volunteers or maybe you have a one-off project that requires some additional support?

Have you been involved in a great project and would like to share your story?

You can now actively search for volunteers by posting an ad on our new LIFE Jobs Board.

It's free and easy to use and will help get the word out there to people who want to get involved in Landcare.

Our new LIFE Stories section is all about sharing the fantastic stories that are out there in the Landcare community.

Simply submit your 300-word story and a video or photo to accompany it and it will be shared for everyone to enjoy.

Visit www.landcarelife.com.au to see how you can get involved with LIFE!



Emily from NSW National Parks works with volunteers on water quality projects in Sydney Harbour.

New partnership to help preserve natural beauty

A NEW partnership between Landcare Australia and Neutrogena® Naturals will see three major water improvement projects supported along Australia's east coast.

Australia is home to one of the most diverse and unique coastal marine ecosystems on earth.

The temperate east coast of Australia in particular has some of the highest numbers of species in the world.

However, human impacts such as climate change, pollution, habitat loss and invasive species severely threaten the future of these ecosystems.

The aquatic ecosystem conservation projects funded by Neutrogena® Naturals will support Landcare, Coastcare and Beach Care groups working on and along various waterways, including coastal and river systems.

Community action and education activities that promote and care for

Australia's unique aquatic ecosystem and waterways will also be supported.

Sydney Harbour is home to superb swimming spots, bushwalking tracks and picnic areas, which offer a wide range of activities, and consequently are experiencing increasing levels of human traffic.

These harbourside areas and coastal zones contain some of Australia's most fragile and valuable natural habitats, all of which require ongoing conservation and regeneration work to help mitigate against the effects of increased visitation.

One of the projects funded through the partnership will help control weeds and, as a result, allow native plants like gum trees, wattles and bottlebrushes to grow back more successfully.

This in turn may help to improve the overall water quality and increase local numbers of native fish and birds in and around Sydney Harbour.

As part of this project, Landcare volunteers will combine their enjoyment of outdoor adventure activities, with conservation volunteering.

Volunteer groups and Rangers from National Parks NSW will work together to rehabilitate native bushland across several islands, national parks and foreshore areas around Sydney harbour.

Pressures on the environment are also being seen on the Gold Coast in Queensland as urbanisation puts strain on the aquatic ecosystem.

Neutrogena® Naturals will be helping BeachCare volunteers in this area by supporting activities which will contribute to preserving native biodiversity.

The Currumbin to Cobaki wetlands habitat corridor is considered to be of national significance for nature conservation because of its high diversity of flora and fauna.

Volunteers will help protect vegeta-

tion that provides important habitat for resident and migratory fauna.

In Victoria, the Yarra River is Melbourne's most important natural asset but with the expansion of the city the river is under stress from urbanisation.

Through the partnership, a number of "friends of" groups along the Yarra River will help to improve water quality by removing noxious and exotic weeds and reduce riverbank erosion by planting native fauna.

Neutrogena® Naturals produces naturally-derived skincare products, and as part of its commitment to the environment also sources packaging and other materials from environmentally-friendly sources.

Neutrogena® Naturals regards its new partnership with Landcare Australia as aligned with its key principles, values and commitment to real results and long-lasting change for the cause of protecting clean water.

Basalt to Bay's mission to save agricultural ally

AMONG the many allies of farmers that shelter in crown land is the southern brown bandicoot.

This endangered rabbit-sized animal is a vigorous consumer of pest insects, a service it provides without interfering with farm production or bothering stock.

But the bandicoot is endangered.

Where it does remain, it is under threat from foxes and lack of places to feed under cover.

In a recent survey funded by Pacific Hydro using remote fauna cameras, the Basalt to Bay Landcare Network confirmed that the southern brown bandicoot still lives in the St Helens Reserve, a 30-hectare remnant managed by Parks Victoria.

This is an opportunity for Landcare to engineer a conservation program around the endangered species.

In Landcare, one of the premises behind increased native vegetation is to provide homes and links which will allow the native creatures who can



Image of a bandicoot at night taken by a fauna camera set up in St Helens Reserve.

benefit agriculture to re-colonise agricultural land.

In places where endangered native fauna is remaining, what helps the natives can be a strong case for helping existing agriculture in a mutual benefits relationship.

The aim is to devise a program at St Helens Reserve in which the bandicoots will win and so will the local farms.

The losing team will be the foxes and feral cats.

At St Helens, Landcare is building a project to support fox control all

around the Parks Victoria site, using the land around the reserve as the buffer to remove the fox threat from the reserve in the short to medium term.

Then Landcare will do further work with the same landholders to build biodiversity links that provide the resident bandicoots pathways out of the reserve.

Investment in protection of bandicoot habitat needs in the wider area of St Helens is also likely, and this could draw in participation in protection and pest management planning with the Indigenous Protected Area at Yambuk as well as the Orford/St Helens Blue Gum Plantations.

The Basalt to Bay group hopes that in considering the needs of the endangered species at the same time as the needs of the local landholders, it will create a more sustainable and resilient livestock protection program – only in this scenario the livestock is both sheep and bandicoots.

Grants help to grow food for thought

COLES and Junior Landcare have distributed 81 grants in Round 1, 2013, totalling more than \$75,000, to schools, childcare centres and community groups around the country for educational garden projects.

The projects brought to life include a bush tucker garden in Belmont North, NSW, a sustainable tropical market garden in Yungaburra, Queensland, and a canteen kitchen garden in Albany, Western Australia.

One grant recipient from South Australia believes their new garden will be a way for kids to learn about more than just gardening.

"The kindergarten is built on the traditional lands of the Kurna people," a representative said.

"So we would also like to introduce some bush foods into our garden so children can develop an understanding of how Aboriginal people lived off the land."

Coles and Junior Landcare will be offering two more rounds of garden grants this year, and all schools, kindergartens, childcare centres and community groups involved with young people are encouraged to apply.

Landcare Australia partnerships manager Amy Gillett is excited to give kids the opportunity to have a fun learning experience outside the classroom.

"Coles and Junior Landcare have funded over 1600 gardens since 2008 and it's fantastic to see the positive impact this program is having around the country," she said.

"Children who are involved in these gardens have an appreciation of where their food comes from, their local environment and sustainable living."

The next round of applications for the Coles Junior Landcare Garden Grant program closes on Friday, May 10.

■ For more information and to download an application form visit www.juniorlandcare.com.au



Cooking up a healthy message at Alice Springs

THE origins of food and the value of healthy eating have been demonstrated to Grade 3 students at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Catholic College in Alice Springs thanks to a Coles Junior Landcare grant.

With the grant, the school established a vegetable and herb garden, a chicken coop and a small fruit orchard for students to cultivate and enjoy fresh organic produce.

"The garden is an invaluable tool for students to learn about healthy eating and understanding the food chain from the farm to our dinner table," said Grade 3 teacher Tom Gosling.

"Some of the favourite exercises for students have been cooking meals using the organic produce from the garden,

which have included broccoli soup, stir fry vegetables, fruit muffins, bruschetta, omelettes, silver beet and spinach quiche and egg and lettuce sandwiches."

The garden has also been a major part of the curriculum for one of the grade three classes.

Around the garden's development, the students have completed numerous writing exercises covering different genres, and completed a diverse range of mathematic concepts, design and technology tasks and art activities.

The garden has also taught students the practicalities of maintaining a successful vegetable garden, such as watering, weeding and pest management.

Students established a compost bin using

garden scraps and this played an important role in their learning about landfill waste and how food decomposes.

Along with the compost bin, the students had a worm farm where lunchtime scraps were fed to the worms in return for their castings and juice.

However, the students agree that if you want a bumper harvest from your next crop then you should get some chickens.

The clucky mates Sophie, Snow, Freckles and Molly have done an amazing job making sure the garden has enough fertiliser to help the produce grow.

Their eggs are tasty too!

Pictured are Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Catholic College "rakestars" working in the community garden.



A team from Konica Minolta at last year's inaugural Landcare Australia Corporate Challenge Day held at Goat Island in Sydney Harbour. Konica Minolta is the proud sponsor of this year's Corporate Volunteer Challenge Day in Middle Head National Park.

Creating corporate carers

LANDCARE volunteers aren't just those who live in the environments they are restoring.

During the past 18 months, more than 3000 corporate employees have volunteered a hard day's work with a range of host Landcare, Bushcare and Coastcare groups across Australia.

Landcare Australia's Corporate Environmental Volunteer (CEV) Program is aimed at providing hands-on Landcaring by connecting employees with grassroots volunteer organisations to lend a hand.

In turn, employees provide valuable time, energy and smiles on projects from Cottesloe Beach in Perth to Bel-

lerive Bluff in Tasmania, and many locations in between.

LAL's CEV program also provides funds to the groups that host the days, allowing groups to purchase new tools, resources and undertake training to further their on-ground works.

Teams of employees work alongside local volunteers who share their skills, knowledge and tools to impress on their fellow volunteers the importance of our natural resources.

Recently Landcare Australia invited its corporate partners and Workplace Giving partners to sign up a team of employees for Landcare Australia's Corporate Volunteer Challenge

Day, to be held at Sydney's Middle Head National Park.

The event will be held on May 17 and more than 130 employees are expected to be involved on the day.

Landcare Australia's Corporate Volunteer and Challenge Days are great networking and team building events where employees have the opportunity to bond while spending time in the great outdoors.

■ If your group is interested in hosting employee volunteer days with Landcare Australia, or would like advice on approaching businesses in your area, contact odessa.obrien@landcareaustralia.com.au or contact (02) 8840 8812.



Workplace Giving Partners...Thank you!

Landcare Australia's corporate supporters and their employees understand that together we can make a positive difference to our natural environment.

Generous donations to Landcare Australia from workplace givers all around the country are pooled to maximise on-ground environmental benefits and support volunteers' efforts.

To find out more about Landcare Australia's Workplace Giving Program visit www.landcareonline.com.au/workplacegiving

Lessons from the oceans

OCEAN Crusaders are out to raise awareness of the issues our oceans are facing by educating primary school students around the world through a free online program.

The program allows teachers and parents to download 13 lessons from the Ocean Crusaders website to present to their students or children, and includes free activities on most lessons.

Students will learn about the oceans, the creatures in it, the hazards they face and how students can change things in their everyday life to make a difference.

Ian Thomson (pictured below) founded the Ocean Crusaders campaign in 2010 after finding one too many turtles in the Whitsunday Islands that had died from eating plastic or entanglement in rubbish.

Wanting to make a difference, Ian first raised his profile by smashing the around-Australia solo circumnavigation world record by a whopping 26 days.

On the back of the publicity, he set about educating students across Australia on the threats to our oceans.

The program has now spread to New Zealand, Canada, USA, Belize and South Africa, reaching hundreds of thousands of students.

■ Visit www.oceancrusaders.org for more information.



Christopher Cole, Cook's Myall Landcare Group.

Perfecting pastures for sustainable production

A GROUP of NSW farmers is researching pasture mixes designed to produce quality beef and lamb with a low carbon footprint.

Their efforts will help provide consumers with a consistent, good quality red meat experience and the knowledge that standards for tenderness, juiciness and flavour are being met in an environmentally-friendly way.

The Cook's Myalls Landcare Group is trialling a range of subtropical perennial grasses, supported by a Woolworths Fresh Food Future grant administered by Landcare Australia.

Between them, the 21 group members manage 15,000 hectares of mixed farming country just west of Parkes.

Their pastures are traditionally based on clover and lucerne mixes.

Cook's Myalls Landcare Group member Christopher Cole said mixed farming systems in the region were evolving to incorporate dedicated paddocks for grazing and – with increasingly tight margins – these needed to be highly productive.

"We need pastures that harvest storm water, respond quickly to rainfall events and provide a reliable bulk of feed, adequate

groundcover and competition to avoid broadleaf weed establishment," he said.

In 2009, a Woolworths Fresh Food Future grant of \$11,000, administered by Landcare Australia, provided seed funding for the group.

They set up a perennial pasture trial of 20ha plots on eight properties across the catchment.

Three years on and the performance of grass species Katambora Rhodes, Premier digit and Bambatsi panic continue to be assessed at each site.

The species mix is matched to soil type.

On heavier soils, farmers use a 50 per cent digit and 50pc panic grass mix.

On lighter soils, they switch to an 80pc digit, 15pc Rhodes and 5pc panic grass mix.

The group is finding that establishment of perennial species relies on good pre-seeding weed control, a maximum sowing depth of six millimetres, and sowing along with fertiliser and before early summer rains.

"The persistence, plant density and ground cover of the perennials in the trials are far exceeding our expectations," Mr Cole said.

"These pastures are providing high-quality summer feed, good

ground cover and bulk dry feed to fill a winter feed gap, when supported by undersown clovers."

Mr Cole said a plant density of about six plants per square metre was needed to achieve the goal of constant minimum ground cover of 80pc, pasture lengths higher than three centimetres, and 50pc more pasture availability than with volunteer grasses and clovers.

He said indications to date suggested this goal was achievable, but whether this level of cover would continue as plants matured remained to be tested.

The use of perennials in the system allows lucerne paddocks to be deferred from grazing to recover and this provides additional ground cover across whole farms throughout the year.

Mr Cole said the next step was to evaluate mixing the subtropical perennials with winter-active lucernes to see if they could be compatibly established, paving the way for year-round green pasture grazing.

A more reliable and sustainable feed base could increase livestock carrying capacity by as much as 30pc.

On his own 640ha beef and cereal cropping property, Mr Cole has sown 80ha with a mix of Katam-

bora Rhodes, Premier digit and Bambatsi panic grasses.

"We are using pasture mixes of lucerne/clover and subtropical/clover on areas that have the potential to become saline," he said.

"The perennials use water efficiently before it rises to the surface, turning a possible problem into productive pastures for livestock."

During winter, the subtropical pastures have a high proportion of litter at ground level which, coupled with legumes in the mix, should help build soil microbial activity and nitrogen content.

In the longer term, the grazing system should produce more quality feed but take fewer nutrients out of the soil.

This will lead to more sustainable meat and wool production.

Cook's Myalls Landcare Group members will monitor grazing productivity at the eight trial plots in the district this winter and, for the first time, will measure levels of carbon sequestration by the subtropical and legume plant mixes.

"If we can continue to develop high-quality, year-round sustainable pastures, consumers will benefit by being able to buy a higher-quality red meat product that has a low carbon footprint," Mr Cole said.

Feed to fill winter gap

GARRY O'Brien, who runs a 2430-hectare mixed wool and cropping property with his parents Tim and Judy and brother Tim, has 32ha of perennials providing valuable carry-over feed in the winter months.

The family's mix of 45 per cent Bambatsi panic, 45pc Premier digit and 10pc Katambora Rhodes grass sown three years ago has persisted well and thickened up.

This winter the perennials, undersown with clover, will support 400 lambing ewes for up to three months.

This provides extended green feed and

fixes soil nitrogen for the grasses to access during the next summer.

"Over summer the perennials respond really well to soil nitrogen and storm rain events and are left ungrazed and allowed to bulk-up," Mr O'Brien said.

"They then act as a standing hay stack of dry feed during winter... The system works well and using clover in the mix cuts our urea inputs and costs."

Mr O'Brien said there had been a slight increase in lambing percentages and survival rates because of the wind protection offered in winter by the perennials, which could stand at

more than one metre high.

Brett and Tina Jones are also enjoying success with perennials on their wheat and sheep property.

In the first year of their 20ha trial plot, it supported 500 lambs for two months just two months after sowing.

After two months grazing by the lambs, the perennials were still producing five tonnes per hectare of quality dry matter for stock feed.

This year the Joneses are sowing clover into the paddock of perennial grasses and will set up a cell grazing system to increase pasture utilisation.



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.

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

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

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

● One article of no more than 300 to 600 words saved as a Microsoft Word document or a PDF.

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

● Full captions for each attached image that explain who is in the photos and/or what they illustrate. Also, please ensure we have permission from any people featured in the photos to use these photos in Landcare in Focus

● Contact information for more information if required

Dates for 2013 are as follows:

Publication Date	Submission Deadline
August 1	June 28
November 7	October 4

Kings' path to protection

A NEW boardwalk is giving visitors unprecedented access to Kings Billabong on the Murray River while preserving the area's fragile environment.

Kings Billabong Park is a Murray tourist attraction, with about 150,000 visitors each year.

It is also an important wetland, home to nearly 200 species of birds and diverse indigenous flora and fauna, some of which is endangered.

The Friends of Kings Billabong formed in 1990 with the aim of conserving the flora and fauna of this listed wetland, including the provision of 16 kilometres of walking and cycling tracks, some of which are wheelchair accessible.

With support from the Qantas

Foundation through its partnership with Landcare Australia, the friends have been improving the billabongs network of boardwalks, signs and improving pest control.

The Kings Billabong Boardwalk Project provides safe access to areas affected by recent flooding.

The boardwalks are designed to protect the condition of riparian and floodplain ecosystems, protect against erosion, and help maximise the benefits from wetting and drying regimes.

It is a vital recreation area for locals, partly because it is accessible to those with varying levels of physical ability.

It is also a culturally significant

area, part of Nyeri Nyeri country for thousands of years, with scar trees and middens evident.

Funding from the Qantas Foundation and a Victorian Landcare Grant complemented the on-ground assistance from Parks Victoria, and helped make the boardwalks possible.

The project volunteers built 140 metres of boardwalk, and rehabilitated two hectares of wetland.

Integrated Recycling helped design and develop the boardwalks.

Integrated Recycling (IR) works with waste plastic to be recycled and recreated as Envire™ composite recycled plastic products such as bollards, fencing, benches, seats, tables, walkways and boardwalks and more.

The boardwalks are fire-resistant and flood-resistant.

Further activities by the group included revegetation and weed clearing along the boardwalk area.

Friends of Kings Billabong president Tressna Martin said the local community and the volunteer group thanked Qantas Foundation "for helping us to protect this wonderful wetland".

"Because this area gets inundated with water quite a lot it means that people still have access without harming native habitat for the many species of waterbirds that live on the billabong, including Whistling Kites and Swamp Harriers," Ms Martin said.



General manager of Integrated Recycling Stephen Webster, Friends of Kings Billabong president Tressna Martin, Friends of Kings Billabong grants officer Wendy Miller and Park Victoria liaison manager Bruce Summerfield at the opening of one of the boardwalks last year. Photo courtesy of Sunraysia Daily, Mildura.

Getting on board with social media

A RECENT Landcare Australia survey of the Landcare movement and its use of social media has painted a picture of a community interested in learning more about the benefits of sharing stories the social way.

Close to 250 people took part in the survey, which delved into current social media habits, particularly within Landcare groups, and the level of interest in helping people engage with new audiences through social media.

Of those surveyed, 59 per cent said that their group or network has a website, 38pc have a Facebook profile and 12pc have a Twitter profile.

Nearly three-quarters indicated they have a newsletter with an average of 752 subscribers.

When it came to learning more about social media, 39pc of those surveyed indicated they would be interested in learning more about Twitter, with 55pc interested in Facebook.

When asked how they would like to learn more, a webinar would be the preferred method for 38pc, although it only rated slightly higher than a workshop in their region, or production of a manual on the art and craft of social media.

Unsurprisingly, funding opportunities interested more than half of those surveyed – 56pc said this was the sort of content they would like to see on Landcare Australia's social media profiles – and 35pc indicated interest in project case studies.

Following on from the Landcare Connections survey, Landcare Australia is developing a social media kit for Landcare groups which will give an overview on the most popular social media sites and tips and hints on to how to use them well.

A big thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the survey and congratulations to Boyd Essex and Geoffrey Makara, who won an iPad mini each.

We hope they're coming in handy for all your tweeting and tagging!

■ Keep an eye on www.facebook.com/landcareaustralia and www.twitter.com/landcareaustr for information on a social media manual and an upcoming social media webinar.

Capital country's labours of love

A VIVID and beautiful book telling the stories of the rich natural and human heritage of Landcare in the Australian Capital Territory was launched in Canberra last month.

A Labour of Love – Celebrating Landcare in the ACT was launched by ACT Environment Minister Simon Corbell at Tuggeranong Homestead as part of Heritage week and the Centenary of Canberra.

A highly visual publication, the book contains profiles of over forty ACT groups, the areas they care for and

stories of the exceptional people that are part of the Landcare movement in the ACT as well as sections on Aboriginal Landcare and rural Landcare.

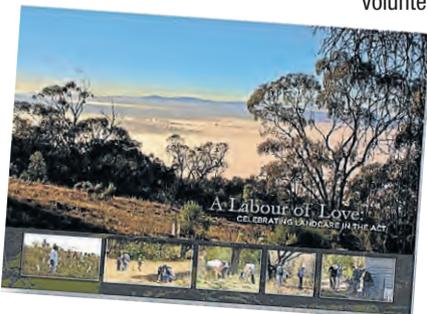
A Labour of Love celebrates the beauty and value of the ACT's natural heritage, its rich Aboriginal history, and the importance of on-ground conservation and partnerships between public land managers and landcarers.

The book has been made possible by the ACT Heritage Grants Program and has been largely written by

volunteering Landcarers and ParkCarers.

It is available for \$25 from Southern ACT Catchment Group at participating outlets in the ACT.

■ For more information contact (02) 6296 6400.



Glossy champions step-up efforts

THE Glossy Black-Cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus lathamii*) was once widespread across most of south-eastern Australia, but is now found only in patchy populations scattered across the landscape.

Nationally endangered and listed as threatened in every state in which they occur, Glossy Black-Cockatoos (aka Glossies) are reliant upon community conservation efforts to ensure their ongoing survival in many locations.

The Glossy population found in the Riverina region of New South Wales has been identified as a population under particular threat of decline.

Volunteer community groups and professional research bodies across the Murrumbidgee and Lachlan catchments have dedicated many hours to identifying local distribution and implementing conservation measures in an effort to understand and improve living conditions for these iconic birds.

Glossies feed almost exclusively on sheoak seeds, and lack of access to sufficient feeding sites has been identified in many areas as limiting local population growth.

Other limiting factors include habitat fragmentation and lack of suitable

tree hollows for nesting sites.

In the upper Murrumbidgee catchment, several community groups including Michelago Landcare Group, the Upper-Murrumbidgee Landcare committee, the Molonglo catchment group and Kosciuszko to Coast, along with Greening Australia, have propagated and planted thousands of sheoaks in the ACT and surrounding region.

A further 10,000 drooping sheoaks are currently being raised for planting in Autumn 2013.

The lower catchment has also seen its fair share of Glossy supporters.

Sheoak plantings have been carried out by Landcare groups and other volunteers in Griffith and Wagga Wagga, while the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists have undertaken numerous Glossy projects with local landholders throughout the Narrandera Ranges and Brobenah Hills.

Surveys have been conducted; nest boxes constructed and installed; and nesting and feeding sites identified, fenced off and monitored throughout the ranges.

In all, about 3000 hectares of high-value woodland remnants with Glossy Black-Cockatoo habitat potential have been protected, mostly on private property, in very rugged country.

In 2012 a new batch of Glossy champions stepped up, straddling the border between the Murrumbidgee and Lachlan catchments.

The Lachlan Fold Wildlife Action Group has been keenly pursuing knowledge of the needs of their local Glossy population and the conservation activities of other groups across south-eastern Australia.

This group of rural landholders is very proud of their birds and between planning habitat restoration activities they are taking action to raise Glossy awareness within their local community.

They are currently attempting to raise funds to send members to visit and learn from the very successful Glossy Black-Cockatoo Recovery Program on Kangaroo Island, and are hoping to erect several purpose-built cocky boxes in suitable nesting areas on members' properties in 2013.



Families explore a greener future

A THREE-year program of regeneration of Woodlands Historic Park in the north-west of Melbourne kicked off recently at a launch day attended by more than 500 people.

Organised by Landcare Australia and energy infrastructure company Jemena, the "Live. Grow. Explore." Community Day brought the local community together to promote ways to live sustainably and learn more about the beautiful natural environment on their doorsteps.

The community day signalled the start of a three-year program that will see Jemena staff work alongside the local community to undertake long-term regeneration activities at Woodlands Historic Park.

Families took advantage of the sunny autumn day by taking part in guided nature walks, planting native grass and learning about smart energy use from Jemena.

People also took the opportunity to bring home a native seedling from the Landcare tent or pick up a bicycle and follow a bike tour around the

historically and environmentally significant site.

Young and old found something to their taste.

Children enjoyed pony rides, face painting, story-telling by the Landcare fairy and boomerang throwing. There was also a variety of native animals on hand, including a friendly olive python, a pair of baby sugar gliders and frill-necked lizard.

Live music from Cold Snap made for a real party atmosphere on the day, with families enjoying a free barbecue and ice cream.

Landcare Australia partnerships manager Amy Gillett was delighted to see so many locals coming along to learn more about living sustainably.

"The huge turnout on the day and the hundreds of smiling faces shows that people really are interested in looking after their local environment and learning about leading a more sustainable lifestyle," Ms Gillett said.

Jemena has supported Landcare Australia since 2006 through community-based Landcare projects and corporate volunteering.



ABOVE: Many young visitors got to plant their first seedling at the Live. Grow. Explore. Community Day.



ABOVE: Some ponies were on hand at the community day to help young attendees explore the park.



LEFT: Landcare Australia board member Peter Hay; Wurundjeri Elder Bill Nicholson; Hume City Councillor Helen Patsikatheodorou; Jemena managing director Paul Adams; Federal member for Calwell Maria Vamvakinou, and MC Arron Wood.

RIGHT: Representatives from the winning schools in the Live. Grow. Explore. school competition: Pascoe Vale Girls College, Coolaroo South Primary School and Emmaus Catholic Primary School.



BELOW: Community day visitors get up close with some native Australian animals.



L.I.F.E

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