



1945-1985

Australian farmers given financial support for on-farm scale soil conservation, first targeting individuals, and later small local groups.

1788-1988

Up to 50 per cent of tree cover removed in 200 years of European settlement.

1983-84

The name "Landcare" originated in south-east Victoria where soil conservation and salinity control programs were underway.

1986

The Victorian government launched an autonomous, community-based Landcare program across the state. Landcare initially focused on rural areas, but many urban communities wanted to infuse remnants of publicly owned bushland with environmental and recreational values. By 1990, about 70 Landcare groups had formed, and by 2006, there were an estimated 800 groups in rural Victoria, 500 urban conservation groups and 300 Coastcare community associations.

1988

Senator Peter Cook, Federal Resources Minister, launched two Landcare groups in Vic, witnessing effective environmental action by local communities.

1989

Following a joint submission from the National Farmers' Federation and the Australian Conservation Foundation, the federal government pledged bipartisan support to help protect the "fundamental ingredient both of our natural environment and our agricultural prosperity – our soil". Ahead of the Decade of Landcare, to start in 1990, \$320 million in funding would go towards a new package of measures. On October 10, Landcare Australia Limited was formed.

1990s

The first National Landcare Facilitator, Andrew Campbell, travelled across Australia, telling communities every region had land and water management issues. He spread the word that community Landcare groups were forming to tackle these issues, encouraging more groups to form.

2012

Close to 6000 community Landcare groups exist across Australia, and 93pc of primary producers practice Landcare on their properties.

2014

Landcare celebrates its national 25th anniversary.

Reference: Landcare in Australia by Rob Youl, Sue Marriott and Theo Nabben, and Health of the Landcare Movement survey results 2012

Growing therapy with trees

From a speech that will be given at the Australian Association for Bush Adventure Therapy Forum by DR CHARLIE BRENNAN

YESTERDAY I took part in a Landcare tree-planting day in my local town of Bellingen.

Today I'm feeling uplifted after such a positive experience. The day was sunny but cool, making it perfect conditions for the 30 or so tree-planters.

We planted 450 trees to extend the zones of riparian regeneration on what we know as Bellingen Island and its lowland subtropical rainforest on the floodplain endangered ecological community (EEC).

It was an opportunity to get my hands dirty again and take a break from the computer screen, where I spend too much time.

It was also an opportunity to see the emerging and exciting effects of eight years of work on this very challenging site.

The event reminded me of the old days of Landcare, when we took on almost unrealistic challenges and when, somehow, our grassroots energy managed to make limited funding go a long way.

These days, things have changed a little – for a start, most of us involved in Landcare are older.

But the Landcare and landscape conservation and regeneration scene has become more professional.

People who were volunteers five or 10 years ago now often work for professional conservation agencies or Landcare offices, or run businesses that carry out bush regeneration or plant growing to contract.

What was noticeable at this tree-planting event – and is becoming common in many sectors these days – was the coming together of a range of people and organisations.

Side by side, contractors (businesses) worked with volunteers, Landcare groups, Landcare community support officers, local government staff, a social enterprise, a conservation alliance and so on.

As co-ordinator of the Jaliigirr Biodiversity Alliance, this kind of collaboration is something I am becoming familiar with. It's innovative and sometimes challenging, but it's clearly the future.

Some things change – others do not. Unchanged is the satisfaction I get from such tree-planting and general landcaring events.

This satisfaction is a form of therapy.

Being out in nature gets us away from the routine demands of life; bills, work schedules, domestic chores and the sense we have so little time in which to do all the things we seem to be required to do.

Being out, for instance in a Landcare site, is a reminder there is another more spacious world out there.

For many participants, there is a sense of belonging and place both in the sites being painstakingly regenerated but also the communities of like-minded people who work in teams to make places more sustainable.

■ continued, p6.

Looking to the next chapter

After 25 years, time to grow Landcare

AFTER a successful quarter-century, the two organisations that formed a partnership that gave rise to Landcare nationally agree the next 25 years are about broadening and strengthening Landcare's connections.

For National Farmers' Federation president Brent Finlay, Landcare has created "a rich vein to follow" in linking farming issues to an awakening urban awareness of the challenges around producing food.

"People in the cities are prepared to contribute to issues around managing land," Mr Finlay said.

"Landcare has done so much around education, and it can do a lot more in this area.

"It's a vehicle for informing communities, not just farmers, about the environment that surrounds those communities and the places we live in.

"Farmers deal with the environment every working day, and any increased understanding of what we do on our farms – awareness of biodiversity, water quality, health of our soils – is largely thanks to the work that Landcare has done.

"Australia is a very old country, with a very young agriculture. Looking after our soils for hundreds of years into the future is important to all Australians, not just those that are farming.

"We all want to wear the fibre produced from those soils, and eat the food."

Kelly O'Shanassy took on the reins as chief executive of the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) last month and highlighted the interconnected nature of Landcare.

"Landcare is so important because it engages people from all walks of life in the task of looking after our farmlands, our river and creeks, our parks and our cities.

"In the real world, they are all connected.



Outgoing Australian Conservation Foundation chief executive Don Henry and national Farmers' Federation chief executive Matt Linnegar, at "Mundango", Braidwood, NSW, in March commemorating the 25th anniversary.

to protect and restore public and private lands, because Australia's nature is our life support system."

ACF director of environmental campaigns Paul Sinclair believes the anniversary is an opportune time for Landcare to link more firmly with other initiatives.

Landcare's enmeshment particularly in rural Australia, in Mr Sinclair's view, "has been an essential foundation for Australia to build on over the next 25 years".

"If we didn't have that foundation of experience, passion and knowl-

try (along with)... programs that have had massive positive benefits for conservation and the health of our indigenous community."

Mr Sinclair is hopeful of an evolution toward a more holistic approach toward the country's environmental challenges.

"I'm really hopeful because 25 years of Landcare shows that people can work together in their local communities to make a difference.

"When you join those bits of work up, you're starting to get people doing things at a scale that address

and there are more of them, and I'm really inspired by what I see from many farmers."

Mr Finlay believes Landcare's evolution outward, to engage more and more people, is a natural continuation of an idea that has evolved in surprising ways.

"When you start these things, you don't know where they are going to go."

Landcare Australia chief executive Tessa Jakszewicz said the organisation has for the past quarter century focused on providing leadership, in addition to raising awareness and funding for the Landcare movement, to support its work protecting, restoring and improving the productivity and value of our natural environment.

"Collaboration at all levels was the cornerstone on which Landcare was created," Ms Jakszewicz said.

"As we celebrate this significant milestone, we look forward to continuing to collaborate with government at all levels, the Landcare movement, the wider community and corporate Australia to help secure a strong and resilient Landcare into the future."

Landcare is important because it engages people from all walks of life in the task of looking after our farmlands, our rivers and creeks, our parks and our cities

– Australian Conservation Foundation chief executive Kelly O'Shanassy



"The success of Landcare in the past 25 years is an excellent foundation on which Australia can build.

"Looking to the next 25 years, we need to think about what we've done well and what we can do better

edge that's been built in regional Australia, we would be in a far worse position," he said.

"Landcare is one of the critical components of our national efforts to maintain the fertility of our coun-

try and the big problems that we face.

"There have always been wise people in Australia who say it's not about either the economy or the environment: those two things are linked.

"Those wise people are still here,

In Brief

Deadlines extended:

Landcare Australia has extended the deadline for the submission of abstracts for presentations at the 2014 National Landcare Conference.

The conference steering committee is looking for a range of presentations that will help build an engaging program based on the conference theme "Celebrating our history, growing our future".

Submissions close Wednesday May 16.

■ To make a submission, visit www.landcareonline.com.au/nationalconference

National soil management:

For the first time, Australia has a national, co-ordinated and forward-thinking approach to managing soils.

On 25 March, Australian Agriculture Minister Barnaby Joyce launched the National Soil Research, Development and Extension Strategy – Securing Australia's soil for profitable industries and healthy landscapes.

In the next five years, 150 different organisations from across Australia will be involved in implementing the strategy which is all about providing better information and tools to our farmers, scientists and policymakers on soil use and management.

■ For a copy of the National Soil Research, Development and Extension Strategy visit daff.gov.au/soilstrategy

Soil advocate reappointed:

Former Governor-General, Major General the Hon. Michael Jeffery, AC, AO (Mil), CVO, MC (Retd), has been reappointed as the Advocate for Soil Health in 2014.

In his role as advocate for soil health, General Jeffery provides strong leadership and advocacy and promotes the benefits of looking after soils not just to farmers but to all Australians.

■ For more information on the Advocate for Soil Health or to view his second report visit daff.gov.au/soiladvocate

Landcare measures up:

Everybody involved in Landcare knows the Landcare approach has benefits beyond the agricultural and environmental domains – and now there is research to prove it.

The Multiple Benefits of Landcare and NRM report – commissioned by the Australian Landcare Council – explores the social, education, cultural, health, resilience and economic benefits of Landcare.

With this evidence base established, the council is passing the baton to the Landcare community to expand on the research to further strengthen the case for investment in Landcare.

■ See the Multiple Benefits of Landcare and NRM report, www.daff.gov.au/alcs submissions

Reduce emissions:

Farmers or fishers looking to reduce greenhouse gas emissions can look to a report which explores findings from an Australian government research program.

The report, *Australian agriculture: reducing emissions and adapting to a changing climate*, highlights the new ways farmers can reduce agricultural greenhouse gas emissions and still maintain or increase productivity.

The report also explores some of the climate challenges farmers and fishers are facing.

■ Visit www.daff.gov.au/ccrpreport

Celebrate our history and look to the future

UPDATE

Tessa Jakszewicz

LAL chief executive



LANDCARE Australia received welcome news from the Australian government that we will receive an injection of more than \$4 million in the next four years to continue promoting Landcare practices, encouraging participation in Landcare activities and celebrating the achievements of landcarers.

A key component of this will be delivery of the 2014 National Landcare Conference and Awards.

This year's National Landcare Conference – which will take place in Melbourne from September 17 to 19 – will include a celebration of 25 years of Landcare as a national initiative, but more importantly it will focus on the future of Landcare.

The program will be based on the theme: Celebrating our history –

growing our future. We are looking forward to working with the Landcare community, government and corporate partners to make this an inclusive, inspirational and comprehensive knowledge-sharing event.

The conference – abstract submissions for which are being accepted until May 16 – will also play host to the National Landcare

anniversary and encourage more Australians to get involved with their local Landcare groups.

Landcare Australia has also planned a number of grant rounds and corporate volunteering events, thanks to funding from our corporate partners and Workplace Giving Program.

These include grants to support Landcare and Junior Landcare

Foundation – who in 1989 successfully put a joint submission to the federal government for a national Landcare initiative, which was launched by the Honourable Bob Hawke.

The Bob Hawke Landcare Award, won in 2012 by New South Wales dairy farmer, Lynne Strong, will also be held this year.

Entries will open soon for this prestigious award, which celebrates an individual who has been involved in championing Landcare principles and inspiring others to take action on their own property or through a Landcare group.

Watch this space for more grants information and events supporting the Landcare community.

■ Application forms for the Landcare Week Grow Grants and Planting the Future Junior Landcare Grants can be downloaded at www.landcareonline.com.au/25years

■ For more information or updates subscribe to free e-newsletters at www.landcareonline.com.au, search for Landcare Australia on Facebook, follow Landcare on twitter @LandcareAust

We have planned a number of grant rounds, thanks to funding from our corporate partners and Workplace Giving Program

Awards, which will feature 69 finalists from every State and Territory.

In addition to funding from the Department of Agriculture, Environment Minister Greg Hunt more recently announced funding of more than \$90,000 to Landcare Australia – toward a range of activities that will celebrate our 25th

projects as well as grants for groups to focus on growing their volunteer base.

Anniversary celebrations are nothing without acknowledgement of where we came from, and it was great to see the recent 25th commemorative planting with the National Farmers Federation and the Australian Conservation

Supporting farmers through drought

Comment by Federal Agriculture Minister BARNABY JOYCE

RUNNING a farm is not as straightforward as getting fortnightly wage payments in your bank account, like many of us take for granted.

There are times when, even after much planning and preparation, farming families need looking after when their farm is affected by prolonged dry conditions outside of their control.

Areas across Australia are currently experiencing ongoing drought, in particular farmers in Queensland and northern New South Wales, are doing it tough. That's why it is now more important than ever to support our farming families in managing and recovering from times of hardship by providing assistance to help them meet their basic expenses and prepare and plan for the future.

The Australian government is committed to building a more productive, competitive and profitable agricultural sector.

In February, the Prime Minister and I announced a \$320 million comprehensive drought assistance package offering financial, social and mental health support to farm families, farm businesses and rural communities suffering from drought.

The new package will assist those affected by drought to deal with immediate financial pressures and improve their capacity to recover when the current drought breaks.

It also promotes drought resilience and preparedness over the longer term. The measures offered include:

- Interim Farm Household Allowance (Interim FHA);
- Drought Concessional Loans Scheme;

- Additional funding for water-related infrastructure rebates;
- Social support, and
- Assistance to help reduce the impact of pest animals in drought-affected areas.

During drought, pest animals can add pressure on pastures and groundcover at a time when feed is critical for livestock. The funding will help manage the impacts of pest animals such as wild dogs, feral pigs and foxes in drought-affected areas.

Drought-affected farmers in Queensland and NSW will also benefit from additional funding for water-related infrastructure rebates.

This support will help farmers in those States invest in infrastructure to provide water for emergency animal welfare requirements and improve their long-term drought resilience.

Farmers can't walk away from their responsibilities on a farm – they do everything they can to ensure they have a business to run once conditions improve.

Some of these properties have been in families for generations, and there are strong sentimental ties to the land.

This package will help farmers manage during times of drought and be in a financial and emotional position to effectively recover when the drought breaks.

These new drought measures are in addition to existing programs including the \$420 million Farm Finance Concessional Loan Scheme, farm management deposits and debt mediation arrangements and the assistance and support available through the Rural Financial Counselling Service.

■ For further information on the package or to apply for assistance visit daff.gov.au/assistance or call (02) 6272 3933.





Grassroots' strength

LANDCARE'S evolution into a "movement" rather than something more formally structured is its greatest strength, outgoing National Landcare Facilitator Brett de Hayr says, and also one of its greatest challenges.

Mr de Hayr, who resigned from the National Landcare Facilitator's role last month to help out with family issues, said Landcare is not a single organisation – it is controlled by no one, but owned by all.

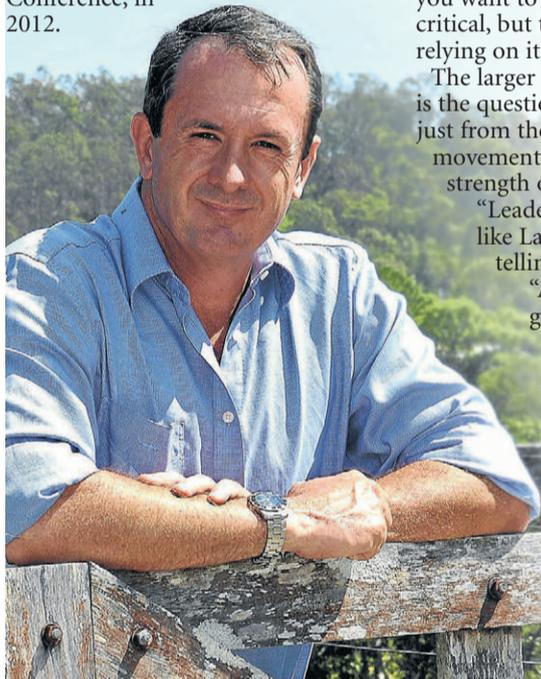
In a quarter of a century the movement has developed a complex structure akin to a donut: most of the strength is on the periphery.

That's largely to Landcare's advantage, Mr de Hayr said.

"Nobody controls it, there is no head you can chop off to kill it – it's a totally grassroots movement."

On the other hand, "how do you bring a movement together so you can harvest collective strengths?"

Watching Landcare consolidate its identity as a movement was one of the satisfactions of his role as Facilitator, Mr de Hayr said. A defining moment was the most recent biennial National Landcare Conference, in 2012.



"It was evident there the movement had moved past looking back to what happened 25 years ago," he said.

"We've always had that green-versus-brown friction but people seemed to have moved past that and were looking forward in the knowledge that there are a lot of different ways of doing things.

"The movement is comfortable with its ambiguity, even if some struggle with the difference between a movement and a traditional linear organisation where you can tell people what to do."

"But movements are a fairly recent phenomenon, and the real challenge is how to hold that spontaneity together and focus collective strengths.

"This movement has survived 25 years, but how do we strengthen the core... how do we bring together all the diverse entities around Landcare, without trying to control them?"

Money is part of the issue, but not all of it.

"Government and corporate investment is necessary to fast-track change and help champion and support the Landcare movement. If you want to accelerate change, it's critical, but the movement isn't relying on it for survival."

The larger issue, Mr de Hayr said, is the question of leadership – not just from the heart of the movement, but to maintain the strength of the periphery.

"Leadership in a movement like Landcare doesn't equate to telling people what to do.

"A major challenge for all groups, be they urban or rural is that increasingly, people don't have the time to give up as volunteers to help drive those collective actions."

"Paid co-ordination roles are becoming more essential to work alongside

leaders from local communities, but they cannot replace them."

"Landcare has grown into a movement as diverse as our community to include rural activities, Coastcare, urban and indigenous activities and some not branded as Landcare at all.

"Some strong networks have formed spontaneously in certain areas, but how do you get that to happen in other areas?"

"The leadership to bring the pieces of the puzzle together is one of the big challenges for the future.

"Landcare could exist forever in its current form, but to truly realise its potential, the dots need to be joined."

With even greater leadership, co-ordination and support to harvest the collective energy and innovation of the movement, Mr de Hayr thinks Landcare can grow in new and vital ways.

"A real opportunity lie in Junior Landcare. It goes right across rural, urban, Coastcare, and engages everybody.

"It is also a great avenue for the rural sector to engage with other parts of the community – particularly in relation to food.

"Landcare farming is another opportunity – it says what it is, and it is important to recognise the contribution that farmers make and engage with them in a way that meets their needs.

"The role of farmers within the Landcare movement is different, as they are predominantly working on private land and need to make a living at the same time. For them Landcare needs to be both environmental and productive.

"Landcare farming as a sub-brand within the Landcare movement could help showcase the valuable work farmers do (for) the environment.

Ultimately it is people, not structures, that make Landcare work, Mr de Hayr said.

"It's been a privilege to work with so many people across the country who are working – mostly voluntarily – to help shape the future of their farms and local communities."



Euan McLean and his original patented long-handled shovel to dig out lantana.

Lantana no match for retirees and their tools

LANTANA is the most vigorous of weeds, but has proved to be no match for the vigour of six retirees.

Two years ago the Ramsay Lantana Busters – members of Cambooya Landcare, Queensland – took on a paddock that had been infested with lantana for 50 years and, using mainly manual methods, liberated four hectares from the weed.

With the end in sight, they are now casting around for private contracts to bust lantana in the Cambooya area.

Ross Ibell and Euan McLean started working on the six-hectare paddock in November 2011.

At that point, they said, there was no point in thinking about wiping the area free of lantana: the best they could do was get into a rhythm.

Across a couple of years of Monday morning starts, and with extra hands joining the project, that rhythm has proven highly effective.

They use almost solely manual methods. Big bushes are snared in

webbing and then either pulled over by a winch to expose the roots to the thrust of the patented "Root Blade" shovel or they use the "Tower Power" – a tripod-mounted winch – to lift the plant so the roots can be severed with loppers.

Along with the pleasure of rolling back the lantana, there is the pleasure of tinkering.

If the Ramsay Lantana Busters feel a solution isn't working as well as it should, they go back to the shed and improve the technology – or find a whole new solution, like winches made from modified powered post hole augers or old rotary hoes.

Uprooted lantana is then dismembered, heaped and burned with assistance from the local fire brigade.

The Ramsay Lantana Busters are now "a couple of golf shots" from the fence that signals they have fully cleared the paddock.

Having really got into a rhythm over the last couple of years, they don't want to stop.

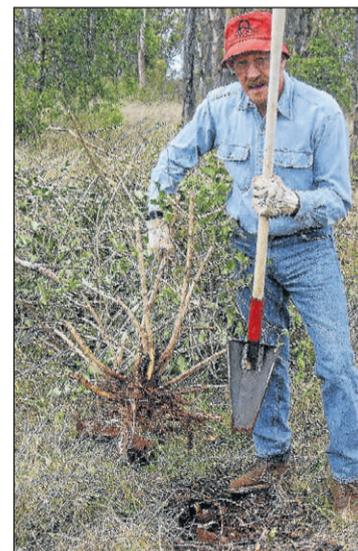
Landcare insurance covers their activities on private as well as public land, so they are now seeking private landholders looking for skilled lantana-busters and who are willing to help out with the lantana-busting costs.

■ See Lantana Busters in action <https://open.abc.net.au/posts/euan-maclean-and-the-lantana-busters-43ac9bw>

■ Read the blog <http://weedsbytheshortandcurly.blogspot.com.au>

■ Like Lantana Busters facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Lantana-Busters/248258428679936>

LEFT: Graeme Wegner shows a plant taken with the "New Root Blade".



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

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

Please note due to space restrictions we cannot guarantee all submissions will be included. All submissions must adhere to the following guidelines and the deadlines below and must include:

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

● No more 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 people featured in the photos to

use these photos in Landcare in Focus

● Contact information for more information if required

Dates for 2014 are:

Publication Submission

August 21 July 18

November 20 October 17



Australian Government

Department of Agriculture



CELEBRATING

25 YEARS OF LANDCARE

As part of this year's celebration of 25 years of Landcare as a national program, we are offering 25 \$1,000 Landcare Week Grow Grants and 25 \$1,000 Planting the Future Junior Landcare Grants to the Landcare community. Applications close on June 13th.

Visit www.landcareonline.com.au/25years for application forms and criteria



Video bug hits Landcare in the Central West

TWENTY Landcarers in the Central West became filmmakers, producers and directors for a day under the guidance of *Baywatch Armadale* star Hugh Beveridge at a Central West natural resource management (NRM) working group course on the world of video and YouTube.

Mr Beveridge taught the group how to take good footage, edit video clips and post and promote through the world of social media.

Regional Landcare facilitator Danielle Littlewood was thrilled with the group's enthusiasm for video and its opportunities.

"There is a lot of fear about using video, but it's such a powerful way to tell Landcare's story," Ms Littlewood said.

"This event was part of a wider training program we are running to give Landcare groups the skills and capacity to engage their communities and carry out their activities professionally."

Leonie Coleman is a member of the Macquarie Marshes Environmental Landholder Association and was interested in the use of video to promote what their group is doing.

"I have the confidence to move forward and play with editing, which is a massive step," Ms Coleman said.

Macquarie 2100's Bev Hamilton was also keen to put the learnings of the day to good use.

"It has been fantastic to get hands-on today," Ms Hamilton said.

"We received lots of great information and just need to go home and play – expect some great clips on Facebook and YouTube."

■ To find out more about the Central West NRM Working Group, search for the Landcare in the Central West Facebook page or contact Danielle Littlewood, 0418 280 616 or Danielle.littlewood@lrs.nsw.gov.au



YouTube 101

- Check equipment 24 hours before filming so you can fix problems
- It's better "done" than "perfect" – start filming, have a go and learn from your mistakes
- Think beforehand about how your video will be used
- Have a well-lit scene and pick a good

- background – no walls
- Use a tripod if you have one
- No hats or sunglasses
- Check and double-check the record button is on
- Check footage while your subject is still there to make sure it's what you need
- Use headphones to check sound

- Take more footage than you need – different angles, close ups, pans
- Have a plan B
- Look at available software for editing – there are some easy, fun apps available
- Cross-promote your clips on all forms of social media to get the best exposure
- Have some fun with it!

Coming together on climate change

CLIMATE change is such a large, shapeless and indefinite threat that people are uncertain about how to respond to it.

Farmer Peter Holding, Harden, NSW, understands the uncertainties inherent in the forecasts, but is taking some action anyway.

Mr Holding, a sheep and grains producer who has served on the committee of Murrumbidgee Land-

care, believes boosting the resilience of the farm business is the most useful response to the climatic and market volatility that climate change appears to be already producing.

Until recently, Mr Holding farmed 600 hectares of his own and leased another 800ha.

"We could have battled on forever with that, but my son wanted to come home, and that wasn't possible

as we were operating," he said.

Instead, he sold 160ha to an intensive duck producer, used the funds to retire debt, and leased another 800ha at Cootamundra.

"That's given us scale," Mr Holding said.

"We had 400ha of crop in last year; we'll have 1000ha in this year.

"It's amazing how upping the scale has changed our budget outlook.

"We've now got a spread from Booroowa to Cootamundra – it's not a big spread, but at least there's some variation in where the showers might fall, and we're not going to get burnt out in one hit."

Price volatility is also an inevitable consequence of more extreme climate events, Mr Holding believes.

He has experienced that himself.

After what was effectively a decade of drought through the 2000s, he grew massive crops in 2011 – only to see them all shot and sprung by late rain.

As crops are hit by more extreme events across the world and the inputs for agriculture grow more costly, Mr Holding foresees that kind of risk cascading through the supply chain.

"If you can continue to produce whatever product you can produce, it's highly likely the price will rise (with climate variability).

"The biggest risk I see is for marginal areas, where you'll be trying to produce a product as the cost of inputs goes up, but the more extreme climate increases the risk of not harvesting that product.

"Marginal operators might have to move out of cropping into sheep, or make oil out of cactii, or something.

"There will have to be transformational change, it won't be enough to adapt."

However, Mr Holding said, "it's not all going to be bad".

"Some of this area used to be too wet and now it's looking good – some of those southern areas of Victoria might become good wheat growing areas."

In the Climate Champions group of farmers, who gather to share ideas about managing climate risk, Mr Holding has met winegrowers alarmed about visible effects of rising temperatures on grape flowering. Some have already opted to move to Tasmania.

"So areas that are not so favoured might come into their own, but it's really hard to say.

"One thing we're certain of is rising temperature, but we're not certain of the effects on rainfall. It may be longer dry periods, bigger floods. We might have to get better at storing water when it falls and reusing it."

Landcare has a role in tackling climate change, Mr Holding thinks, by "bringing communities together to start putting their brains into gear to think about how they want their future to be".

"I think we're struggling at that.

"People think they can't have a say in development going on in the shire (but) we have to turn that around and say, we are the voters, this is how we want the environmental action plan to look, this is what we want done."

"I don't think the general public understands the power they have, and that if you've got power, you need to exercise it."



Peter Holding, Harden, NSW, has taken steps to mitigate any negative impacts the changing climate might have on his properties across the State's South West Slopes region.



Bushcare's Major Day Out

Bushcare's Major Day Out
events held on Sunday September 7th
as part of Landcare Week 2014

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

Get involved with your local community and take part in Bushcare activities, including native planting, weed removal, native plant identification and nature walks. To register your site, find a BMDO site close to you, or get a Starter Kit, visit www.bushcaresmajordayout.org

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Corporate, community: a caring combination

A PARTNERSHIP to create a children's nature playground has kick-started the revitalisation of an old wildlife precinct to create a fun and safe nature playground in Sydney's Lane Cove National Park.

NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and Landcare Australia recently enlisted the help of energy distributor Jemena and 37 of its employees, who used an official corporate volunteer day to work at the Park's Jenkins Hill Precinct recently.

Corporate volunteers from Jemena helped to remove weeds, such as *Anredera cordifolia* (Madeira Vine), *Ehrharta erecta*, *Ligustrum sinense* (small-leaved privet), and *Ligustrum lucidum* (Large-leaved privet).

A group of meticulous Jemena employees painted the outside of a small building used volunteers to pre-

pare food for the grey-headed flying foxes, while others planted 160 seedlings including slightly more mature native plants – species included *Acacia longifolia*, *Acacia suaveolens*, *Acacia terminalis*, *Banksia serrata*, *Banksia spinulosa*, *Banksia marginata*, *Dianella caerulea*, *Dianella prunina*, *Goodenia ovata*, *Dodonaea triquetra*, *Grevillea speciosa*, *Grevillea linearifolia*, *Elaeocarpus reticulatus*, *Viminaria juncea*, and *Viola hederacea*.

Several Jemena employees used muscle power to undertake extensive clearing of built-up debris including removing a concrete path in preparation for an architectural make-over of the site – more than 21 cubic meters of green waste including weeds, fallen trees and branches, and general waste was removed on just one day. The result of the makeover

will be a safe play area that integrates environmental learning outcomes for both parents and children.

Landcare Australia's corporate environmental volunteering (CEV) program has supported and engaged more than 4000 corporate volunteers across Australia in the past 12 months.

From Bellerive Bluff in Tasmania to Cottesloe Beach in WA more than 24,000 hours have been contributed to more than 30 Landcare sites and host Landcare groups to support their efforts, while the funds raised from the CEV program have provided groups with a lifeline of funding to carry on their work after the corporate teams have completed their day.

Jemena owns and manages major electricity and gas infrastructure in NSW, Victoria, Queensland and ACT.

In NSW, Jemena distributes natural gas to 1.1 million homes and businesses in Sydney and regional areas.

Jemena has been a corporate partner of Landcare Australia since 2004.

Their most recent community investment funding has been directed to support the makeover of what was once a small zoo but which is now home to an important bat crèche program, a traditional play area and also a NSW Rangers office.

Landcare Australia chief executive Tessa Jakszewicz said such partnerships were vital to help communities create and regenerate public spaces while also supporting volunteer



Wildlife volunteers raise, feed and care for orphaned flying foxes at the bat crèches located within the Kukundi Wildlife Shelter site, Lane Cove National Park. Photo: Chris Grounds, Booderee National Park, NSW.



LEFT: Jemena corporate volunteers bagging weeds at Lane Cove National Park.

groups who are looking after unique and vulnerable native wildlife.

"Corporate volunteers and funding not only help the Landcare movement protect, restore and sustain the productivity of our natural environment, but realise shared visions about making our parks and natural areas more accessible for everyone," Ms Jakszewicz said.

The new nature playground will be open to the public by the end of 2014, coinciding with broader refurbishment of the Kukundi Wildlife Shelter which is a hive of activity during bat crèche season, when mother bats are often caught in power lines and the babies drop to the ground.

Volunteer wildlife carers raise, feed and affectionately take care of the orphaned grey-headed flying fox – the largest bat in Australia, safely within the crèche enclosure on site, and eventually release them back into the wild when they are ready.

Volunteer wildlife carers raise, feed and affectionately take care of the orphaned grey-headed flying fox – the largest bat in Australia, safely within the crèche enclosure on site, and eventually release them back into the wild when they are ready.

Report reveals strength in shelterbelts

LANDHOLDERS in the Moyne Shire have found evidence to back up recommendations they put native shelterbelts on their properties.

Shelterbelts offer protection not just for stock but land as well as boosting farmers' bottom lines through increased productivity and biosecurity benefits.

The Economic Benefits of Native Shelter Belts Report is a move towards collaborative, positive, productive land management change, according to network facilitator for Basalt to Bay Landcare Network Lisette Mill.

"Out of conversations with landholders in Moyne Shire about shelterbelts came the clear message agricultural businesses and their industry connections wanted short, proven evidence backing up why they should look to put native shelterbelts on properties," Ms Mill said.

"They told me to chuck out the 'do it because it is good' brochures and get proof."

The report summarises the most recent Australian research that shows the business gains land managers can expect from planting native shelterbelts, in a short and easily read format available online.

"It will be updated every six months to check links and add new research conducted by the report stakeholders" Ms Mill said.

The long list of stakeholders includes – but is by no means limited to – Meat and Livestock Australia, Australian Wool Innovation, Dairy Australia and Landcare Australia. The list is growing all the time.

The report will be used to broker funding to improve:

- Production;
- Biodiversity linkages between

properties and remnants;

- Animal welfare and biosecurity;
- Fire security on farm and for regions;
- Carbon farming as a tool for carbon neutral futures;
- Landscape and community resilience to changing climate;
- Education regarding sustainable agriculture practices, and
- Industry wide thinking and partnerships.

The Basalt to Bay Landcare Network will hold a report launch in Koroit on Wednesday May 14.

"To this launch the stakeholders will express their visions for the use of the information, and how they will support us and the others to drive up investment in native shelterbelts," Ms Mill said.

"We believe this document will provide the financial and networking



Farm shelterbelt at Wangoom – showing layered species and seeding into the road reserve.

leverage for Landcare and other NRM organisations for years.

"We also believe it will assist land managers to apply native shelterbelts to their properties with encouragement from industry – and not necessarily under a reliance on external

funding to undertake these works."

■ For a copy of the report visit www.basalttobay.org.au

■ For more information contact Lisette Mill, basalttobay@gmail.com or 0408 712 713.

Perfect Pitch of Green Grants

Turf Australia in partnership with Junior Landcare is giving 10 schools or youth groups the opportunity to experience a real green makeover for children and young people to enjoy.

Natural turf will be supplied by local turf growers to update sporting areas, enhance outdoor learning spaces or provide more room to play and enjoy our natural environment.

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





Morning tea for Landcare volunteers at Bellingen Island, near Bellingen on NSW's North Coast.

Planting more than just trees

WHEN it commissioned independent research into children's interaction with the natural environment, Planet Ark uncovered a saddening statistic: only about one in five children today has climbed a tree.

At the same time, Planet Ark's annual Tree Day, now in its 19th year, had its most successful year in 2013, with trees planted in more than 4000 sites.

Throughout its history, which has been closely intertwined with the

Landcare movement, Tree Day has seen the planting of some 20 million native trees, shrubs and grasses, with the help of more than 3 million volunteers.

But like the passion of urban Japanese for cherry blossom viewing, Australians seem to be increasingly formalising their engagement with nature.

Planet Ark's head of campaigns Brad Gray said modern Australia's retreat from nature into screens is changing the role of Tree Day.

Its primary role is still to improve biodiversity by planting of trees, but the social and health benefits of tree-planting and interacting with nature are growing in importance.

The organisation began to shift its approach to Tree Day in 2011, when it commissioned the research that revealed how few children have climbed trees.

"In 2012, the research looked at the measurable health and wellbeing benefits of contact with nature," Mr Gray said.

"Something like 20 per cent of kids don't play outside at all.

"There is overseas research looking at children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and how they perform when they are outside more often.

"They have lower manifestation of ADHD, and people with anxiety and depression feel better as well.

"We compared parents' understanding with those findings and found parents don't really understand the benefits of exposure to outdoors.

"Last year, we looked at the back-

Tree-planting, growing therapy

■ from p1

The need to belong is hard-wired in us, and for many of us we need to be part of collective ethical responses to the social and ecological damages we can see occurring around us.

Landcare work can also be seen as creating "zones of care".

These zones are areas in which the environment is cared for but also in turn seem to become reservoirs of eco-psychological care that can be tapped into by visitors.

Another possible explanation of Landcare work as therapy comes from its health benefits. This kind of work encourages us to do a lot of physical

work in the two or three hours of tree-planting or similar activity.

There is also evidence that to work in local soils and biota is beneficial for our own body ecologies.

Lastly, in the field of therapeutic horticulture it is recognised through focusing attention upon a practical task that requires skill, concentration and judgement, people are often taken out of their busy minds and find themselves more in their bodies and the "flow" of the tree-planting, or weeding, or watering.

People are forced to slow down to the pace of what can actually be physically done. There is also

humility in this. This humility reminds me of the strength of nature. And this I find reassuring.

■ This is an edited version of a speech Dr Charlie Brennan will give at the Australian Association for Bush Adventure Therapy Forum on May 16 to 19 in Canberra. For information about the forum, visit www.aabat.org.au/forum-2014

● Charlie is the co-ordinator of Jalligirr Biodiversity Alliance, lectures in Ethics and Sustainability and Sense of Place at Southern Cross University, and a permaculture designer. Visit www.charliebrennan.info, www.facebook.com/JalligirrBiodiversityAlliance or contact cwsbrennan@gmail.com



National Tree Day will be held across two days, incorporating school and weekend plantings.

yard – it would be of no surprise the backyard is shrinking drastically.

"Houses have become bigger on the same sized blocks and more people are living in units.

"The research we're doing this year is about workplaces. If you're in an office and can't see outside and you put up pictures of nature scenes, it helps lower stress levels and all sorts of other advantages.

"But that's low-level – it's still better to go outside.

"Many of these things are happening for valid reasons. We're not critical, but we're giving people new reasons as to why Tree Day is important."

A primary reason is to get children

outside. If they won't leave their screens, Mr Gray said, they can carry them and start learning about nature through them.

"National Tree Day is a low-entry environmental activity – you don't need to be particularly green to go and plant a tree.

"You might have a park in your area and you'd like to go and plant a tree because it's nicer for the kids.

"One of the things we like about the program is that the research shows once people start to do one thing, they are more likely to do other things in that direction."

Schools, and as of last year, pre-schools, contribute 75 per cent of the participants to the Tree Days.

Planet Ark is working with Cool Australia, which has developed a classroom-based lesson in line with the national curriculum to help students understand the value of trees. After the lesson, they go out and plant trees.

"On National Tree Day, hundreds of Landcare groups, and at least 160 councils, put in an effort that is, tree by tree, shrub by shrub, person by person, creating places where future generations of children can escape their screens and rediscover themselves in nature," Mr Gray said.

■ The program will be held as two days – School Tree Day, on July 25, and National Tree Day, on July 27.



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.

Landcare Australia would like to say thank you to our 2014 Workplace Giving Partners and their employees who are supporting a celebratory 25th Anniversary Junior Landcare Grants Program to encourage the next generation of Landcarers to get involved in a range of projects just for them!

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



Rounding up feral olives

OLIVES might lend charm to a Mediterranean landscape, but in Australia's Mediterranean climate zones, they can be a significant pest.

Although olives are an important part of the agricultural and tourist industry in many parts of Australia, they have a "dark" side.

A hardy plant, well-suited to the Australian climate, mature olive trees produce large quantities of fruit with seeds easily dispersed by birds.

As a result, feral olives have become a serious environmental weed and pose a real threat to remnant native vegetation.

A long-lived species (100 years or more), olives produce a dense canopy that effectively shades out native plants and suppresses natural regeneration.

A South Australian study found native eucalypt woodlands infested with olives had a 50 per cent reduction in plant diversity and an 80pc reduction in native plant canopy cover.

The message those involved in North East Victoria's indigo feral olive control program is to think twice about planting olives in gardens or on properties for ornamental purposes.

If there are already olives growing on a property or you intend to plant them for a commercial venture, ensure they are managed properly and harvest all the fruit before the birds get to them.

There are olive infestations in many parts of south east Australia, including major infestations in the Adelaide Hills and the Mt Annan Botanic Gardens in NSW's Blue Mountains.

A declared weed in NSW and South Australia, olives are not yet officially a

weed in Victoria and Tasmania.

The Indigo Feral Olive Control Program is an ambitious joint project by the Rutherglen and Chiltern Landcare groups that has already seen more than 400 kilometres of roadsides in the Indigo Shire mapped and cleared of feral olive trees.

The groups' goal is to remove the olives before they become a major environmental weed and to inform the community of the threat to the district's remnant vegetation along roadsides, on private properties and in State and National Parks.

The three-year program, which began in May 2012, received \$96,000 funding from the Victorian State government's Communities for Nature program.

As well, Indigo Shire has contributed \$10,000 for removing other woody weeds on selected roadsides.

"From Indigo Shire's perspective, this project is viewed as a really proactive program, rather than a reactive one," said Indigo Shire natural resources management officer Jenny Pena.

"The Landcare groups are trying to tackle an issue before it gets too big," Ms Pena said.

"It complements our weed program, and we can complement theirs."

But the source of olive infestations also needs to be tackled, said Rutherglen Landcare group president and convener of the program's steering committee Jenny Davidson.

"There is a real concern that garden plantings and farm driveway plantings of olives are possibly a ticking time-bomb unless those olives are well-managed and regularly pruned," Ms Davidson said.



An olive tree overtaking native trees.

Instead of planting fruiting olives, the suggestion is to plant a non-fruiting variety, such as the Swan Hill Olive, or a native species with similar foliage and growth characteristics, for example Western Rosewood (*Alectryon oleifolium subs canescens*).

The initiative is not targeting commercial olive growers, according to project manager Rick James, from Riparian Management Services.

"Properly managed olives are okay because you are removing the fruit and the seed source," Mr James said.

"If you are a conscientious professional olive grower you should be

aware they can become a weed, and so remove the fruit.

"It is good practice for growers to monitor their immediate area and remove any seedlings that do pop up on nearby roadsides or reserves."

Members of the project are happy to talk to other landcare groups and agencies and share their experiences.

■ **To download fact sheet "Olives: friend or foe?" visit <http://northeast.landcarevic.net.au/rutherglen/projects/major-feral-olive-tree-removalproject/olives-friend-or-foe/view>**

Panboola community challenge to record species

VOLUNTEERS are invited to take part in a major bioblitz this month that will see 39 surveys undertaken to detail the biodiversity of the Panboola Wetlands region.

Run by the Atlas of Life in the Coastal Wilderness and the Panboola Wetlands and Heritage committee, this will be the second bioblitz in the region.

A bioblitz records as many living species as possible in a chosen area in a designated period of time and the surveys – which will be taken during 30 hours – will cover everything from water bugs to shell middens, birds to bats and flora and insect hunts.

In the past two and a half years, 164 registered contributors have provided 8412 moderated records of 1769 species.

As well as biodiversity, the bioblitz

in the ecologically significant Panboola Wetlands will add records to help track effects of climate change and invasive species.

The 82-hectare community-owned and managed wetland on the far South Coast of New South Wales is a new collaborative method of collecting biodiversity data in Australia.

The Panboola Bioblitz – sponsored by Landcare Australia through Workplace Giving partners – will cover wetlands, saltmarsh and grassland, foreshore, river estuary, lake, dunes and bushland.

It is part of the regional project – the Atlas of Life in the Coastal Wilderness – a long-term program to identify as many of the living creatures of the region as possible over time.

The Atlas of Life spans the landscape from the Great Dividing Range

in the west to the coast of NSW south from Bateman's Marine Park and down to the northern coastal region of Victoria at Lakes Entrance.

The project enables anybody with an interest or passion for the natural world to contribute to an important work of reference.

With expert team leaders, the bioblitz will identify species and log sightings into databases, which will contribute to the national Atlas of Living Australia while giving schools and communities the opportunity to participate in genuine scientific surveys.

The Atlas of Living Australia – an Australian government initiative – is the Australian node of the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF).

Atlas of Life in the Coastal

Wilderness marine biologist and project co-ordinator Patrick Tegart said building relationships and getting support from larger established environmental organisations such as Landcare Australia was essential.

"We have some great scientists and naturalists involved in this year's bioblitz and are encouraging volunteers from the area to get involved and take part in documenting the biodiversity of this significant area," Mr Tegart said.

The Panboola Bioblitz will take place on May 16 and 17.

■ **To find out more and to reserve spot in the blitz, visit www.alcw.org.au**

● The following month there will be an Atlas of Living Australia Science Symposium in Canberra. For more information visit ala.org.au

In Brief

Crab photography: Budding photographers in South West Western Australia are invited to take part in a photo competition being run ahead of the "Save the Crabs, Then Eat Them" campaign.

The popular television campaign was developed by the South West Catchments Council (SWCC) and its partners in 2013 as part of the Home River Ocean program.

The campaign urges South West coastal urban residents to "hold off on the fertiliser till spring" to reduce the amount of nutrients entering coastal waterways during the winter months.

The overall theme for the photo competition is lifestyle; encompassing home, river and ocean. The competition, to be run from March 6 to August 31, will be run through Instagram using the hashtag #homeriverocean.

■ **For details on how to enter visit www.homeriverocean.com.au**

Marine research grants: The Foundation Of National Parks and Wildlife annually offers a \$7000 grant to support marine research in partnership with the Paddy Pallin Foundation and Humane Society International science grant program.

The aim of the Foundation's Marine Science Grants is to provide financial support for conservation-based research of Australian marine ecosystems.

The grants are administered by the Royal Zoological Society of NSW.

Applications for the next round of funding open this month.

■ **For application details, visit fnpw.org.au/foundation-grants/marine**

Park congress: A one-in-ten year event for those concerned with the world's cornerstone of biodiversity conservation, the global system of protected areas, will be held in Sydney from November 12 to 19.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature World Parks Congress affects debates, thinking and strategic direction of the largest single allocation of land on earth, says a congress spokesman.

"The congress is not just for those working in the protected area industry, it's for everybody who cares – our economy, our environment and the health of our society," he said.

There are various categories of registration from student and developing country rates to day rates and full registration packages for the full seven day congress and prices start from \$100.

■ **For more information visit www.worldparkscongress.org**

Helen Macpherson grants:

Applications close June 16 for the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust Round Two Community One-off Grants.

The trust is offering grants of up to \$30,000 and welcomes applications from eligible organisations with projects that fit the trust's funding criteria.

■ **For application details visit www.hmstrust.org.au or call the HMSTrust grants team, (03) 9999 3000.**



Yates Junior Landcare Creative Gardening Grants

Get Creative in the Garden - Upcycle, recycle, save water or create a rain garden!

To find out how you can apply for a \$1000 grant for your school, visit www.juniorlandcare.com.au

Pest app the first of its kind

The Field Guide to Pest Animals phone app has just been updated by the Invasive Animals Co-operative Research Centre (CRC).

The app comes as part of an Australian government initiative to develop new technologies to reduce the impacts of pest animals.

With species descriptions for 53 of Australia's worst pest animals – such as wild dogs, mice, rabbits, foxes, feral cats and feral deer – the free app is the first of its kind in Australia.

It contains photo galleries, distribution maps, animal calls, images of footprints and animal droppings, control techniques and quick links to plenty of useful pest control resources.

The app complements a suite of resources by the Invasive Animals CRC, which previously received funding from Landcare Australia through Woolworths and Toshiba for its FeralScan website.

Invasive Animals CRC chief executive Andreas Glanznig said the cost of developing this kind of pest control resource was minimal compared to the cost of pest damage.

"Australia has more than 80 vertebrate pest species, the main culprits costing at least \$1 billion annually in economic, environmental and social impacts," Ms Glanznig said.

Project co-ordinator Peter West said the app was proving popular since the first version was released last year.

"Version 1 of the App had received overwhelming interest," Mr West said.

"(There have been) more than 7500 downloads across Australia by farmers, catchment officers, school students, educators, landcare groups, local government authorities and the general public.

"Version two is expected to be equally popular.

"Importantly, the app contains information about what to do if you find a new pest animal threat, and it also provides links to a series of practical YouTube clips on pest control, and free resources such as the FeralScan program for mapping pest animals in your local area."

Partners to the project include the Invasive Animals CRC, PestSmart, NSW Department of Primary Industries and the Co-operative Research Centres Program – an Australian government initiative.

The free App is compatible with iPad, iPhone and iPod touch devices.

The Invasive Animals CRC is looking at developing an Android version in the near future.

■ Check out the Field Guide to Pest Animals phone app, as well as other mobile tools, at www.feral.org.au/mobile-phone-apps



Yakamia now a 'living stream'

WITH help from a team of professionals, a regional West Australian community is taking ownership of a waterway cutting through the centre of Albany in the State's south-west.

Yakamia Creek is a highly modified urban waterway, reshaped over the years to function as Albany's main drainage channel.

Rising nine kilometres inland, it meanders past housing estates, industrial areas, public open spaces and small farms before emptying into the nationally significant Oyster Harbour.

The creek collects all stormwater run-off and currently suffers from a variety of environmental pressures: invasive weeds, inappropriate shape, poor water quality and lack of habitat.

Inspired by work conducted by the South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare at Perth's Bannister Creek, The Friends of Yakamia Creek (TFYC) formed to address the waterway's many environmental shortcomings and to convert it into a "living stream".

Some of the group's goals include returning robust ecological function to the waterway and making it aesthetically pleasing, without impeding its function as a drain.

TFYC consists of community members as well as staff from South Coast Natural Resource Management (NRM), the Oyster Harbour Catchment Group, the City of Albany, the Department of Water and the Albany Community Environment Centre.



South Coast Natural Resource Management chairman Bill Hollingworth and students from Yakamia Primary School at one of the school planting days. Yakamia Primary School is adopting a small stretch of the creek to look after as their own.

BELOW: Staff from South Coast Natural Resource Management, the City of Albany and the Department of Water planted reeds and sedges in a created wetland on the Yakamia Creek during a corporate tree planting day.

"Without the support from the community and the commitment from everyone, this project would not proceed," said South Coast NRM Regional Landcare facilitator David Broadhurst.

"We are drawing on the experience of many seasoned NRM professionals who all provide something different to the project."

"For example, the Department of Water provides all of the technical information we need, while the Oyster Harbour Catchment Group coordinates the on-ground works."

TFYC has already completed work on two areas of the waterway in partnership with the City of Albany.

The Friends created an artificial wetland on previously degraded land and refurbished a section of open drain opposite Yakamia Primary School.

The project partners have chosen to undertake all activities using current best management principles with thorough consultation, planning and on-ground activities.

"We have engaged with all sectors of the community, but a more focused approach is still progressing with indigenous groups and young people," Mr Broadhurst said.

"Given the entire waterway is a registered Aboriginal site, we have chosen to conduct best practice regarding Aboriginal consultation and engagement by collecting stories, employing Aboriginal family repre-

sentatives to conduct surveys and oversee earthworks and well as having a contingency for archaeological support if required.

"We have also employed an Aboriginal NRM work team to carry out maintenance and follow up works when required."

TFYC has also received assistance from school groups, the Girl Guides and Scouts, undergraduate university students and "youth at risk".

Participants have established thousands of appropriate and locally sourced plants on the two sites.

Further community consultation with local residents is on-going as the "living stream" concept relies heavily on the wants and needs of residents and users.

Future projects will include more whole-of-catchment planning in partnership with the City of Albany (to include all tributaries and drains that flow into the creek), sourcing funding to continue community consultation and Aboriginal NRM work, and a more detailed monitoring regime.

Murrumbidgee giving silverleaf the flick

The perennial summer weed silverleaf nightshade (SLN) is in the sights of NSW Primary Industries and Murrumbidgee Landcare.

The organisations have developed a new collaborative project, funded by Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA), to target the costly weed across five States using the Landcare network.

Previous projects have shown the extent of the weed problem, and how to get better control.

This project will the group learning power of Landcare and farmer groups to build local capacity and foster the adoption of the research by farm communities.

Silverleaf nightshade (*Solanum elaeagnifolium*) is an introduced perennial weed that can dominate pastures and cropping areas.

It can reduce crop yields by as much as 20 to 40 per cent by taking moisture and nutrients in summer and autumn which otherwise would be used by following crops.

In pasture paddocks it can reduce growth of productive species and

render areas useless for livestock grazing.

It reproduces from both seed and root fragments, so can be difficult to control by conventional means.

Many common farm activities such as livestock movement and cultivation will spread this weed.

Research has shown up to 90pc of seeds remain viable after passing through the gut of sheep, so is easily spread by grazing animals.

Surveys of grower practices has shown that many farmers are not aware of the extent of the problem on their farms and that adoption of effective control methods has been poor.

SLN is often not specifically targeted as it often appears as scattered infestations, and if not treated in the long term will re-establish.

Many farmers are frustrated that efforts to control the weed have failed and it has spread to other areas of the farm.

But recent research has shown a systematic approach using a dual action

control over the growing season, from spring to autumn, is needed.

In many cases, more expensive residual herbicides may be required to be used in conjunction with normal summer weed programs to give effective control.

Adoption of research by rural communities requires a combination of extension techniques to give the best results.

Several strategies will be used in this project to ensure that communities have the skills to manage SLN.

The project team will ask each community to come up with strategies that they are comfortable with and develop specific activities, technologies and management practices for their own situation.

This may involve large-scale demonstrations carried out by local farmers which compare current research with the standard farmer practices, and a series of workshops and field days complemented by media articles.

Access to information through

websites, social media and industry journals will keep individuals and groups up to date.

This is all planned to raise awareness of the problem and to get wider adoption of best practices to control this weed by working together.

Project officer Phil Bowden, from Murrumbidgee Landcare at Cootamundra, NSW, will present workshops to raise awareness of the problem and show best practices to control this weed.

Further information will be made available through the farmer groups and Landcare network.

As part of the project, a grower survey will give information about how farmers have dealt with this weed in the past and what influences them to change practices.

● The survey only takes a few minutes, and will give valuable background on this weed. To take part, visit www.surveymonkey.com/s/SLN2014

■ If your group would like a workshop on SLN control, contact Phil, 0427 201 946 or email weeds@mli.org.au



Boosting biodiversity in Tasmania

AN AERIAL view of the Korpershoek's 243-hectare farm in far North West Tasmania would show a patchwork of pasture, crops and bushland, with seams of vegetation flanking streams meandering to West Inlet and Bass Strait.

Upon closer inspection, the tributaries of Ghost Creek on the Korpershoek's property feature thick melaleuca, tea tree and emerging threatened brooker gums, scattered with mature stringybarks, blackwoods and tree ferns.

Native vegetation in the area has a high conservation value but weeds (including gorse, cape ivy and blue periwinkle) and unfenced stock impact the condition of the bush.

With a clear plan, hard work and some local support, the family is reducing threats to local biodiversity and to their farming systems.



Scott Korpershoek, his partner Melanie Colville and their children Audrey, 2, and Sam, 4.

Theirs is one of 51 Landcare biodiversity grant projects being delivered across Tasmania by Landcare Tasmania in partnership with the Tasmanian government's Private Land Conservation Program (PLCP).

Along with several other landholders across the East and West Inlet, near Stanley, the Korpershoeks were invited to apply for funding.

The PLCP's mapped areas of high conservation values or "focal landscapes" were matched with Landcare Tasmania's network of active landholders, and key funding opportunities were identified.

For the Korpershoeks, the grant is providing practical on-ground support to treat various weeds and protect threatened plant communities from stock.

"There are a number of farmers doing an excellent job managing threats to their bush in the area," said Landcare Tasmania project manager Peter Stronach.

"The types of native vegetation on and near these properties are collectively vital habitat for various threatened species including the wedge-tailed eagle, white-bellied sea eagle, spotted-tail quoll, Tasmanian devil and giant freshwater lobster.

"The Korpershoeks are a great example of young farmers managing bush to maximise benefits to both biodiversity and farm productivity."

While the family has owned the land for more than 50 years, Scott Korpershoek and partner Melanie



Landcare Tasmania project manager Peter Stronach and weeds contractor Sam Bryant on the North West Tasmanian property owned by Scott Korpershoek and Melanie Colville.

Colville have been on the property for six years with their two young children.

Annually they crop about 450 tonnes of onions, 1200t of potatoes, as well as poppies and garlic.

They also have 300 dairy cows producing about 2.5 million litres of milk a year.

"We milk right through winter and need warm, dry paddocks," Mr Korpershoek said.

"It's worth valuing native shelter and protecting what you've got.

"Getting fences up to keep stock

out means the bush doesn't get opened up or more weeds introduced.

"Already we're seeing patches we've fenced are recovering really well."

Mr Korpershoek said other farmers looking to improve local native bush just need to "get onto it".

"You've got to see what's out there," he said.

"We've found there's lots of support you don't know about until you start getting involved.

"It's really worth connecting with your local Landcare organisations,

facilitators and project staff."

The Landcare Biodiversity Grants have been delivered by Landcare Tasmania, in partnership with the Tasmanian government.

The program has removed threats to 4180ha of high conservation vegetation communities, protecting and enhancing 1753ha of vegetation communities in good condition and undertaking activities on 363ha that support biodiverse plantings and areas with a high natural regeneration potential.

■ Visit www.landcaretas.org.au

Great Eastern Ranges grants announced

IN MARCH, FORMER NSW environment minister Robyn Parker acknowledged the 25-year anniversary of Landcare with the announcement of \$100,000 in grants at a cake-cutting ceremony near Maitland, NSW.

The grants recognise the critical contribution Landcare makes to conservation and land management, and are being made available to help deliver one of Australia's most ambitious conservation programs, the Great Eastern Ranges Initiative (GER).

"In the 25 years since its formation Landcare has built an enviable reputation for enabling community based action to address land degradation," said Maitland MP Robyn Parker.

"By supporting Landcare in NSW and teaming its efforts with the bigger framework provided by the Great Eastern Ranges Initiative, we are supporting the best opportunities for the restoration and preser-

vation of our natural assets."

The Great Eastern Ranges Landcare Grants Program has been set up by GER, Landcare NSW and the Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife with funding from the NSW government.

Grants are available to Landcare and groups focused on natural resource management and sustainable agriculture for projects that fall within one of the GER's priority focus areas in NSW. The aim is to align land management efforts with the GER vision of an ecologically connected landscape along Australia's eastern mountain ranges and adjacent lands.

Eligible projects cover a range of activities including restoring natural habitat connections, weed and feral animal control and fire management.

GER chief executive Rob Dunn also congratulated Landcare on its 25th birthday and acknowledged the criti-

cal support of the NSW government, both in the establishment of the grants program and its ongoing support for the GER.

"You need three things to come together for effective conservation to take place: the science and planning to know where to act and what to do, the community support and an army of people to do the work and the funding to enable it all to happen," Mr Dunn said.

"This partnership sees these three elements coming together."

Landcare NSW council member and chair of the Hunter Region Landcare Network John Hughson attended the event.

"Landcare and GER share a lot of values with how we work with the community," Mr Hughson said.

"These grants will help us strengthen and build on our partnership with GER in communities we both work in."



Hunter Region Landcare Network chair John Hughson, Maitland MP Robyn Parker, and Great Eastern Ranges chief executive Rob Dunn.

■ For more information about Landcare NSW, visit www.landcarensw.org.au and for details on the Great Eastern Ranges Initiative, visit

www.greasterranges.org.au. ■ To find out more about the GER grants, visit the Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife's website, <http://fnpw.org.au/landcare>

Invertek Drives is proud to announce a new partnership with Landcare Australia to support Landcare and Coastcare groups and the on-ground action that has helped build and create a more sustainable environment and future for all of us to enjoy and appreciate.

Invertek pool pump drives are a plug-and-play device that varies speed - reducing energy by up to 75% - helping you and the environment become more sustainable.

For every Invertek pool pump drive sold, Invertek will donate \$99 to Landcare Australia, to launch the Invertek Landcare & Coastcare Grants program during the summer of 2014/15.

For more information visit

www.landcareonline.com.au/corporate-partners/invertekdrives/



Film a dam wildlife blitz

There are hundreds of thousands of farm dams across Australia but they are typically barren and lack good wildlife habitat.

A new film, *Farm Dam Blitz*, aims to help landholders transform their dams and better accommodate wildlife.

The film highlights the huge potential of farm dams to help agriculture become more sustainable.

Landholders talk about what they have done to enhance habitat in their farm dams, with each property doing something different.

Murrumbidgee Landcare program manager Marion Benjamin said the film showcased some of the inspiring Landcare work being done by farmers in both New South Wales and Victoria.

"The message from the farmers is really clear: you don't need to make huge changes to make a difference," Mr Benjamin said.

"Their enthusiasm shows the benefits are not just for wildlife; the wetlands greatly improve the beauty and amenity of the landscape for the farmers too."

The film contains aerial footage of

the sites taken from a small drone and features more than 20 waterbird and frog species, including the endangered Australasian Bittern and Australian Painted Snipe.

Among the different habitat enhancement methods highlighted in the film are earthworks to create shallows, mudflats and reed beds; fencing to exclude stock from all or part of the dam; adding logs, and planting natives around the dam.

Presenter and wildlife ecologist Matt Herring said he had a lot of fun making the film and he hoped many more landholders would seize the opportunity to benefit wildlife on farms.

"I really wanted to highlight the habitat value of waterplants and shallows, and without giving it away, let's just say I undergo my own transformation alongside the farm dams."

Farm Dam Blitz was produced by Murrumbidgee Landcare, Murray Wildlife and NJ Productions, through funding from the Australian government. The film can be viewed on YouTube and the Murrumbidgee Landcare website.



Waterbirds like the purple swamphen are quick to benefit from new waterplant habitat. Photo: Matt Herring.

Blue Mountains' blueprint success

A COMMUNITY initiative to preserve native vegetation has resulted in some important infrastructure upgrades, thanks to support from Landcare Australia's partners.

The Blue Mountains Wildplant Rescue Service (BMWRS) has been hailed as a model for communities working on practical ways to conserve and extend local biodiversity in the face of urban development.

BMWRS is a community based, not-for-profit, volunteer organisation founded in 1994 to protect and maintain the biodiversity of the Great Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

It has 57 members and 15 dedicated and active volunteers who contribute more than 1500 hours a year to various activities that support nursery operations including seed collection and rescuing plants.

From 2012 to 2013, BMWRS received project funding from Landcare Australia and partners Qantas, Be Natural Cereals and Snacks and Coca Cola International Foundation – which allowed the group to begin an upgrade of the community-run Katoomba Native Plant Nursery.

The group's first move was to install 24 new propagation benches to help increase productivity and survival rate of native seedlings.

Before the upgrade, the benches were nearly at ground level, which

left tubestock vulnerable to attack by rabbits, slugs, snails and other lovers of young plants.

Working with trays in this position also required a lot of bending and heavy lifting; back-breaking work that could be discouraging to potential volunteers.

The new raised benches – stage one of several planned upgrades – have allowed volunteers to increase the production of native seedlings and mitigated earlier safety issues.

Funding for stage 2 of the nursery upgrade, provided by the Coca Cola International Foundation, went toward the planning and installation of an automatic watering system.

This initiative has allowed the nursery to be more waterwise, especially through reducing the need for water from the town's mains water supply in favour of water from on-site rainwater tanks.

A lot of time and energy was spent watering by hand. Automation has freed up time and directed volunteer efforts to other key areas of nursery operations.

Stage three of the upgrade plan kicked in earlier this year when, through Landcare Australia, BMWRS became part of the Westpac Foundation's Village Nurseries program.

Regular BMWRS volunteers look forward to welcoming new volunteers as the program helps them reach out



The Blue Mountains Wildplant Rescue Service focuses on plants endemic to the Blue Mountains.

to the local TAFE, schools, job network clients and locals interested in biodiversity issues and getting hands-on with biodiversity conservation.

"Our volunteers are extremely grateful for the support from Landcare Australia," said BMWRS chairperson Anne Rickwood.

"Our gratitude extends to the fact Landcare Australia and their corporate partners have recognised not only our need for new equipment but also value the work of our volunteers... thank you."

Without volunteers, BMWRS and the nursery would not exist, Ms Rickwood said.

"Volunteers are the backbone of the organisation, proving people who care can make a difference."

Landcare Australia is providing regular updates on the nurseries involved in the Westpac Foundations Landcare Village Nursery program.

A "how-to" kit is in development to aid nursery development in the future, and will be made freely avail-



Raising seedlings off from the ground.

able when the program concludes next year.

The Landcare Australia kit will be used to encourage other nurseries across Australia to adopt best practise

and develop their own social enterprise program, so they can deliver environmental outcomes alongside social inclusion and community development benefits.



New benches being installed.



Ark delivering devils from extinction

THERE is an ark in the Upper Hunter not carrying all the world's animals, two by two, but about 200 Tasmanian devils in quarantine against the catastrophic crash of the species on its island home.

The Tasmanian devil population has plummeted because of devil facial tumour disease (DFTD), contagious, devil-specific cancer that has wiped out about 97 per cent of the devil population in some areas.

DFTD is transmitted through bites or scratches when adult devils squabble over food or sex.

It first appears as lumps and lesions around the mouth, which can develop into cancerous tumours of such size they interfere with feeding, causing eventual starvation.

Devils usually die within six months of lesions appearing.

There is no known cure for DFTD, so the DevilArk breeding facility was built at Tomalla, in the Upper Hunter, NSW, in 2011 as the species' ark against what some fear might be the devil's extinction.

DFTD-free wild Devils from Tasmania and zoo-bred animals were carefully selected to first establish the DevilArk breeding program.

Last year, 15 of the 20 breeding Devils carried pouch young, with 35 joeys bred, bringing the DevilArk

entire Tomalla population to just under 200. The young are carried in their mother's pouch for about four months.

DFTD-free wild Devils from Tasmania and zoo-bred animals were carefully selected to first establish the DevilArk breeding program.

This year, 15 of the 20 breeding devils have been confirmed as carrying pouch young, making a total of 35 joeys so far bred in the DevilArk and the entire Tomalla population to just less than 200. Young are carried in their mother's pouch for about four months.

The large free-range enclosures at Tomalla provide a similar natural environment as in the wild.

The feeding program also encourages the devils' natural scavenging behaviour.

Temperatures at Tomalla simulate climatic conditions in the devil's Tasmanian home range. At an elevation of 1350 metres, that includes frosts and snow in winter. The native vegetation mirrors the complex bushland habitat seen in Tasmania, with a tall eucalypt forest on the property and its surrounds.

Introduced weeds like stinging nettle (*urtica urens*), nodding thistle (*carduus nutans*) and the invasive scotch broom (*cytiscus scoparius*) exist in the area, and weed control works



Lucky, a Tasmanian devil joey at the DevilArk breeding facility in the Upper Hunter, NSW

are helping native acacias and grasses re-establish on the site.

A new DevilArk interpretative centre was recently opened, providing displays, video presentations and a sound machine that plays devil vocalisations.

The centre provides office facilities

for staff, a reception area, a modern kitchen, toilets, meeting room and outdoor verandah space.

Volunteers from the DevilArk Advocates group in the Upper Hunter Shire promote the project and raise funds, primarily by displays and stalls

at events across the Hunter and other practical support where required.

■ For more information on the DevilArk Advocates or to join the group, email info@devilark.com.au, contact 1300 553 565 or visit www.devilark.com.au

Joint forces growing revolution

A UNIQUE project is delivering economic, social and environmental benefits in the Mid-Lachlan Landcare district by providing a peer learning environment to livestock producers.

Growing the Grazing Revolution appeals to graziers who want to implement sustainable and regenerative grazing practices and encourages people to try new techniques at their own pace, with the help of a facilitator and mentor.

The project has contributed to significant improvements in groundcover, soil health and water quality, all of which contribute to ecosystem services.

"Proper management of our grasslands will provide huge benefits to landscape health and sustainability to all our rural communities," said Canowindra grazier Scott Hickman, who has managed the project since it began four years ago.

"Landcare has always played an important and vital role in achieving these goals."

The project began in 2010, when a survey of landholders in the Mid-

Lachlan Landcare district identified the need for a support network for graziers who wanted to improve their management practices.

A joint partnership formed between Mid-Lachlan Landcare and the Lachlan Catchment Management Authority, and so the Growing the Grazing Revolution was created.

What began as a local project four years ago has expanded to include a wide range of people and farming enterprises in nine localities across the NSW Central Tablelands and beyond.

Mr Hickman (pictured) is trained in holistic grazing management and well respected within the community.

He delivers the project with enthusiasm and strong communication skills.

As the facilitator he provides resources and links to other networks, organises information sessions, propa-

erty tours and field days with specialist speakers, who talk on a range of topics, from grazing management to animal fertility, nutrition and dung beetles.

Mr Hickman also acts as a mentor, building confidence and providing ideas and encouragement.

While he works hard to convey the benefits of grazing management, he believes the project's success comes from its inclusive nature, which harnesses local knowledge and experience.

"We welcome anyone who is interested to know how they can keep their businesses viable, profitable and sustainable, working with the land and the climate," Mr Hickman said.

"While the project provides people with a positive outlook and the tools to manage their grazing land and businesses more effectively, it's important to highlight that there's no set way of doing things.

"The shared knowledge is a combination of lessons learnt from all types of farming backgrounds."

Supporter and local grazier Wendy Bowman believes the project's success is reflected in field day attendance.

She recently observed a crowd of more than 50 people only a week away from last Christmas, during what was a particularly dry time.



Participants at the Closed Season Field Day learning about strategies to plan ahead during a non-growing phase using stock control and grass feed budgeting.

"The season was going downhill," Ms Bowman said.

"Lots of people felt the need to come together at a critical time and that moment was provided by Scott."

Growing the Grazing Revolution is just at the beginning of its journey.

Mr Hickman plans to keep challenging and encouraging his network, but would also like to help other Landcare districts and Local Land Services areas adopt the project.

"We'd like to encourage all members of the community to feel they can be comfortably involved with Growing the Grazing Revolution, no matter what their property size or enterprise," he said.

■ For more information about recent and upcoming field days, or to become involved with Growing the Grazing Revolution, contact Scott Hickman, 0427 416 450 or email oatleigh@westnet.com.au



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The Harlequin Team are proud to support Landcare Australia with time, energy and funds to support kids' involvement in Junior Landcare projects across Australia.





The big achiever from Little River

FARMER, chief executive, board member, advocate, wife, mother and NSW/ACT Rural Woman of the Year – Pip Job is a one-person advertisement for how many roles a woman can fulfil in the once man-centric world of agriculture.

And to prove the adage about women and multitasking, Ms Job manages to do all these things at once.

Ms Job, who with husband Selwyn breeds beef cattle at Cumnock, NSW, is driven by the need for agriculture and natural resource management to be integrated to create a sustainable future for generations to come.

She is the chief executive of the Little River Landcare Group (LRLG), chairs the Central West natural resource management working group, is an executive committee member of Landcare NSW Inc and sits on the board of Central Tablelands Local Land Services.

She also supports Meat and Livestock Australia as an “environmental advocate” in its Target 100 campaigns and is an active spokesperson on the work being undertaken by the

farming sector to protect the environment while practising agriculture.

Her approach to strengthening agriculture is exemplified in her role in overhauling the Little River Landcare Group.

In late 2011, the group’s management was on the edge of burnout, and the survival of the group itself was threatened.

Ms Job and some other far-sighted members of the community got together to look at how Little River could regroup and rebuild on a stronger basis. In doing so, they have redefined what a Landcare group is about.

Little River has adopted a “triple bottom line” that allows it to deal with issues across the catchment on any level.

The underlying principle is that environmental outcomes are only achieved when people and their needs are taken care of.

This has prompted Little River to step outside the normal sphere of Landcare to deliver social programs. Some of the most successful have included:

- Farmers Teaching Farmers – more than 70 farming families

(more than 150 individuals) have participated in this educational program over the past four years.

- Positive Farming Footprints – 25 farming families have completed this eight day program, developed in-house by LRLG.

- Landcare Mentoring Program – 30 farmers have undertaken mentoring training.

- Succession Planning and Intergenerational Transfer – more than 110 people have attended.

The group has also incorporated personal awareness and development as a key item in its capacity building programs.

“At the end of the day, the most serious challenges we have are those that involve people and their thinking,” Ms Job said.

“We have overcome a period of stress and anxiety about the organisation’s future and are now certain of what the future holds for the group.”

Little River hopes to present the story of its revival at the National Landcare Conference in September.

A Strong influence in agriculture

LYNNE Strong is a connector. A partner in the Jamberoo, NSW, dairy run by her husband Michael and son Nicholas, Ms Strong wants agriculture to evolve from pockets of isolated endeavour to an integrated industry that links everybody and everything, from the customer back to the soil.

“Everybody along the supply chain is our customer, and until we understand those customers, we can’t deliver for them,” said the winner of the inaugural Bob Hawke Landcare Award in 2012.

“Communication is huge in this. We have this mindset that agriculture is about quiet achievers.

“If we’re going to communicate and reassure the Australian public we’ve got safe, healthy food, we have to communicate.”

“Women are the key to this. We’re comfortable in that space, we’re proud of what we do, and people trust women.”

Ms Strong takes her own medicine. She initiated Dairy Youth Australia Inc. and the “Art4Agriculture” programs, including Picasso Cows and the Archibull Prize, which use

the basis of their understanding of the agricultural supply chain as well as consumer attitudes and trends.

They are then charged with feeding this knowledge back to their peers to help them respond to emerging issues, and to help others develop meaningful relationships with urban consumers.

“When we started the Young Farming Champions program, all of our farmers just happened to be women,” Ms Strong said, adding that the mix has since been enriched by men.

“Women are wonderful communicators, which is why the Women in Australian Agriculture 100 (WIAA 100) initiative is so important.

“Women play a whole-of-business role — as the categories in WIAA show. It showcases how women are able to engage right through the supply chain.”

Ms Strong’s own journey into farming politics and advocacy, at a State and federal level, has given her a personal education on the rewards and perils of “sticking your hand up”.

“It takes a huge amount of time to get involved with these things,” she said.

“What I learnt was it’s essential that farmers support the people representing them. We need to supply people with the capacity to do that job, and industry isn’t doing it well.”

“It’s pivotal that when you get involved, you do it for the right reasons. I put my hand up because I wanted to get a clear understanding of how the system worked and what was involved, and how to communicate that back to people on the ground.”

But, Ms Strong said, in the boardroom she “realised I didn’t have the skillset and knowledge to do the job I wanted to do”.

“I thought, I’m not achieving and



Winner of the inaugural Bob Hawke Landcare Award in 2012 Lynne Strong, from Jamberoo, NSW, has initiated projects including Art4Agriculture and Dairy Youth Australia to engage young people in agriculture.

I’m just feeling bad about myself – but I’m working with a whole group of young people who have those skill sets.”

That realisation helped inspire the Young Farming Champions program, through which Ms Strong is passing on the torch of her passion for a deeply interconnected agriculture.

“Agriculture needs to be dynamic, innovative, connected – and it needs to be fun – to be successful and profitable. So how are we going to extract more value from our supply chains?”

“I’m obsessed with finding and nurturing talent, and supporting it. “This is about forming the networks that agriculture so

desperately needs. But we’re not doing that as industry.”

■ The second prestigious Bob Hawke Landcare Award will be presented at the 2014 National Landcare Awards in September. Applications open later this month Details will be available at www.bobhawkelandcareaward.com.au

art and multimedia to engage thousands of students in learning about the role farmers play in Australia’s future.

More recently, she has built the Young Farming Champions program.

Young Farming Champions are selected within different sectors on

I put my hand up because I wanted to get a clear understanding of how the system worked and what was involved

– Lynne Strong