



LEFT: Federal Agriculture Minister, Joe Ludwig talking to farmers on his recent tour of the Murray-Darling Basin.

## Soil carbon still a good farm option

THE future of carbon trading may be unclear, says National Landcare facilitator, Brett de Hayr, but unlike almost everything else to do with emissions abatement, soil carbon sequestration can still be pursued "with no regrets".

Little wonder soil carbon is generating great interest and discussion among Landcare groups.

"It's not just a potential source of income under carbon trading, but offers productivity and environmental benefits that will accrue regardless," Mr de Hayr said.

Another reason soil carbon is being discussed is that much remains to be learned about the topic.

Some new research initiatives are underway to deliver more baseline data, but while those projects are underway Mr de Hayr suggests landholders wanting to know more should seek out *A Farmers Guide to Soil Carbon Under Pasture* by Dr Yin Chan from the NSW Department of Industry and Innovation, or CSIRO's fact sheet, "Soil Carbon: The Basics" (November 2008), which can be found on the CSIRO website.

Landcare is watching with interest developments under the Carbon Farming Initiative, the \$46.5 million Federal program to develop methods of establishing carbon credits that can be sold on voluntary domestic or international markets.

It had been proposed Landcare might be a vehicle for informing landholders how they could benefit from the initiative, but Mr de Hayr said no further details were available at the moment.

Most of the methods likely to be initially eligible under the scheme involve avoiding emissions – from livestock, fertiliser, savannah burning and deforestation.

Reafforestation, a Landcare speciality, is the only land development method that is currently a clear possibility for the initiative.

"The Carbon Farming Initiative is likely to be of significant interest to many farmers and the broader Landcare community," Mr de Hayr said.

"However, it is important that it retains a practical focus to ensure people are well informed and maximise co-benefits to production and the environment."

# Learning Landcare's legacy

By COLIN BETTLES

FEDERAL Agriculture Minister Joe Ludwig has spent little more than two months in his new portfolio but has already established a firm grasp of Landcare's strategic importance to environmental sustainability, across a broad range of areas.

Mr Ludwig said one important aspect of Landcare's continued success in Australia was the critical, ongoing interaction it generated between landholders, farmers, graziers and the general community.

He said another important ingredi-

ent was the passion Landcare people exhibited in running different programs, "particularly for their community and ensuring the environment was looked after".

There are more than 6000 Landcare and Coastcare groups nationwide with volunteers ranging from children, retirees, surfers, farmers and

Landcare than just planting trees. He said the program also encompassed caring for waterways.

He nominated the Reef Rescue Program as one of its great beneficiaries.

"It's about ensuring the continuation of the Great Barrier Reef and it's also about ensuring agricultural land

is not contributing to that," he said. "It's a very successful program.

"I think it's important to ensure we have the ability to have a complete granting program that captures all different types of Caring For Our Country projects."

During his early field trips to rural and agricultural communities where he has engaged with a range of stakeholders, Mr Ludwig has seen evidence of Landcare's positive impact on modern farming practices.

He recently visited farmers and landholders along the Murray-Darling Basin where he gained several strong impressions about the program's effectiveness.

"The range of community people who were showing me around, the dairy farmers as well, were explaining to me how they were now managing their properties and how they were dealing with a whole range of issues," he said.

"One of the properties I was on in the Murray Darling was planting and had planted trees in different ways to put in wind breaks but also to stop soil erosion.

"That may not have been a direct benefit of Landcare but the idea of Landcare and communities assisting in Landcare has, I think, also permeated and helped farmers more broadly so that they do adopt those practices.

"They do consider how they can

plant trees, how they can consider maintaining waterways and how they can ensure that they don't allow pollutants to run off into waterways.

"And so through all of those things they have significantly changed their practices, at least what I've seen they have."

Mr Ludwig said the task was far from complete and despite the success of Landcare, there was "always more work to be done".

"It was explained to me that some of the easy work has been done," he said.

"Maintaining your banks and maintaining trees and doing all of those things, that always needs to continue.

"But that's why Landcare should always evolve; should always look to see what the community, what the farmers and what the environment needs are and maintain its relevance to farming communities about what it can do to assist in these areas and Caring For Our Country."

Mr Ludwig said the government was supporting and assisting Landcare's evolution.

"This is what the role of government is about," he said.

"It's about supporting regional communities, it's about supporting Landcare to engage with regional communities and it's about ensuring there are granting funds available especially for that purpose."

(Farmers) do consider how they can plant trees, how they can consider maintaining waterways and how they can ensure that they don't allow pollutants to run off into waterways

– Federal Agriculture Minister, Joe Ludwig



## I donated myself to Landcare.

Landcare Australia is a grassroots movement dedicated to managing environmental issues in local communities from coast to country. From tree planting to web design, restoring habitats to event management, sustainable farming to fund-raising. Landcare relies on people like you and me to lend a hand. So if you're going to donate anything, go to [www.landcareonline.com.au](http://www.landcareonline.com.au) and donate yourself to Landcare. Just like I did.





# Landcare In Focus

www.landcareonline.com.au



## The shape of Landcare's future is clear

LANDCARE has been at work for more than two decades, over which time the landscape in which it operates has changed. What does Landcare look like in coming decades?

The knowledge, experience and achievements of the past two decades have been poured into the Australian Framework for Landcare, intended to be the basis of Landcare's growth and development in coming years.

The framework is also a guide for stakeholders and prospective Landcare partners, advising them on how they can engage with landcarers in addressing sustainability issues of common concern.

The Australian Framework for Landcare Reference Group, charged with developing the framework on behalf of landcare communities, has based its work on consultations with Landcarers over the past 18 months.

"The aspirations in the document belong to the community," said Coral Love, chairwoman of the reference group.

The framework is based on the philosophy that people from all communities and cultures can actively take responsibility for the health of Australia's environmental assets – as Ms Love said, "it's in our hands".

"The bar has been set high. The framework's vision asks all Australians to take responsibility for the way they live in the landscape, to ensure a healthy environment that supports a sustainable future."

"Landcarers have an important leadership role within their communities in addressing ongoing and emerging challenges associated with the risks of climate change, access to safe food and water supplies, and the stability and health of environmental assets across the country."

To support the framework, an Australian Framework for Landcare Action Plan is being developed, overseen by the Australian Landcare Council.

Due to be completed by the end of this year, the action plan will include an analysis of the framework's key elements and how they are to contribute to the development and improvement of the Landcare approach.

It will provide strategies for how landcarers can contribute to the critical sustainability and environmental issues facing the community.

■ The framework can be downloaded at [www.landcareonline.com.au](http://www.landcareonline.com.au)

## Victorian volunteers plant 13,500 trees

A HUNDRED volunteers, two-and-a-half days, 13,500 trees: the latest plantout by Project Platypus demonstrated that the Landcare spirit is alive and hard at work.

The plantout was aimed at revegetating the banks of a 4.5-kilometre stretch of Georges Creek, from the Moyston-Willaura Road to Moyston-Dunkeld Road – right through the middle of the Historic Barton Station.

With many hands making light work, the volunteer planting brigade completed the 4.5km of creek line plantings planned for Barton Station and nearly half the planting program for Simon and Yvette Brady's property at Jallukar.

Project Platypus manager, Leigh Blackmore, said locals were boosted by a busload of volunteers from Melbourne's Seven Thousand Oaks Project.

Many participants camped at the Moyston Recreation Reserve, and were catered for by the Moyston Landcare Group.

The event was stitched together by some fine logistics work to get teams to each section by bus, a hot woolshed lunch, and a billy boiling at each site to warm the planters, and a lively dinner venue.



LEFT and BELOW: Project Platypus volunteers keeping the Landcare spirit alive.



"There is something very satisfying about working as a team and seeing how quickly what seems a daunting task can be completed by working together," Ms Blackmore said.

"Looking back at those rows of white carton guards extending off into the distance is great. The appreciation of the landholders and the positive comments from participants

means we will keep planning these very successful annual plantouts."

■ For photos of the plantout, and to see what Project Platypus is doing, visit [www.platypus.org.au](http://www.platypus.org.au)

## CSIRO needs to take trees

HOW much are the nation's Landcare plantings really worth, in terms of carbon sequestration?

Better answers to this question are needed, which is why it has become the focus of a national research project—a project that needs Landcarers.

Specifically, the project is looking for Landcarers with revegetation plantings that they are willing to sacrifice to the long-term good of understanding the contribution of planting programs to emissions abatement.

CSIRO scientists plan to "destructively sample" half-hectare blocks of environmental plantings and make direct measurements of biomass carbon from different vegetation types, planted in different areas and different configurations.

The results will be built into the National Carbon Accounting System (NCAS) as "carbon accumulation curves" that will provide a picture of how much carbon is being sequestered by plantings at various stages in their growth.

Richard Smith, Landcare Australia's partnerships and carbon manager, said the study was critically

important to the Landcare movement.

"This is expected to increase the modelled carbon yield and thus financial returns for landholders who establish environmental carbon sinks under the Carbon Farming Initiative," Mr Smith said.

"Unfortunately, the study requires destructive sampling of half a hectare, which is a tough ask for landholders who have painstakingly worked to establish their plantings."

"However they will be compensated – and they will know that their work has made an important contribution to climate mitigation in Australia."

The project is jointly funded by the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency (DCCEE) and CSIRO, in collaboration with several State government departments, universities and industry bodies.

The project aims to increase the capacity of the NCAS to account for environmental plantings across different sites and management regimes.

The aim is to demonstrate optimum conditions for carbon sequestration in environmental plantings, and thus to reward good management and site selection.

Site sampling will be done on the principle that you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs.

Some sites will be harvested using chain saws, but where possible, harvesting will be done by a new biomass harvester (an Australian innovation jointly developed by Biosystems Engineering, Future Farm Industries CRC and others) that removes all vegetation near ground level.

CSIRO is aware this isn't a happy prospect for those who have invested in plantings, so it is offering a good compensation package.

In return for sacrificing 0.5ha of plantings to research, CSIRO will:

- replant the plots it harvests with tube stock, using species of the landholder's choice;
- fix damage to roads or fences made during any of the visits to sites by CSIRO and its contractors; and
- establish another environmental planting stand on the property at a location of the landholder's choice, up to a total value of \$10,000.

Your contribution will also be acknowledged in any publications or presentations of the work.

Not every site will be suitable.

CSIRO is looking for sites that ideally:

- have information available on date of planting, planting technique, species used, establishment success, weed control, any disturbances;
- have a slope of less than 10 degrees;
- are not rocky, and are clear of wire and posts;
- contain trees that are, on average more than 15 centimetres in diameter at the base, planted in rows of at least two metres apart;
- have access for a 13m harvester and room (at least 20m from the end of the row to the nearest fence or other obstruction) to allow the harvester to turn into each row and then get out of the row at the far end. There also needs to be room for a tractor-drawn bin alongside the harvester to catch and weigh the biomass.

Interested landholders can arrange a preliminary site visit with CSIRO to assess feasibility and harvesting logistics.

■ Contact Richard Smith, (03) 9662 9977 or email [richard.smith@landcareaustralia.com.au](mailto:richard.smith@landcareaustralia.com.au)

## Spree has joined the Landcare Journey!

Spree is helping Landcare volunteers to improve their local environment...

With the support of Spree, selected Landcare groups across Australia will help repair and protect highly degraded waterways which have been impacted by urban development. The tireless effort of Landcare volunteers will make a real difference to their local environment and conserve this precious resource for future generations. Become a part of the leading community-environmental volunteer movement in Australia and join your local Landcare group today.

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



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# WA celebrates salvinia success

ONCE a weed has gained a foothold in an area, it's rare for it to be eradicated.

But that is precisely the triumph that Ord Land and Water and the Shire of Wyndham, in Western Australia's East Kimberley, are celebrating.

The weed is salvinia, which was first discovered in Lake Kununurra in May 2000.

The threat posed by the weed was recognised immediately.

A serious pest mainly of waterways on Australia's east coast, fast-growing salvinia thrives in warm, slow-moving waters, where it has the ability to double its mass in two days.

Several eradication attempts were made at Lake Kununurra, including the installation of a floating boom around the weed infestation in an attempt to contain it.

By 2004, it was evident that control measures hadn't worked.

Big flood events were forecast for the 2004-05 monsoon, and there was a risk of the weed spreading.

Two groynes were built to further contain the weed.

The timing was fortuitous – a week after the groynes were completed, 162 millimetres of rain fell in an afternoon, bringing down the forecast flood.

By 2005, ongoing eradication efforts appeared to have worked.

No plants were found during that year, but hopes that it had been eradicated were dashed by new discoveries in 2006.

As efforts to tackle the pest renewed, a partnership between the community group Ord Land and Water and the Shire of Wyndham was able to secure more funding.

An area on the infested site was filled with soil and another groyne was constructed to hold two more booms.

Most of the control work either consisted of spraying the plant or pulling it out by hand.

The last piece of salvinia seen in Lake Kununurra was removed in October



**ABOVE:** Ord Land and Water salvinia burn at Lily Creek.

**RIGHT:** Ord Land and Water salvinia collection.

2007, but monitoring continued.

The plant was declared eradicated from the region in 2009.

Wins such as this against any of the Weeds of National Significance are a rare occurrence, especially one situated in such a difficult location.

The program's success demonstrates that given the right resources, communities can deal effectively with these situations, and come out on top.

■ Contact Dick Pasfield on (08) 9169 2222 or dick@olw.com.au



## Fire-proof your garden for a safe summer

THE key to building a fire-resistant garden might well be "keep it clean".

A sequence of terrible bushfires in southern Australia, and the promise of more to come under climate change, reinforces the fact that Australian gardeners have some unique challenges in their efforts to create a domestic idyll.

Sue Ferguson, Queensland representative on the Landcare Australia Steering Committee, and secretary of the Culgoa Bushfire Brigade near Dirranbandi, Qld, said the rains across eastern Australia had

brought a welcome flush of feed – but when it dries off, that blessing will turn into a fire hazard.

She said it might be timely to consider how to make homestead gardens, a potential line of defence against bushfires, more fire-resistant.

A key strategy is to keep plants – especially volatile flammable plants like eucalypts and pines – away from the house.

Garden design must also ensure ready access for fire services, and a ready exit for the home's inhabitants if fire threatens.

Paths, gravelled areas and lawns meet this criteria, while adding to a garden's aesthetic appeal.

Trees overhanging the roof look attractive and provide shade, but raise the fire threat to the house substantially – not least by dropping leaves and bark into gutters.

The dry litter that builds up in gutters is a primary flashpoint for houses threatened by bushfire, readily catching sparks thrown before the blaze.

Mrs Ferguson advises that along

with a gutter cleanout, a garden makeover at the start of each fire season is a good idea.

That includes removing or scorching the loose flammable bark that peels from some eucalypts (or ideally, not growing these species at all) to ensure fire doesn't leap into the trees' crown.

Nurseries are a good source of advice about highly combustible plants, and those that actively retard the progress of fire.

The local fire brigade can help with garden layout.

### In Brief

**Group donations:** Donations can be made to specific Landcare groups through Landcare Australia.

Groups will not have to apply for DGR status and 100 per cent of the amount donated will be passed on to the group.

Groups must be registered on the *National Landcare Directory* to make use of the online donation facility.

■ To make a donation visit [www.landcareonline.com.au](http://www.landcareonline.com.au) and under the "get involved" section, you will be able to specify the group to receive the donation.

### Summer by the Sea:

Landcare's maritime cousin, Coastcare, will be hosting its 17th Summer by the Sea festival in Victoria from January 3 to 16.

The festival involves 300 free events to help people discover and appreciate the natural wonders of Victoria's coastal and marine environments.

Activities include rockpool rambles, marine sanctuary snorkel safaris, fishing clinics, kayak tours, geology adventures and bird watching.

Participants also have an opportunity to meet the Maremma dogs who guard Little Penguins, try volunteering with "Coastcare for a day", "board a boat" tour, take a "walk on the wild side", discover underwater bugs and get hands-on with marine monitoring.

■ Visit [www.dse.vic.gov.au/summerbythesea](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/summerbythesea)

### Vale Peter Huthwaite:

Landcare lost a leader with the death of Peter Huthwaite in June.

Mr Huthwaite was the chairman of the Victorian Landcare Council, vice chair of the Bass Coast Landcare Network Board, past president of Phillip Island Landcare Group and a Victorian representative to the National Landcare Network.

He was dedicated to the Landcare movement, and is remembered as a good bloke, a mentor to many and a personal friend to many.

Mr Huthwaite had an extensive history in Queensland agriculture, farm and property management and journalism; at one stage he was a rural reporter for Brisbane's *Courier Mail*.

Although he lived in the town of Cowes, he was heavily involved in rural and urban Landcare.

He helped the network's staff through some difficult times.

They appreciated his expert guidance and the knowledge he was out fighting for them.

– Kellie Nichols, Paul Speirs, Matthew Stephenson, Lisa Wangman and Roger Hardley

**Keep caring:** Landcare Australia has a bequest program where you have the chance to help.

For more information, email [enquiries@landcareaustralia.com.au](mailto:enquiries@landcareaustralia.com.au) or contact (02) 9412 1040 or (03) 9662 9977.

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# Landcare In Focus

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



## Qantas plant out fun

**T**HE Qantas Foundation together with Landcare Australia donated their time to a local school to celebrate Landcare Week.

The Qantas Green Team volunteered at two staff volunteering events at the Chifley Public School in Malabar, New South Wales.

Organisers said both were an opportunity to share resources, knowledge, skills and staff to make a difference to the school's environment.



Queensland governor, Her Excellency Penelope Wensley AO, as patron of Qld Water and Land Carers (QWaLC), attended the 2010 Landcare Qld annual conference, and was welcomed by chairman of Landcare Qld, Geoff Penton and QWaLC chairwoman, Esma Armstrong OAM. The Governor delivered an address then joined delegates and guests for afternoon tea. Her Excellency Penelope Wensley AO is pictured with David Walker and John Taylor.

## On Landcare's 21st

A poem by Ian Mackay, September 2010 (for Queensland Landcare conference)

(With apologies to the late Bobbie Miller for borrowing some of his great poem *A True Australian*.)

What makes a true Australian? Have they set some stringent test?  
Should he ride some stallion stockhorse round some station in the west?  
Should he camp the night with shearers when the dust has turned to mud?

Should you smell the eucalyptus as it courses through his blood?  
Should he drift with sunburnt drovers down some overlander track?  
Should he gallop through the timbers with a stirring stockwhip crack?

In my search for true Australians, I'd cast my net much wider  
It's not where you live, or what you ride, but what you've got inside yer.

If you love this sunburnt country, if you love its wide brown lands,  
Then you'd be caring for its future, for it's really in our hands.

And that's the Landcare vision, it's as simple as I've stated  
And it's plain that it's essential, there's no need to go debate it.  
Oh there's the push for farming business, get big or just get out,  
But there's the future to be thinking of, did I hear somebody shout.

Yes that's been the Landcare challenge, and though some  
gave it little chance,  
A forward-thinking vision ... some farmers were askance.  
Yet many saw the notion they were but stewards of their land  
That would one day pass to others, it's not hard to understand.

That poor management, poor practice, had already cost us dear  
That the time to act was now, not put off another year.

And the thought spread through the nation, rural, urban, peri-urban too,  
A grass roots caring for country, in the part that's nearest you.  
And now's an important milestone.. twenty-one years it must be said,  
A time for looking back ... and a time to look ahead.

Locals taking action ... at their local level, they'll insist  
And you'd have to hope that governments would  
bend backwards to assist.

It's a long-term investment in country, on fixing wrongs  
as they're detected,  
A far cry from political imperatives, the drive to be re-elected.  
But governments of all persuasions, and at each and every tier  
Need to see the local capital; that Landcare has invested here.

The rise and rise of Landcare, for as long as there's a need  
Of hands-on local solutions, for that's the Landcare seed  
So happy birthday, Landcare, you're twenty-one years old  
For contributions to our caring for Country, you deserve the best in gold.

And what makes a true Australian, to end  
Bobbie Miller's pondering loop?  
I'd say he/she's involved, in a hands-on way, at the local Landcare group.



## A Powerful Partner of Regional Landcare Projects since 2003

CitiPower and Powercor Australia is committed to partnering with the community to achieve positive benefits for the environment. Powercor Regional Asset Manager Nick Rees is seen here with Peter Carrucan from the Friends of Pallister's Reserve, north of Port Fairy, inspecting seeds for revegetation programs.

To see how our involvement in your community is growing, visit [www.citipower.com.au](http://www.citipower.com.au) or [www.powercor.com.au](http://www.powercor.com.au)





# Don't just survive – thrive

## Kalgoorlie to Copenhagen at just 16

**A**WOOLWORTHS-funded Landcare project on South Australia's Eyre Peninsula has demonstrated how landholders can make better use of available feed.

The Eyre Peninsula was stricken with three seasons of severely low average rainfall between 2006-08, pushing the equity levels of farmers to the brink. "Despite the huge potential to increase livestock profitability through improved grazing management, landholders could not afford or had limited funds to redirect into on-ground works," said Mark Stanley, deputy general manager of the Eyre Peninsula NRM Board.

"There was very limited scope for implementation of new technology and management options.

"Many of the district's 1500 landholders were in survival mode, and paddocks with lighter soil types were more vulnerable to erosion.

"Some were already bare, damaged, and in poor condition to recover in better seasons."

Thanks to a \$165,000 grant from Woolworths obtained through Landcare Australia's Corporate Partnership program, which was used to leverage a further \$140,000 in funding, trials were set up that provided proof-of-concept on flexible grazing management strategies.

The project developed by the Eyre Peninsula NRM Board had two objectives:

- To optimise feed utilisation and minimise erosion risk over the dry summer and autumn periods by using cell grazing techniques coupled with strategic siting of watering points, and
- Minimise erosion on paddocks by constructing temporary feedlots, and build returns from livestock.



LEFT: Participants at a demonstration site in Rudall, South Australia.

Paddock demonstrations of cell grazing and revised watering access were established, and farmers were offered support to set up drought feedlots.

SARDI and Rural Solutions SA provided technical expertise to the projects.

Mr Stanley said as a result of the work, some Eyre Peninsula landholders retained stock that would have previously been either sold off or had a severe impact on the region's erosion prone soils.

More than 80 landholders removed stock from paddocks and into improved containment feedlot systems in times of low pasture availability.

Damien Lynch of Poochera, who

provided one demonstration site, is now aware of how much feed he had been wasting through stock trampling and selective grazing in bigger paddocks.

Based on the experience he now has with temporary electric fences, breeding ewe numbers are being increased from 900 to about 1200, with confidence that the property will now be able to carry that number throughout the year.

Using temporary electric fencing to graze cereals also provided Mr Lynch with management flexibility across the season.

Cereals could either be grazed green and then harvested, cut for hay or grazed as a standing crop.

A second round of \$120,000 in

funding, jointly provided by Woolworths and Australian Wool Innovation, will enable the project's findings to be developed further.

More demonstration sites will be established, and some practical issues considered – like how to quickly and effectively roll out the multiple strands of hot wire needed for sheep containment.

The project will also look at sustainable practices that contribute to "whole of farm" profitability.

■ **Contact Mark Stanley, Eyre Peninsula NRM Board, (08) 8682 7506 or email mark.stanley@epnrm.com.au**  
Full details of the project and case studies can be downloaded at <http://bit.ly/910N6U>

WHEN 16-year-old Kalgoorlie-Boulder resident, Samantha Fielder, was introduced to the concept of Landcare in 2008, she had no idea it would take her to Copenhagen.

In her entry to the ABC's Heywire website ([www.heywire.abc.net.au](http://www.heywire.abc.net.au)) Samantha said she first became conscious of "the environment" as something that needed looking after when she became involved with the efforts of the Kalgoorlie Boulder Urban Landcare Group (KBULG) and local council to revegetate the mined-out areas of the WA Goldfields.

"With this community support, and my widening knowledge of local, regional and global issues, I became more aware of what is out there," Samantha said.

"Along with this I have helped plant and grow over 20,000 native plants in the Goldfields region."

That was only the start. In 2009, Samantha was selected to go to Copenhagen as an Australian representative for the Bright Green Youth Conference, the youth counterpart to the UN Climate Change Conference held in Denmark last year.

Amid all the people and all the talk, she discovered she was one of only seven youth delegates not from a metropolitan area.

During interviews with international media, Samantha realised she was feeling something she never thought she'd feel: she missed the red dirt of the Goldfields.

People around the world are dreaming up technologies to combat global warming, but in Kalgoorlie, the primary tool is mateship, Samantha wrote.

KBULG's clean up and community tree planting taught her that the environment was worth working for, and that it was community that made the work worthwhile.

"Having been to Denmark I have realised how much is out there, but also how important looking after your local environment is as well, before thinking big."

ABC Heywire website was built to give a voice to young people, with special emphasis on youth living outside metropolitan areas.

Participants are asked to submit a story via text, video or audio.

Successful stories are presented on the ABC through ABC Radio, triple j and [www.abc.net.au](http://www.abc.net.au) and 44 winners score an all-expenses-paid trip to the Heywire Youth Issues Forum in Canberra in February 2011.

# Delving deeper to protect our natural assets

GENERALISATIONS such as "wetlands" or "critical habitats" proved too woolly for Landcarers on the Top End's sprawling Barkly Tableland, so they sat down to consider what mattered to them, and why.

As a result, the Barkly Landcare and Conservation Association (BLCA) decided to narrow its focus to three categories of landscape: Areas of Conservation Significance, Premium Production Zones and Water Resource Systems.

Using these categories, the BLCA has devised a register, Assets of the Barkly – a Register of our Valued Landscape Features, which describes these natural values across the Barkly and identifies key management actions

to protect and ensure sustainable use of these assets.

"While it is still too early to assess the impact of the register on sustainable land management within the region, there are a number of potential applications at the regional planning level," said BLCA project manager, Naomi Wilson, who implemented the project.

"Initially the register is being used by BLCA to support the implementation of the BLCA Strategic Plan and to guide decisions on where to focus group project efforts, particularly in identifying key riparian and wetland restoration projects."

As well, Ms Wilson said, the register identifies the capacity of land man-

agers to counter emerging challenges to the region's ecology.

The register can help manage threats to the region by providing the ability to identify how a threat will impact the landscape, allowing a threat on a resource to be better assessed, and help determine where to take first action.

"The register takes an important first step of identifying what landscape features are important to the health of environmental and production systems and why," Ms Wilson said.

"In coming years, the register will be crucial in the sustainable management of the region."

Maintaining an economically viable production industry in a climate of rapid change, persistent drought and

increasing market pressures, while protecting natural assets in such a vast landscape, presents an ongoing challenge for Northern Territory pastoralists in remote, semi-arid regions.

"In meeting this challenge, it is crucial to be able to identify specific and discrete landscape features or systems," Ms Wilson said.

BLCA identified this issue in 2008, and set about bridging the gap in 2009-10 through an Australian Government Caring For Our Country funded project: Asset Protection Decision Support Tools for Pastoralists in Semi-Arid Landscapes.

■ **Contact Naomi Wilson on (08) 8962 4494 or [barklylandcare.nw@bigpond.com](mailto:barklylandcare.nw@bigpond.com)**



**SP AusNet** is pleased to announce the successful recipients of 2010 funding for Landcare projects in Victoria.

Many of the projects have received ongoing funding from SP AusNet, which has supported a range of innovative Landcare projects for the last 8 years. The projects enable SP AusNet employees the opportunity to participate directly with Landcare in order to demonstrate its active commitment to social and environmental responsibility.

- Merri Creek Management Committee (Transmission Line Easement Vegetation Management 2011)
- Pearcedale Landcare (Bandicoot Biolink – Cranbourne to Western Port)
- Geelong Landcare Network (Golden Farms Increasing Biodiversity)
- Chatsworth Landcare Group (Native Grassland Rehabilitation)
- Regent Honeyeater Project Inc (Lurg Regent Honeyeater Vegetation Retention Project)
- Project Platypus (Project Platypus Plantout 2010)
- Mid Loddon CMC (Building Sustainable Landscapes)
- Yarram Yarram Landcare Network (Continuation of Yarram rail trail)
- Bass Coast Landcare Network (Enhancing the Well-being of the Wonthaggi)
- South Gippsland Landcare Network (Friends of Strzelecki Koalas)
- Latrobe Catchment Landcare Network (Bio links projects)

Photographer: David Fletcher, Project Platypus Plantout 2009





# Landcare In Focus

www.landcareonline.com.au



## Willow Warriors take up the cause

**Y**OUTH Landcarers have the black willows of the MacDonal River firmly in their sights.

Since 2008 young Landcarers have blitzed more than 1300 black willows along 41 kilometres of the river, in the Hawkesbury-Nepean catchment north-west of Sydney, giving hope that full control of the pest might be possible.

Willow control on the MacDonal began in 2000 with the local Landcare group, the MacDonal Valley Association, but the exercise petered out as funding shrank while the willow galleries grew.

By 2008, hopes that the willows could be controlled were fading—but then some Youth Landcarers picked up the cause.

The MacDonal Valley program enlists youths involved in the Willow Warriors Duke of Edinburgh program, part of the Willows Out Of Our Rivers project.

Those who took part came from Macmasters Beach Surf Life Saving Club, Pacific Hills Christian School, Arden Anglican School, Arndell Anglican College and Marion College.

Jeff Cottrell, president of Willow Warriors, said in total, these young Landcarers had been on 18 willow control exercises and have invested a total of 770 volunteer hours.

In their first runs at the willows in 2008, the Landcarers put in 218 hours to poison 800 black willow seedlings and young trees.

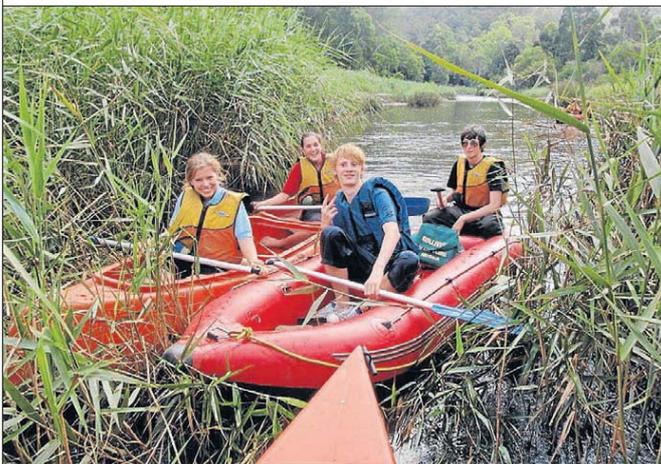
That effort was extended in 2009, when the initial 20 kilometres of river bank targeted was extended to 41 km.

With the help of contractors and other volunteers, the control work has branched into adjacent lagoons.

For the Willow Warriors, these trips aren't all about willow control. One expedition involved a four-day canoeing and camping trip.

There are more black willows to be tackled on the MacDonal, but Mr Cottrell said seedling recruitment had declined dramatically and full control was within reach.

■ **Contact Jeff Cottrell, (02) 9686 6972, or email jeffcottrell@optusnet.com.au**



LEFT: Youth Landcarers paddling through the reed banks on MacDonal River.



Young Landcare members visit Oak Flats Landcare.

## Youth 'strike force' helps

BUSHCARE and Landcare groups are facing challenges that threaten their existence – specifically, the combination of dwindling volunteer numbers and an aging population less able to take on the physical work of Landcare.

Illawarra Youth Landcare group was established to tackle some of these issues, and also address a diverse range of environmental activities that engage youth in the practical work of land stewardship.

The group travels around as a team to visit a different Landcare site one weekend a month, lending a helping hand to the projects of others.

The teamwork gives other groups an opportunity to tackle larger more labour-intensive tasks on-site, and enables them to showcase their work to a younger generation.

Members of the youth group not only learn about environmental management issues, but also benefit from networking opportunities, build on social skills and develop a more sound understanding of the real environmental challenges the Illawarra region is facing.

"This is a great way for volunteers to see parts of this region they may never normally get to visit," said Megan Rowllatt, co-ordinator of the Illawarra Youth Landcare.

"Not only is it a fun day out in the great outdoors, it's an opportunity to lend a helping hand to our beautiful environment, and the wonderful groups that already exist."

■ **Contact Megan Rowllatt, (02) 4229 7526 or 0412 532 817 or email illawarraylandcare@hotmail.com**



Megan Rowllatt, at the Bombo Headland Landcare site carrying out lantana removal from Littoral Rainforest.



Young Landcare members helping Tullimbah Landcare carrying out lantana and rubbish removal.

*What would you like to grow?*



Tell us at [whatwouldyouliketogrow.com.au](http://whatwouldyouliketogrow.com.au)

# Group unlocks secrets of soil

**I**N THE Northern Rivers area of NSW, a unique Landcare group is focusing its efforts on the secrets of soil health and productivity.

Soilcare Inc., part of the 90-group Richmond Landcare Network, has a membership of 163 farming families interested in improving soils for sustainable farming.

In partnership with Industry and Investment NSW, SoilCare has begun trials of biochar, a soil amendment with enormous potential for improving productivity while reducing carbon emissions.

Trials of biochar on members' properties – avocado, coffee, corn, dryland rice, macadamia, pasture and sugar farms are all represented in the trials – are being monitored by I and I scientists from the Wollongbar Research Station.

SoilCare members have also lobbied Ballina Shire Council to build an Environment Protection Authority (EPA) approved pyrolysis plant at their landfill site to process organic waste into biochar, and generate electricity from the gas produced in the process.

The council is advancing with the approval process for the project.

Biochar's properties depend on its origins and how that material is reduced to char in the pyrolysis process.

Feedstock under testing by SoilCare includes animal manures, biosolids, green waste, forestry and agricultural crop wastes.

A project funded through Caring for our Country is testing contrasting biochars in mixed cropping, sugar cane, non-irrigated rice, and horticultural crops such as macadamias and coffee.

More than 300 long-term test plots are under management.



**LEFT:** Scott Petty examining the dryland rice crop in Coraki, a part of the CFoC biochar trial in 2010

The plots are used for both farmer demonstration (and extension activities), as well as scientific evaluation.

The results already in have been highly encouraging.

A cereal-legume rotation was established at Wollongbar in 2007 to test the impact of biochars derived from poultry litter and papermill wastes.

The biochar applications were compared to standard farmer practice, which includes annual application of fertiliser (urea 400 kilograms a hectare, single super 300kg/ha, muriate of potash 140kg/ha).

The replicated trials have shown significant increases in productivity, largely due to changes in soil chemistry.

Biochar led to a reduction in soil acidity, and an increase in soil nitrogen, phosphorus, cation exchange capacity and carbon.

The changes were maintained throughout the experiment, and delivered sustained yield improvements.

An analysis of the project suggested that the biochar applications were worth more than \$300 per tonne in increased productivity.

It's not all good news – glasshouse trials showed that some biochars actually lowered crop yields, possibly by temporarily reducing plant-available nitrogen.

More work is being done on this effect.

An additional benefit of biochar, as demonstrated in glasshouse trials, is that it appears capable of lowering emissions of nitrous oxide, a potent greenhouse gas, from the soil.

It has been guessed that the biochar modified the availability of nitrogen

in the soil, resulting in reduced denitrification when soil is flooded.

This hypothesis will be studied in more detail as part of a Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry-funded biochar project administered by the CSIRO.

SoilCare is also active on the education front.

Earlier this month it hosted US soils expert, Dr Paul Hepperly, at the SoilCare Expo in Wollongbar.

Dr Hepperly is an internationally recognised expert on soil carbon, composting and soil biology.

He also held "Regenerating Our Soils" workshops at Grafton, Wollongbar, Casino and Tweed Heads.

■ **Contact Soilcare**, (0408) 359 429 or email [info@soilcare.org](mailto:info@soilcare.org) or visit [www.soilcare.org](http://www.soilcare.org)

## In Brief

**Helping fight cane toads:** One Landcare group is making valuable headway in the fight against cane toads in the Clarence Valley of northern NSW.

Clarence Valley resident, Sharon Lehman, started the Clarence Valley Conservation in Action (CVCIA) Landcare group in mid-2009 with the help of Clarence Landcare community support officers, Julie Mousley and Debbie Repschlagler, and administrative support from Sue Moore.

"Becoming a Landcare group gave us credibility, respect from landowners we were dealing with and a platform to continue with our work," she said.

Last season the CVCIA Landcare group picked up over 6000 cane toads in the Clarence Valley.

The CVCIA Landcare group has also offered to help Clarence Valley Council with its common myna trapping program.

■ Visit [www.cvcia.org.au](http://www.cvcia.org.au) or visit the blog on [cvcia.blogspot.com](http://cvcia.blogspot.com) or follow them on Twitter at [twitter.com/cvcia](https://twitter.com/cvcia)

**Action in Hobart:** An October meeting in Hobart, hosted by the Tasmanian Landcare Association, saw Landcare representatives from every Australian State and Territory at the table to discuss how to take Landcare forward.

A focus of the meeting was to ensure that the Landcare Action Plan, part of the Australian Landcare Framework process, delivers continuity, clarity and stability.

This focus is vital if Landcare is to continue to be the answer, in Minister Burke's words, to the environmental and land management questions that confront us: food security, climate change and loss of biodiversity.

The National Landcare Network will work with the newly re-constituted Australian Landcare Council to make sure that the Action Plan will deliver Landcare Action.

■ For a full report on the meeting, and the NLN communiqué, go to [www.nln.org.au](http://www.nln.org.au).

**Calendar promotion:** The top three items on the wish-lists of Landcare groups are volunteers, funding and promotional support.

In response to this, Landcare Australia has partnered with EnviroPrint to offer an easy way for Landcare groups to order printed materials and promote the Landcare volunteer work.

To get started, EnviroPrint is offering Landcare Greeting Cards and 2011 Landcare Volunteer Day Calendars.

The calendar is a great reminder for volunteers, family and friends—keep it on the fridge or other magnetic surface year round as a prompt for meetings and activities.

EnviroPrint has a history of assistance and experience with many Australian not-for-profit organisations, which is why it was selected by Landcare Australia.

Landcare Australia makes no money from this supplier arrangement.

■ Visit [www.enviro-print.com.au/Welcome\\_Landcare.htm](http://www.enviro-print.com.au/Welcome_Landcare.htm)

# Landcare can help solve food security puzzle

LANDCARE is a great example of thinking globally and acting locally – the sort of approach that will be required to successfully address food security issues, says National Landcare facilitator, Brett de Hayr.

He said the local and global linkages between the environment and food production had recently become even more topical as food price spikes drew attention to the fine balances underpinning food production for more than six billion people.

The world's food supply will have to be maintained in the face of increasing populations, increased competition for food from the rising middle classes of India and China, probably less water, a potentially more variable

climate, higher fertiliser and oil prices and the loss of productive farmland due to urbanisation, mining development and land degradation.

These pressures to increase food production will lead to greater pressure on the environment, either through bringing new land into production, or through the greater intensification of production from existing areas.

The challenge, Mr de Hayr said, would be increasing food production while improving the sustainability of our production systems.

"(This) is not just of critical importance to society from an economic and food perspective, but it's also the environment that has a major interest in getting this right," he said.

"It's important that we look at these issues not only on the basis of what the world looks like today, but also in the decades to come."

"This highlights that the Landcare ethic, and its focus on delivering an integrated approach to issues on the ground in partnership between the community and government, is just as essential now as it was 21 years ago."

Food commodity prices are again on the rise, an expression of fears on the world market of the effects of crop disasters, like the Russian heat-wave and drought of earlier this year, in key production areas – and unforeseen government intervention following natural catastrophes.

"Some commentators would say

food security and the stability of food prices is mostly an issue for the third world and Australia, as a net food exporter is largely unaffected by this," Mr de Hayr said.

"However, this ignores the fact that not only our food commodity markets operate on an international basis, but so do our fertiliser markets, which have a major impact on our local food producers."

While Australia is not likely to run out of food anytime soon, we are all affected by rising food prices.

A recent study by the University of Queensland says Australian fresh food prices could increase by 45 per cent over the next decade as a result of domestic and international pressures.



## The New National Landcare Directory

connecting Landcare and  
Coastcare volunteers

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

### Find A Local Landcare or Coastcare Group

Looking for a local Landcare or Coastcare group to volunteer with? Use the **Find A Group** link on [landcareonline.com.au](http://landcareonline.com.au). You can search by either entering your postcode or suburb. Results appear in a list and on a Landcare Map.

### Register Your Landcare or Coastcare Group

The new directory has been purpose built so that it is easier for groups to use. It will also capture the various project types that groups are working on all over Australia. You are encouraged to register if your group is involved in volunteer community environment projects under any banner, including: Landcare, Coastcare, sustainable farming, friends of groups, bushcare, rivercare, Junior Landcare (eg. schools, scouts and other youth groups).

### More Features available

- Registered groups can apply for Landcare Australia grants online
- Search for and network with affiliated Landcare/Coastcare groups
- Showcase projects from past and present
- Promote group events such as working bees and planting days on the events calendar



# Landcare In Focus

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



# Rain garden grants clean stormwater

MELBOURNE Water and Junior Landcare are inviting schools and youth groups in the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment area to apply for grants of up to \$5000 to build a raingarden to improve the health of rivers and creeks.

The Junior Landcare grants program aims to raise awareness of how good management of stormwater contributes to healthy waterways.

It promotes simple ways people can improve stormwater quality at school and at home – like building a raingarden.

Raingardens receive stormwater from hard surfaces such as a downpipe from a roof, paved areas or driveways, slowing the rate of stormwater before it flows into drains and on to rivers, creeks and bays.

In public spaces such as streets, parks and schools, raingardens also filter out litter, oil, excess nutrients, chemicals and sediment that normally build up on hard surfaces such as roads, car parks, roofs and driveways.

Melbourne Water's general manager of Waterways, Chris Chesterfield, said stormwater runoff from suburban streets was the main polluter of rivers,

creeks and bays because of what it picked up and carried into waterways.

"Stormwater runoff can carry pollutants ranging from nitrogen that causes algal blooms, to motor oil and animal droppings that can affect the health of fish and platypus," said Mr. Chesterfield.

"Raingardens are a great way to reduce the impact we have on our waterways, and they also make an attractive and water-efficient feature."

Funds can be used to hire a landscape gardener to manage the project, which enables applicants to focus on promoting the project to the school, parents and local community.

Alternatively, raingardens can be built with guidance from teachers and raingarden instruction sheets.

Since 2003, Melbourne Water has provided schools and groups with Young Watercare Grants through the Junior Landcare Grants Scheme.

Schools have used the funds to restore or maintain waterways in their local area through activities like water testing, reducing litter, water bug surveys, tree planting or protecting native flora and fauna.

■ Grant closes February 11. To apply visit [www.juniorlandcare.com.au](http://www.juniorlandcare.com.au)



Melbourne Junior Landcarers with their raingarden.

# Student sustainability leaders

AUSTRALIAN schools can now apply to receive the Westpac Junior Landcare Student Sustainability Grant.

Grants of \$1500 are available for schools to help students build their sustainability leadership abilities via a project to improve their school or local community environment.

"We'd love to see as many schools apply for these grants as possible," Westpac spokesman Sean O'Malley said.

"Westpac has a long history of global leadership in sustainability and sponsors the Education Award category in the Landcare Awards.

"This is a wonderful initiative which allows Westpac to encourage students around Australia to better understand their local environment."

Projects can incorporate a variety of environmental issues such as biodiversity, habitat restoration, reducing energy and water consumption and reducing waste and greenhouse gas production through to improving water-harvesting and quality.

"Successful schools will team up with a local landcare group and high school students so that they have mentors to guide them along the way to both get the job done and then



LEFT: Chris Walker and Jonathon Browne, Westpac bank managers, with students from Middle Harbour Public School, Mosman, Sydney.

share their achievement with their community," Mr O'Malley said.

Landcare Australia chief executive, Heather Campbell, said this new Junior Landcare grant program was a great opportunity for students to build leadership skills by embracing the principles of landcare.

It will help create awareness and an understanding about environmental sustainability.

"By getting involved with landcare early, we hope the students will volunteer along with their families for other environmental activities in their

local community," Ms Campbell said.

There will be 60 schools chosen from those who apply for a grant in the Westpac Junior Landcare Student Sustainability Leadership program.

Funds will be distributed in early 2011 and projects will be completed throughout the year.

Grant criteria and application forms can be downloaded from [www.juniorlandcare.com.au](http://www.juniorlandcare.com.au) and applications close Friday December 10.

■ Visit [www.westpac.com.au/landcare](http://www.westpac.com.au/landcare) or [www.juniorlandcare.com.au](http://www.juniorlandcare.com.au)



# School grants up for grabs

THE Yates Junior Landcare Sunflower Challenge received almost 8,000 registrations with 66,425 kids around Australia participating in Australia's biggest sunflower challenge.

If you were not able to register, the Yates Junior Landcare (sunflower challenge) project kit and activity sheets are available online for you to download.

## Funding recipients

CONGRATULATIONS to all successful recipients for Round 3 of this year's Coles Junior Landcare School Garden Grant and Yates School Environmental Management Planning (SEMP) Grant.

For the list of recipients visit [www.juniorlandcare.com.au](http://www.juniorlandcare.com.au) under the grants section.

## Coles grant round 2011

COLES Junior Landcare School Garden Grant 2011 dates have been announced.

Since 2008 Coles has been providing School Garden Grants of up to \$1000 to schools and youth groups to help create gardens in their grounds or community, such as bush tucker gardens, water wise gardens or veggie gardens.

The closing dates for the Coles School Garden Grants are Round 1: Friday 25th February, Round 2: Friday 13th May and Round 3: Friday 5th August.

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



## Westpac Junior Landcare Student Sustainability Leadership Grant

Westpac is helping students develop leadership skills through local environmental projects.

Grants of \$1,500 are available for schools to help students build their sustainability leadership through a project to improve their school or local community environment. Schools seeking to develop environmental leadership skills for Year 5 and 6 students are encouraged to apply before Friday, 10th December 2010 5pm (EST).



For more information or to apply visit [www.juniorlandcare.com.au](http://www.juniorlandcare.com.au)

Caring for our future