

# Wildlife corridors flourish

**T**WO decades of effort by Landcarers have created thousands of islands of healthy native vegetation across Australia.

Now fresh efforts are being made to link these islands into one big functioning ecosystem.

The nation's national park system is the best method for arresting the decline of plant and animal species, but they are not enough, says the Hon. Bob Debus, former NSW Environment Minister and currently chairman of the National Wildlife Corridors Plan Advisory Group.

"There is a growing realisation that we have got to make sure that there is habitat for wildlife across the whole landscape," Mr Debus said.

"The conservation reserves are crucial but the productive land is as well."

Corridors present challenges quite different to those of crown reserves or on-farm remnant vegetation.

They may cross many different landholdings, and all landholders have to agree to the same project.

"Conservation activity on private land is voluntary," Mr Debus said.

"Wildlife corridors can be planned at national or regional level or even at individual farm level, but it is always a question of cooperation."

"Typically you will find some combination of local government, CMAs, State agencies, Landcare and private land holders all working together."

"Nobody is obliged to join in and there is no regulation to force them to do so."

"However the evidence from all over the country is that landholders mostly want to join in."

"It will always be up to the individual to work out how to join in a corridor project."

Landcare has always attempted to include corridor planning in its activities.

Landcare Australia's Farming and Major Projects director, Shane Norrish, said because of their complexity and the potential to fragment farms, plan-

ning is crucial before work on corridors begins.

"You have to ensure that corridors are designed to allow movement of stock and equipment across them, otherwise they will always be a hindrance to a farm," Dr Norrish said.

Often, corridors can be built along major drainage lines, which often form a natural barrier to farm traffic that have already been incorporated into the working of a farm.

Dr Norrish said a corridor can actively enhance the productive value of a property through "ecosystem services", like improving water quality or spoiling the damaging effects of wind.

When they work to the benefit of native species and landholders alike, Dr Norrish says that habitat corridors are a way of working at a local level in a way that has regional, and ultimately national significance.

Mr Debus believes that better pro-

ductivity is not the only motivation that drives landholders.

He said in his experience the great majority of farmers want to leave their property in better condition than when they found it.

"There are always opportunities to connect up wildlife habitat – for instance, by protecting or restoring vegetation along water courses and ridges, or by protecting clusters of paddock trees to provide 'stepping stones' across agricultural land," he said.

"Although good environmental management can often improve agricultural productivity, I believe that most farmers are happy to improve the environment because they care about it for its own sake."

The National Wildlife Corridors Plan Advisory Group provides advice on wildlife corridor strategy to the Minister for Environment though many corridor proj-

ects that are being undertaken without the need for higher-level input, Mr Debus said.

"My own interest in corridors comes from a belief that in the long term we will need to join the entire community in the effort to maintain the environment," he said.

"I very strongly believe that we should get past the idea that the world is divided between farmers and greenies and that we should instead find a common purpose in securing our food supply and protecting the marvellous natural values of our country."

The importance of corridors to the national conservation estate is recognised in programs like the Great Eastern Ranges Initiative, a government-level program that is attempting to overcome the fragmentation of settlement along the Great Dividing Range and allow species to freely move north and south.



The Hon Bob Debus



Dr Shane Norrish

## New coastal link

**O**NE of the most ambitious wildlife corridors undertaken as a Landcare project, the 70 km Durness-Borland Landcare Corridor, was launched during Landcare Week in September.

The corridor, which will link coastal lowlands near Port Stephens, NSW, to coastal ranges rising up to 650 metres, was described by Bob Debus as an "exemplary project that will have fantastic effects".

The project is a partnership between Landcare Australia, Durness Station (a subsidiary of Nepean), Hunter-Central Rivers CMA and Great Lakes Council.

It will connect areas of high conservation value for native fauna and flora habitat.

It will also rehabilitate and revegetate degraded grazing areas to reconnect remnant vegetation of high conservation value near the lower Myall River and Port Stephens with an extensive area of remnant swamp forest.

The majority of habitat revegetation and regeneration is being undertaken on Durness Station, a 4000 hectare beef grazing property owned by Nepean.

A proportion of the funding for

the project came from a bequest from the estate of Mr Raymond Borland to Landcare Australia.

At the September 11 launch, Heather Campbell, CEO of Landcare Australia, paid special tribute to Mr Borland, describing him as a "very humble person".

She also announced the Raymond Borland Bequest Grants Program, which will provide ten grants of \$30,000 that will go towards NSW environmental community groups and organisations tackling significant projects within their local communities.

These grants have now closed for applications, and recipients will be announced shortly.

Great Lakes Deputy Mayor, Councillor John Weete, also spoke at the launch.

He said the council was very proud of what was being achieved, and praised the "fantastic community commitment to natural resource management" in the region.

Following on from the official proceedings, community volunteers began planting the 2000 seedlings on the project site, assisted by employees from Trees in Newcastle, who supervised the planting activities on the day.



The Durness-Borland Landcare Corridor launch attracted community volunteers of all ages.



## Woolworths congratulates Nuffield Scholars

Woolworths congratulates Nuffield scholars, *Rhys Arangio* and *Dave Reilly*, on receiving Woolworths sponsored scholarships through the prestigious program.

Woolworths has supported the Nuffield Australia Farming Scholarships for two years in recognition of the great work that is done in advancing leadership in the primary production industry. These scholarships give Australians the opportunity to study the best farming practices currently used around the world.



## Landcare In Focus

November 3rd 2011 ~ [www.landcareonline.com.au](http://www.landcareonline.com.au)

# Biodiversity benefits at Springvale

Comment by Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator the Hon JOE LUDWIG

**I**CELEBRATED Landcare Week with the hardworking Springvale Landcare group who gave me a tour of their area and the work they've been doing.

Springvale benefited from part of the \$31.3 million in Landcare grants I announced in September.

This funding will continue to support the work of Landcare groups all over Australia and is part of this Government's commitment to Landcare.

Springvale is a picturesque spot nestled on the NSW south coast.

Springvale, along with the rest of the Bega Valley has been affected by both drought and floods in recent years, presenting lots of natural resource management challenges.

Under the guidance of Andrew Taylor, who with other family members runs beef cattle on "Brianderry", the Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and local MP, Mike Kelly, and I were able to see the work the group was undertaking to tackle problems such as erosion and weed management.

Andrew showed me some of the

work that has been undertaken on his family's property and local area to revegetate and protect about 20 hectares on the property, including major riparian zones, wetlands and remnant woodland.

It was great to be able to see some of this work and hear about the benefits for the Taylors' operation and the flow-on effect for neighbouring properties and the environment.

Some 5000 to 6000 native plants and shrubs have been planted on the Taylor property since 1999, utilising a combination of public funding and their own resources.

Andrew said the flexible and diverse funding had allowed for the property and local Landcare group to branch into different Landcare priorities, maximising the appeal it had to different groups.

Currently, the family is implementing a sustainable grazing project, dividing a 16-hectare paddock into six paddocks to allow for more strategic grazing and resting.

I was pleased to hear about the benefits this would have on the management of African Lovegrass, which I know is a problem for local landowners.

The Landcare group of 30 volunteers has been serving their



Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Dr Mike Kelly, and Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig, visited Andrew Taylor's property, "Brianderry", Bega, during Landcare Week to see the work undertaken by the Springvale Landcare Group.

region since 2004 and is currently working across 17 sites in the Bega Valley.

It has been the recipient of six Australian Government grants totalling \$115,000 to fund works including riparian protection and revegetation, erosion control, nest boxes for sugar gliders, paddock subdivision for sustainable grazing and shelterbelt establishment.

"Springvale Landcare Group certainly functions a lot more effectively because of the government funding it is able to get," said group member, Karen Walker.

"With both government and landholder funding, Springvale

Landcare has been able to achieve very visible results across the landscape.

"We are starting to see the realisation of our vision of a biodiversity corridor connecting the rivers and creeks with the higher remnant vegetation."

The enthusiastic volunteers are also doing a lot of work using their own resources, including using a group member's skill in propagating plants, which allows them to undertake more extensive planting projects.

While all this work is for their local region, I know there are many other groups right across Australia undertaking similar work to protect their areas.

The collective impact of this effort has a positive impact on agricultural production and the Australian landscape.

Landcare Week gave us an opportunity to celebrate these efforts as well as the achievements and challenges being tackled right across this land.

While Landcare Week is celebrated just once a year, I encourage you all to recognise your efforts and those of your team each time you get together.

I would love to hear from land groups all over Australia about what you did to mark Landcare Week.

Send me your letters, emails and photos to [joseph.ludwig@maff.gov.au](mailto:joseph.ludwig@maff.gov.au)

## Empowering communities to foster the bigger picture

THE challenges of climate change, water availability, food security, demographic shifts, energy demand and mining all interact to shape our landscapes.

The decisions we all make today will open or close the opportunities that may be available to us in the future.

We need to make sure individual decisions on properties, as well as the decisions that are made by local, State and national governments, are all co-ordinated towards a shared vision of what local communities want their landscapes to be like for the future.

Landcare has been a stable presence at the local level throughout several decades of institutional churn at the regional, State and national scales.

Now, after several different incarnations of catchment management organisations, NSW's 13 catchment management authorities have been in place for nearly eight years.

This continuity has helped government and communities learn and improve the way we manage our landscapes.

I believe we now have the maturity, experience and right institutions in

place to truly manage our catchments in an integrated way – that is, to manage all components of the landscape together at the catchment-scale, in partnership with the community.

This has been a policy aspiration of governments, and a personal interest of mine, for several decades.

This continuity and experience also means the catchment management authorities, Landcarers and communities have a wealth of new knowledge and understanding about their regions that must be used to inform upgraded strategic plans.

Every region across NSW has a government-approved, strategic catchment action plan that guides investments in natural resource management for that catchment.

All catchment management authorities are now beginning to upgrade these plans.

This gives us all the opportunity to learn from the experiences of the last seven years, use the best available information to update our understanding of the landscape, and have a fresh think about what the priorities should be for the next 10 years and beyond.

Now is your opportunity to share your knowledge about the landscape and how it is changing.

Make sure your preferences and views are captured.

Make sure the work on your farm, and in your local Landcare group, is part of a bigger, collective effort.

Help to shape the resilient, functional landscapes that NSW will need to sustain its communities as we face the big challenges of the future.

– John Williams,  
NSW Commissioner  
for Natural Resources



## 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)





Broken Hill Landcarers have been working to rejuvenate this green belt, established in the 1930s, to help temper the winds that regularly sweep through the area.

## Broken Hill's rejuvenated garden to weather storms

AT BROKEN Hill, Landcarers are revisiting a vision for an urban green belt that was started in the 1930s.

Landcare Broken Hill's Caroline Dart said photographs of Broken Hill in the 1930s show the surrounding country as a moonscape, stripped of its timber to feed the mines and provide fuel for Broken Hill's increasing population.

A man called Albert Morris, perhaps Australia's first bush regenerator, decided the town needed a new bush belt to temper the effects of the huge dust storms that were rolling out of landscape denuded by timber har-

vesting and badly managed grazing.

With the help of the mining companies, the State government and the local Council, areas were fenced off and planted out with native vegetation.

A nursery was established to propagate local seeds for use in the revegetation program.

Big areas on the western side of the town were planted out, particularly with saltbush.

The revegetation process continued well into the 1950s, forming a green belt that served its purpose of stabilising the landscape around the town.

Unfortunately, Mr Morris died a few years after his vision was conceived, and he didn't see the results of his work.

But in 2009, three Broken Hill residents decided to give some much-needed attention to the green belt, which has not been worked on since the 1950s and is in poor repair.

Landcare Broken Hill Inc was formed, and within a short time had grown to 15 people and began applying for funding.

It was successful in a Caring for our Country grant, and work began.

Ms Dart said the early plantings were mostly saltbush.

The new work aims to introduce new layers of canopy, to better spoil the winds that periodically sweep the town and to provide better growing conditions on the ground.

The first trees went in along the Silverton Road on National Tree Day, August 1, 2010.

There was no water on the site, but Country Water donated two tanks and filled them with end flush water from their pipes.

Watertubes were used to irrigate the seedlings.

These were used to both water and protect the seedlings all at the same time.

Watering was done on a roster basis by the volunteers who had to use a generator and pumps to access the water and then fill the watertubes.

Native tubestock was purchased from the native plant nursery in town, which produce trees and shrubs sourced from local resources.

Silverton gum, a shorter, thicker version of the river red gum, appears

to be particularly successful.

Pest animals such as kangaroos and rabbits were a possible threat to the project so mesh tree guards were used in some areas.

To date the group has planted out an area 350 metres long by 50m wide on both sides of Silverton Road, covering 35,000 square metres and using 800 seedlings.

The work has hit its share of challenges.

Ants blocked water drippers in summer, dead vegetation punctured the watertubes, and maintaining the site has been labour intensive due to the terrain.

However, some varieties have flourished, growing to a metre high in just 12 months.

Overall, the project has had an 80 per cent survival rate.

Ms Dart said an NRM grant has enabled the group to set up a native nursery where it grows seeds of local provenance.

A hothouse framework was donated by the group's patron, Raylee Hart, and a 30-metre shadehouse was bought in Adelaide.

The Broken Hill Correction Centre is also in the process of setting up a small nursery where their inmates can grow seedlings that will be donated to Landcare and National Parks and planted out where required.

Landcare Broken Hill now has 30 active members who have held numerous workshops and attended forums in Broken Hill and the surrounding districts.

It is active in informing the community of its activities through newspapers, radio and TV.

## Trial of new drought aid successful

I RECENTLY had the privilege of delivering a report on the drought pilot that took place in part of Western Australia to Senator Joe Ludwig, the Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the Hon. Terry Redman, Western Australian Minister for Agriculture and Food.

The drought pilot involved a trial of alternative policy measures.

These included farm income and social support measures that did not require an exceptional circumstances declaration, as well as grants programs to help farmers better prepare for drought.

The review of the pilot, conducted by a panel appointed in February 2011, found the income and social support measures included in the trial were very successful, and recommended these measures should be available regardless of seasonal conditions.

It also concluded that providing income support based on demonstrated individual need, rather than "lines on maps", should be the foundation of any future drought policy.

The Review Panel felt strongly that social support, such as mental health, counselling and referral services, should be embedded with other community services and at community events.

The review findings build on the 2008-09 national review of drought policy, which examined Exceptional Circumstances arrangements in detail.

This created momentum for reform and highlighted the need to move away from crisis management, towards better risk management.

Under the pilot, more than 120 farm businesses received Building Farm Businesses grants of up to \$60,000 which included up to \$20,000 for Landcare activities; almost 400 farm businesses attended training to develop strategic farm plans as part of the Farm Planning program, and more than 400 farm families experiencing financial hardship received income support under the Farm Family Support program.

Participants were divided on some issues, such as the Landcare Adaptation Grants.

However, the Review Panel felt strongly that establishment and protection of native vegetation and repairs to degraded land will have lasting public benefits.

If these grants are to be a feature of future drought policy, they need to be better aligned with existing natural resource management priorities and programs to deliver clear and lasting benefits for the community.

The Review Panel recommended that future drought policy should include things like: an income support safety net for farm families based on demonstrated individual need; the permanent presence of social support services delivered directly to people in rural communities; continuing opportunities for strategic farm business planning; and ongoing access to the Farm Management Deposits scheme and existing tax incentives for primary producers.

Further information on the Drought Pilot Review is available from [www.daff.gov.au/agriculture-food/drought-pilot](http://www.daff.gov.au/agriculture-food/drought-pilot).

— Mick Keogh, chair of the Drought Pilot Review Panel





## Landcare In Focus

November 3rd 2011 ~ www.landcareonline.com.au

# Landcare Honour Board

The 2011 State and Territory Landcare Awards have taken place across the country to honour the valuable work done by tireless volunteers as part of the Landcare movement.

This roll call of environmental heroes recognises the variety of work done by volunteers, be it on urban, rural, coastal or bush

landscapes. The diverse range of projects recognised all have the common goal of working towards protecting and conserving our precious natural resources.

These award winners will go forward as finalists in the 2012 National Landcare Awards which will take place late next year and

will be profiled in the 2012 editions of Landcare In Focus. The Victorian Landcare Awards will take place on November 16. Winners details can be found on www.landcareonline.com.au from November 17.

Congratulations to all award winners.

### Australian Government Individual Landcarer Award

Sarah Hnatiuk	ACT
Chris Scott	NSW
Heidi Hardisty	WA
Glenn Baker	QLD
Kathie Stove	SA
Tim Collins	NT
Gwen Egg	TAS

### Australian Government Innovation in Sustainable Farm Practices Award

Russell Ford	NSW
Craig Forsyth	WA
Running Creek Feed Test Station	QLD
Emie Borthwick	SA
NT Agricultural Association Project	NT
John and Vicki Lillico	TAS

### Australian Government Facilitator-Coordinator Award

Robert (Bob) Jarman	NSW
David Broadhurst	WA
Susie Chapman	QLD
Kim Thompson	SA
Lisa Roeger	NT
Graeme Stevenson	TAS

### Be Natural Young Landcare Leader Award

Maris Tebecis	ACT
Megan Rowlatt	NSW
Tim Harris	WA
Jenny Stanton	SA
Solomon O'Ryan	NT
Marty Bower	TAS

### Local Government Landcare Partnership Award

Banksia Street Wetland Carers and Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate	ACT
Byron and Tweed Shire Councils (Tweed Byron Bush Futures)	NSW
Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council, Belmont	WA
Sunshine Coast Council	QLD

Roper Gulf Shire Council	NT
The Barossa Council/Adelaide Hills Council - Upper Torrens Land Management Project	SA
Hobart City Council	TAS

### Leighton Holdings Indigenous Award

Namadgi Rock Art Working Group	ACT
Bulla Bunyips	NSW
Nyaparu Rose	WA
Bunya Mountains Elders Council	QLD
Karpinyeri Incorporated Association	SA
Waanyi Garawa and Garawa Rangers	NT
Six Rivers Aboriginal Corporation	TAS

### Australian Government Natural Resource Management Award

Central West CMA	NSW
Northern Agricultural Catchments Council	WA
South-East Queensland Catchments	QLD
Cradle Coast NRM	TAS

### Australian Government Coastcare Award

South West Rocks Dunecare	NSW
Green Head Coastcare	WA
BeachCare	QLD
Hindmarsh Island Landcare Group	SA
Darwin Harbour Clean Up	NT
Rubicon Coast and Landcare Group	TAS

### Rural Press Primary Producer Award

Sherry McArdle-English	ACT
Danny Flanery	NSW
Craig Forsyth	WA
Muldoon Family-Midway Station	NT
John and Sue Wardle	TAS

### Toshiba Community Group Award

Red Hill Regenerators	ACT
Balala Brushgrove Landcare Group	NSW
Ellen Brockman Integrated Catchment	WA
Toowoomba Landcare Group	QLD
Hindmarsh Island Landcare Group Incorporated	SA
Land for Wildlife, Alice Springs	NT
Friends of Adventure Bay Inc	TAS

### Westpac Education Award

St Peter and Paul's Primary School	ACT
Corowa South Public School	NSW
North Dandalup Primary School	WA
Mount Whitestone Primary School	QLD
Waikerie Primary School Youth Environment Team (YET)	SA
Kormilda Junior Ranger Program	NT
Youngtown Primary School	TAS

### Urban Landcare Award

Friends of Mount Majura, Mt Ainslie Weeders and Watson Woodlands Working Group	ACT
Georges River Combined Councils' Committee	NSW
Armadale Gosnells Landcare Group	WA
Gold Coast Catchment Association	QLD
Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges NRM Board	SA
Darwin International Airport	NT
Bellerive Bluff Land and Coastcare Group Inc	TAS

### State-specific Awards (These award winners do not go forward to the 2012 National Landcare Awards)

<b>ACT</b>	
The Environment Community Support Award	Steve Welch
The Quiet Achiever Award	Leanne Barrett

### NSW

People's Choice Award	
Save Manly Dam Catchment Committee - Return of the Mermaids	

### WA

Department of Water River RATS Award	
Talbot Brook Land Management Association	

### SA Premier's Awards 2011

Big Picture	Conservation Volunteers - Brookfield Conservation Park
Community Engagement Integrated Project	Tennyson Dunes Group
	Katfish Reach Steering Committee
Rising Stars - Female	Rebecca May
Rising Stars - Male	Jack Sciffer
Service to NRM	Vince Monterola



## SP AusNet – Supporting Local Landcare Groups

Victoria's largest energy infrastructure owner, SP AusNet, is proud to be powering 11 local Landcare projects in 2011.

Partnering with Landcare Australia since 2000, SP AusNet has a strong history of providing opportunities for revegetation and conservation works throughout Victoria.

In 2011 SP AusNet continues its support by funding projects including: Project Platypus in Stawell, Regent Honeyeater Project in Benalla and the rejuvenation of Merri Creek in Brunswick East.

For more information about SP AusNet's commitment to the environment visit [www.sp-ausnet.com.au](http://www.sp-ausnet.com.au)

# Spreading climate-ready seed

THE human brain has an inherent ability to manage risk – and research scientists across Australia are helping farmers apply it to managing mixed farming systems in variable and changing climates.

Australia's Farming Future (AFF) is an Australian Government climate change initiative, helping to equip primary producers to adapt to the impacts of climate change through a number of research projects.

One project is taking science out of the lab and applying it in the field to develop climate change resilient cropping and mixed cropping/grazing businesses in Australia.

This involves working closely with farmer groups to test ideas that farm-

ers believe will make them more resilient to see if they'll apply more broadly.

Using tools like Agricultural Production Systems simulator (APSIM) software, the researchers model ideas suggested by the farmers, such as fallowing, fertiliser use and changing cropping and stocking mixes.

"We evaluate the options in terms of their benefits on yields, gross margins, and other economic and environmental indicators, so that farmers have a clearer picture of what options may or may not work," says the project's lead scientist, CSIRO's Steven Crimp.

South Australia's Barry Mudge, who is a project researcher and a partici-

pating farmer, said farmers had a highly developed ability to deal with complex decisions.

"We want to improve this ability by



We evaluate the options in terms of their benefits on yields, gross margins, and other economic and environmental indicators, so that farmers have a clearer picture of what options may or may not work

– CSIRO's Steven Crimp

nailed down the settings that make mixed farmers successful – based on their own knowledge," he said.

"The important settings are the stock/crop ratio, farm scale and rela-

tionship to inputs, the correct level of equity and flexibility.

"You need to get the right balance between the needs of grazing and

than 70 per cent equity means vulnerability to adverse circumstances like poor seasonal conditions or low prices are significantly increased.

"The final critical factor is the ability to capitalise on opportunity.

"Working with farmers to tweak these settings and look at the outcomes empowers them and builds confidence in their capacity to adapt to challenging circumstances."

For further information on any of the projects funded under Australia's Farming Future, please contact the Australia's Farming Future Hotline 1800 638 746 or [www.daff.gov.au/climatechange/ccrp](http://www.daff.gov.au/climatechange/ccrp).



## Carbon farming opportunities

FARMERS may be able to participate in the Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI) by using nitrogen fertilisers that have been stabilised with nitrification inhibitors.

Clare Luehman, vice-president – sustainability, Incitec Pivot Limited, says the company supports the CFI in principle.

"There is potential for changes in agricultural practices to reduce Australia's overall greenhouse gas emissions, but it is important that these changes do not come at the cost of production," Ms Luehman said.

"Incitec Pivot has had discussions with representatives of the Federal Government to put forward those views and we will continue to be involved as the CFI develops into a fully operational program."

Ms Luehman said Incitec Pivot was committed to sustainability in agriculture and would like to see farmers be able to participate in the CFI by making sound decisions regarding their fertiliser use.

"For example, one of the

Government's proposed carbon offset projects relates to the use of nitrification inhibitors on fertilisers," she said.

"As Australia's leading nutrient provider, we are very interested in how this offset will be structured for farmers and what the underlying methodology will contain.

"We will be following its development closely.

"Farmers are already taking steps to help their crops use nitrogen more efficiently and protect against nitrogen losses.

"That's why we were pleased to see the financial additionality test removed from the CFI."

While the regulations and methodologies for offsets involving nitrification inhibitors are still being developed, Mrs Luehman suggested that farmers interested in CFI opportunities speak to their local agronomist.

"We will be keeping our distributors and Agronomy Community members informed of the latest developments in carbon farming

and the opportunities regarding fertiliser use," she said.

She said Incitec Pivot Fertilisers supported sustainability in agriculture with a range of agronomy initiatives, including the Agronomy Community.

The Agronomy Community brings together more than 350 of Australia's leading plant nutrition agronomists to advance the science of plant nutrition to ultimately help Australian farmers.

"Incitec Pivot Fertilisers also commissions one of the largest plant nutrition trial programs in Australia" she said.

"This research and development program supports innovation in farming by testing and reviewing new fertilisers and fertiliser treatments, in a range of cropping and pasture situations. The results are available to members of Agronomy Community."

Ms Luehman said now was the right time for farmers to talk with their agronomists about the opportunities from the CFI.

## Westpac initiative insight

TO BUILD on its leadership in the areas of sustainability and climate, Westpac has supported a series of workshops on the opportunities and challenges presented by the Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI).

With experience in trading carbon in Australia and New Zealand and a high agribusiness profile, Westpac believed its customers, and landholders in general, would benefit from a better understanding of the CFI.

It promoted that understanding by joining forces with long-time partners Landcare Australia, Baker McKenzie and the Australian Farm Institute to present information sessions in September and October across the country.

Workshops were held in Rockhampton, Toowoomba, Tamworth, Deniliquin, Warrnambool and Murray Bridge, with the potential

for more to come once the grain harvests are over.

The half day sessions covered key topics such as the CFI, carbon measurement and methodologies, the legal aspects of carbon farming, and how carbon will integrate into financial markets.

The format of keynote speakers and panel sessions provided for robust discussion on the CFI and Clean Energy Future package.

These discussions were greatly enhanced by the mix of presenters and attendees from landholders, farmers, business and banking advisers and Regional Landcare Facilitators.

Presenters varied across the sessions but included Westpac, Baker McKenzie, Australian Farm Institute, Landcare Australia, Greening Australia and LRQA Business Assurance.

■ For more details on these sessions and the information presented please go to [www.landcareonline.com.au](http://www.landcareonline.com.au)



## RACV's boost for landcarers

THREE environmental groups working to support local communities have won funding from Landcare Australia and its community partner, RACV.

Six projects were originally considered for funding through RACV's community partnerships program: two projects each from the Healesville, Cape Schanck and Inverloch areas.

RACV members were asked to pick one project they preferred from each of the three areas, with the highest number of votes determining the top three projects.

In the Healesville area, the Northern Yarra Landcare Network will receive funding to support bushfire-affected communities still recovering from the devastating Black Saturday bushfires from 2009.

The group will plant thousands of trees, shrubs and grasses to restore the biodiversity that was lost in the fires.

The Anderson Inlet Landcare Group obtained funding for its Inverloch project, protecting the estuary as an important feeding habitat for migratory birds and reducing sediments to improve the water quality of Anderson Inlet.

Cape Schanck's Main Creek Catchment Landcare Group has received funding to conserve and re-establish tracts of indigenous vegetation to link bushland remnants and protect animals and birds native to the area.

More than 1700 votes were received from RACV members keen to nominate their preferred projects.

Belinda Hunt of Sebastopol, an RACV member for 17 years, was the winning entrant and received a \$1000 RACV Resorts voucher to spend at any RACV resort.

RACV Manager Community Relations and Heritage, Heather Shanhan, said RACV members were enthusiastic about the Landcare projects and welcomed the opportunity to have a say in which projects were given the green light.

"We had a fantastic response from members with many of them commenting that it was a great initiative and well-deserving of RACV's support," Ms Shanhan said.

"Members were also positive about RACV's continued support for important environment projects being carried out in local communities."

Landcare Australia's CEO Heather Campbell observed that the initiative "is a great opportunity to promote Victorian landcare projects to RACV members."

"Although the competition highlights only six of the hundreds of projects in Victoria, members are now aware of the environmental issues volunteers manage all year round."



Northern Rivers CMA Catchment Officer Nigel Black and Yuraygir Landcare project co-ordinator Peter Turland planting an endangered weeping paperbark seedling.

## Guarding Tucabia's treasure

CLARENCE Valley organisations have joined forces to conserve the endangered weeping paperbark on the only area of public land where it is still to be found.

Clarence Valley Council in partnership with Clarence Landcare, Yuraygir Landcare volunteers and the Tucabia community are working together to help protect the endangered *Melaleuca irbyana* (weeping paperbark) trees growing on the Tucabia Recreation Reserve.

Named for its cascading branches carrying fine leaves, the paperbark is listed as an endangered ecological species due to its very restricted distribution and vulnerability to ongoing threats.

The Tucabia Recreation Reserve is one of two sites found in the Tucabia area of NSW Northern Rivers, and one of a few sites in the Clarence Valley Local Government Area where it's known to exist.

It is also found at Glenugie and Coutts Crossing, the southern most limit of its known range.

However, the Tucabia Recreation Reserve is the only site where the weeping paperbark is known to be growing on public land.

Rehabilitation is being carried out on the reserve by Yuraygir Landcare, with material support from Clarence Valley Council and two small biodiversity grants from the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority.

Early works included the planting of more than 250 trees local to the area, rehabilitating a drainage soak as habitat for frogs and other wildlife, the construction of a small day-use area and mown walking tracks through the area being rehabilitated.

During the opening of the first stage of the rehabilitation works, Clarence Valley Council Mayor Richie Williamson said, "Even though the Tucabia Reserve is small, it has the potential to demonstrate how two organisations and the community can work together to achieve conservation outcomes while developing awareness of our natural heritage within the local community."

Northern Rivers CMA Catchment Officer, Nigel Blake, believed the rehabilitation of the Tucabia Reserve presents a potentially model example of reserve management achieving both biodiversity and passive recreation outcomes.

To encourage community ownership of the project, 40 Tucabia Primary School students participated on the 'opening' day by planting trees.

Students also placed a stake beside their tree with a name tag attached so they can keep up-to-date on how their tree is progressing.

More planting days with students and the community will be organised to further foster and strengthen community ownership of the project and the reserve itself.

## Woolworths supports Nuffield scholars

NUFFIELD scholars, Rhys Arangio and Dave Reilly, have received Woolworths sponsored scholarships through the prestigious program.

Dave Reilly, from Loxton in South Australia, has been awarded a scholarship in recognition of his outstanding work in mixed horticulture, particularly the production of premium table dates.

Mr Reilly will use the scholarship to continue his study in the management of date palm plantations for premium date fruit production and to explore the markets for high value table dates.

Rhys Arangio, from Willagee in Western Australia, has received a Woolworths and Fisheries Research and Development Corporation scholarship.

Mr Arangio is part of the management team of Austral Fisheries and will study ways to reduce marine mammal depredation in fishing operations.

"Woolworths has supported the Nuffield Australia Farming Scholarships for two years in recognition of the great work that is done in advancing leadership in the primary production industry," said Woolworths Fresh Food general manager, Pat McEntee.

"These scholarships give Australians the opportunity to study best current farming practices around the world.

"Congratulations to Dave and Rhys and we wish them a successful year as Nuffield scholars."



Nuffield chairman, Terry Hehir; Karl Wilmore, Woolworths; Nuffield scholar, Rhys Arangio, and Bob Pennington, Fisheries Research and Development Corporation.

# Council to clock up 50th meet

AUSTRALIAN Landcare Council member Andrew Stewart (pictured) has hosted many great Landcare and agroforestry events on his Victorian farm, but one of the most significant is scheduled for early this month.

Other council members will converge on Andrew's family farm, "Yan Yan Gurt West", in the north eastern foothills of Victoria's Otway Range, to celebrate the 50th meeting of the Australian Landcare Council.

The council was formed in 1997 as the Australian Government's key advisory body on Landcare.

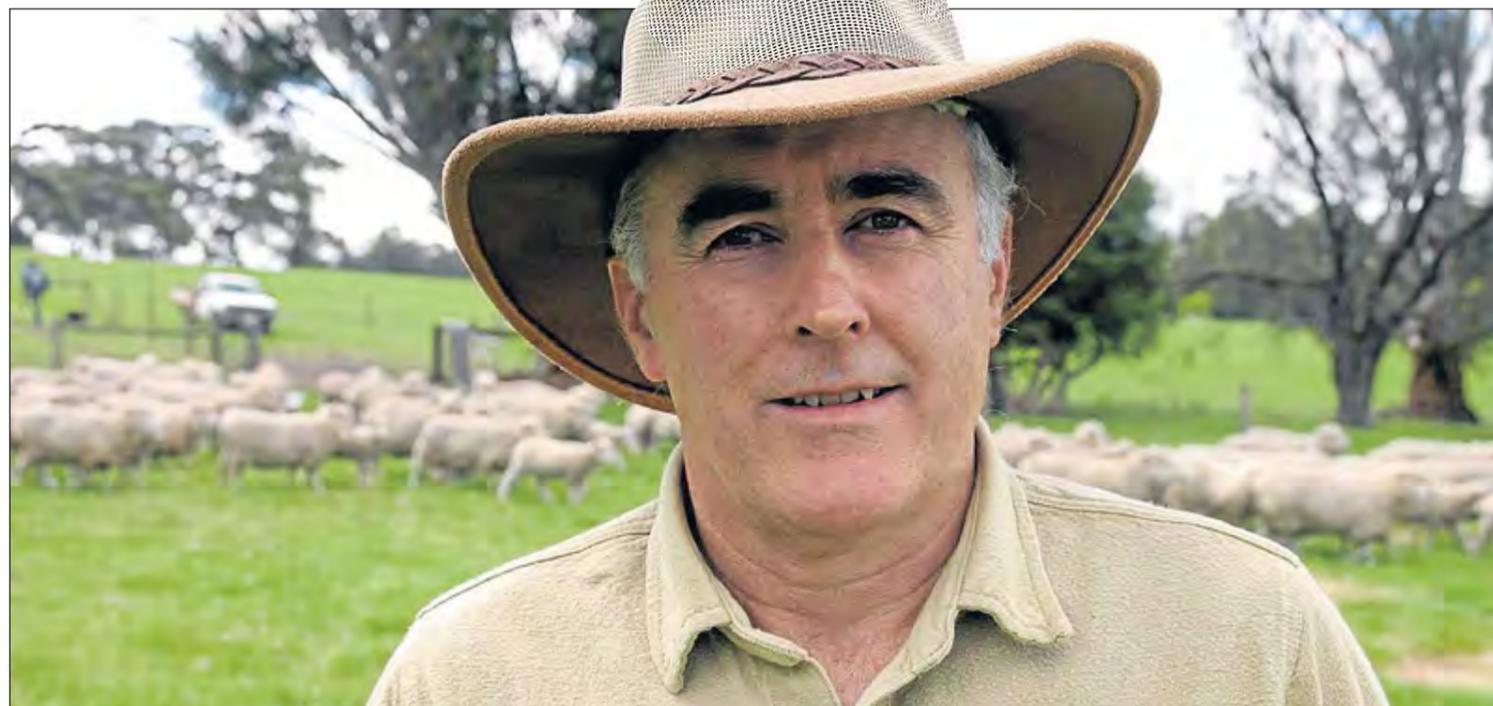
"I see the 50th meeting of the council as significant for the Landcare movement and the successful story we have to tell about Australian leadership in the Landcare approach to land management," Mr Stewart said.

"Not many people realise how instrumental Australia has been in the international Landcare movement and the role we have played in developing Landcare in countries such as South Africa, the Philippines and Iceland."

A fifth generation prime lamb, wool and beef farmer with more than 20 years involvement in Landcare, Mr Stewart said his passion for the movement had grown rather than diminished over time as he had seen its social, eco-health and economic spin-offs and possibilities on his farm, in the Australian community and at an international level.

"The Landcare network is all about sharing information and bouncing ideas off each other and coming up with solutions that landholders can identify with," he said.

"This has led to some exciting spinoffs over the years including



improving the health and well-being of people through Landcare's social networks.

"For instance, I have had a farmer come up to me and say that being involved in Landcare has helped him with depression.

"The Australian Landcare Council's 50th meeting will take place in the Woody Yaloak Catchment Group near Ballarat, which has grown over 15 years from a few farmers to up to 180 farmers sharing their knowledge and experience on productive Landcare.

"Internationally we should be using the knowledge we have achieved through the Landcare movement in

dealing with land degradation to help people become self-sufficient and sustainable."

A co-ordinator of the Otway Agroforestry Network, an organisation he co-founded in 1993, Mr Stewart, his wife Jill and extended family have planted more than 38,000 trees on their 230ha property as a way of improving farm productivity while creating a resilient, robust and adaptable landscape.

"Our farm looks completely different to what it was like 20 years ago. By going to field days and other events our thinking has evolved as our knowledge has increased and we are

seeing the benefits of the change," he said.

"The farm is not only a much more pleasant environment to work in, but more productive due to changes in stock and pasture management and protection of land and livestock with revegetation.

"We have found planting trees has opened up commercial possibilities such as harvesting timber for high grade furniture, producing honey, cut flowers, log-grown shiitake mushrooms; and integrating indigenous food plants as part of the understorey in agroforestry planting."

Best of all, and in the spirit of the Landcare movement Australia-wide, revegetating Yan Yan Gurt West has resulted in an annual farm tree planting day in which up to 40 families and friends congregate from as far away as Melbourne.

"It takes a fair bit of work. My brother Hugh does a lot of the organisation," Mr Stewart said.

"We have a barbecue and billy tea.

"People go and look at the trees they planted last year to see how they are doing, then they roll up their sleeves and plant more trees.

"They are great days."

## Landcare Week the perfect time to get involved

A SURVEY conducted to coincide with Landcare Week, which ran from September 5-11, paints a picture of Landcarers as people concerned for the future of our natural resources.

The survey, conducted by Landcare Australia to investigate the main issues facing the Landcare movement, found 98 per cent of the 653 volunteers surveyed are concerned for the future of Australia's natural resources.

Not surprisingly, 83 per cent also believe the main aim of their groups' activities is to protect the local environment for future generations.

When asked about the demographics of their groups, 51 per cent of

those surveyed described the average age of the volunteers in their group to be over 50, with 68 per cent of all respondents describing themselves as retirees.

Just 22 per cent were under 40.

It seems busy lifestyles are impeding young people from volunteering their time to Landcare.

Lack of time was cited by 67 per cent of those surveyed as the main reason for people not volunteering with their local group.

At the same time, 43 per cent of respondents felt for their group to remain active, its greatest need was for new volunteers.

Three-quarters of respondents said that were actively recruiting for new group members.

Landcare Australia chief executive officer, Heather Campbell, believes the survey shows the passion and dedication behind the Landcare movement.

"The findings of this survey clearly show there is a fantastic community of dedicated volunteers working across the country to help repair and protect our valuable natural resources," she said.

"It also reveals the movement needs to be able to recruit the next generation of Landcarers and continue with the invaluable work that groups are

doing in all types of environments and regions across Australia."

Landcare Week 2011 Ambassador, Catriona Rowntree, believes that Landcare plays a huge part in protecting our environment and bringing communities together.

"From personal experience I know how important and valued the work of Landcare is to local communities," Ms Rowntree commented.

"I love that this survey reveals the passion and proactive spirit of people right across Australia, from the coast to country.

"Landcare offers us all a clear path to follow, to walk the talk and help pro-

tect our environment for future generations.

"It's fun, it's communal, and best of all, you see instant and everlasting results."

For Landcare Week 2011, Landcare Australia encouraged people to donate themselves to Landcare and find a local group to get involved with.

Groups across the country ran events that members of their local communities could take part in.

However, any time of year is a great time to donate yourself, so why not look for an event or a group near you on the Landcare Australia website?

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

## What do you value?

pwc

Discover how we can create value together at [creatingvalue.com.au](http://creatingvalue.com.au)



## In Brief

**Victoria celebrates:** The Department of Sustainability and Environment congratulates Landcare in Victoria on its 25th anniversary.

From the first formal Landcare group in 1986, Landcare in Victoria has grown into a thriving community of more than 1200 community based groups.

Today Landcare Victoria has at least 60,000 members plus another 45,000 volunteers in both urban and rural communities who give freely of their time and effort to care for Victoria's land, water and biodiversity.

The department supports and resources Landcare groups and networks, to help volunteers continue their important on-ground work, as well as developing policy that aims to develop environmental changes at a landscape level.

A range of activities are planned throughout Victoria this month, including the 25th Anniversary of Landcare Conference at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Tuesday, November 15, and the 2011 Victorian Landcare Awards Ceremony on Wednesday, November 16, at Government House.

■ To find out more, visit the Victorian Landcare Gateway at [www.landcarevic.net.au](http://www.landcarevic.net.au).

**Volunteer merchandise:** The Landcare Online shop has been developed as a resource for groups who would like to purchase merchandise for their volunteers.

The shop offers products with either the Landcare Australia logo or your group's logo.

If you would like to order an item that is not displayed on the shop web site, you can request further information from Creative Promotions.

All merchandise is sold at a cost price to groups and Landcare Australia does not profit from any sale.

■ Visit [www.landcareonline.com.au](http://www.landcareonline.com.au) and go to the Resource Section.

**Read all about it:** Australian Landcare Magazine Online is a web based publication aimed at promoting the successes of "landcare farming" – that is, producing food and fibre in conjunction with agricultural ecosystem improvement.

The magazine is published quarterly on the Rural Press website on the first day of each new season, in conjunction with the Rural Press monthly farm business management magazine, *Australian Farm Journal*.

While the majority of articles are about Landcare farming in Australia, the magazine also contains a significant international Landcare section looking at regenerative food and fibre production systems around the globe.

Landcare Australia does not publish or manage the content of this publication.

However, editor Patrick Francis welcomes feedback and article contributions.

■ To read the magazine visit [www.australianlandcaremagazine.com.au](http://www.australianlandcaremagazine.com.au)



BCLG members, Dave and Rikki Allen, with their dog, Mick, give St John's Primary students a lesson in working sheep.

## Students' bush classroom

PRIMARY school students in western NSW are being given a hands-on introduction to Landcare to educate them on the importance of natural resources and their management.

A joint initiative between Western Catchment Management Authority (CMA) and the Buckwaroon Catchment Landcare Group (BCLG), the two-day course, now in its sixth consecutive year, gives students a day of activities at a local primary school, followed by a day-long excursion to a BCLG member's property.

This year, Year 6 students from Cobar Public School and St Johns Primary School attended the Buckwaroon Catchment Landcare Group Education Days in August and September.

Western CMA education officer, Marybeth Baker, said the first education day was held at the Cobar Public School where students were taught

about a variety of subjects relating to sustainable land management including grazing, vegetation, resource management, animal management, erosion and the importance of monitoring.

"The students were shown native grasses and invasive native scrub, learnt how to identify them, and also

plishments in developing a bush-tucker garden, which recently won them the 2011 Environmental Care Award for Environmental Education."

Ms Baker said the second education day involved an excursion to Nullogoola Station, which was sponsored by Peak Gold Mines, and pro-

"The highlight of the day was when the students were able to view a live demonstration of a sheep being shorn and see a sheep dog in action working the sheep."

President of the BCLG, Robert Chambers, said the aim of the education workshops was to give the next generation of land managers a better understanding of natural resource management and sustainable agriculture in the catchment.

Newgold's Peak Gold Mine said they were excited to sponsor the school education program.

"A program that engages and educates local children in the environmental issues of the Cobar district is worthy of support," said Newgold's Peak Gold Mine Senior Environmental Advisor, Chris Higgins.

"Getting the children out of the classroom and onto a local station where they can see the issues first hand is very effective."



Getting the children out of the classroom and onto a local station where they can see the issues first hand is very effective

– Chris Higgins, Newgold's Peak Gold Mine

created their own property plan of the school and researched local weather," she said.

The learning cut two ways.

"The education day also gave the students of Cobar Public School the opportunity to show BCLG members and the Western CMA their accom-

plishments in developing a bush-tucker garden, which recently won them the 2011 Environmental Care Award for Environmental Education."

Ms Baker said the second education day involved an excursion to Nullogoola Station, which was sponsored by Peak Gold Mines, and pro-

## Taking a 'whole of paddock' approach to restoration

GREENING Australia is pioneering an entirely new strategy for vegetation establishment, the Whole of Paddock Rehabilitation (WOPR) approach.

"Traditional" ecological restoration in overcleared agricultural landscapes has typically involved either establishment of wind-break style revegetation through either direct seeding or planting tubestock; or fencing off remnant native vegetation to manage grazing pressure.

Each of these approaches consumes significant resources through investment in new fences.

WOPR uses the existing fences, and

instead uses the money saved for stewardship payments that let farmers spell a whole paddock for five years.

That period allows the establishment of belts of diverse native trees and shrubs, with species composition targeted at local vegetation communities.

After five years, stock are re-introduced on a rotational grazing basis.

Since the strategy mostly uses existing fences, larger areas, typically about 20ha, can be rehabilitated.

The re-establishment of trees and shrubs at this scale breaks the "pad-

dock tree decline" spiral.

Greening Australia believes there are already a variety of benefits emerging of having a paddock "WOPRed", including:

- Enhanced livestock weight gain and health from increased shade and shelter
- Reduced mortality of lambs and recently shorn animals
- Provision of additional feed for livestock during summer in the form of Acacia pods and foliage (with emerging parasite control benefits)
- The return of pasture to heavily eroded or saline areas making them productive again.

Environmental benefits include:

- Regeneration of remnant vegetation, paddock trees and native grasses
  - Increased native habitat and biodiversity, especially for birds;
  - Establishment of "islands" or refugia between remnant vegetation
  - reduced spread of wind-borne weed seeds, and the capture of dust;
  - Reduced run-off and salt and sediment entering watercourses.
- The Australian Government's Caring for our Country program has supported WOPR programs, including pilot sites, in NSW (Lachlan, Murrumbidgee and Hawkesbury

Nepean Catchments), the ACT and Western Australia (Avon Catchment), which together will rehabilitate over 1100 ha of degraded land in agricultural systems.

There are up to 20 sites being implemented in the upper Lachlan and Murrumbidgee Catchments, and GA has recently signed up a 100ha paddock – demonstrating a significant step-change in the scale of on-ground activity for rebuilding productivity and biodiversity.

There are opportunities for farmers to be involved in setting up new sites in the current program or as pilot sites in new regions.

# Traditional owners achieve the 'impossible' mass salvinia removal

By ELIZA ROGERS

WHEN indigenous rangers and workers in North Queensland's wetlands were told their project to remove a mass infestation of one of the world's worst weeds was futile, they didn't back down.

Over four years, the Laura Indigenous Rangers and South Cape York Catchments (SCYC) worked with national and local groups to remove aquatic weed salvinia from a 240-hectare dam and more than nine kilometres of waterways in Cape York Peninsula.

Coordinator of non-for-profit SCYC, Jason Carroll, said the idea was raised by the community to stop spread from the upper Laura River down to the ecologically rich wetlands of Lakefield National Park.

Salvinia, which is a weed of national significance, was in the headwaters of three nationally-listed wetland areas, threatening the function of the pristine ecosystems.

The group worked collaboratively to secure almost \$250,000 over four years from the Federal Government's Caring for our Country Program.

Mr Carroll said it was a huge task, but one that couldn't be ignored.

"It was a really big concern no one else wanted to take it on, it was a really curly one that had a really high chance of failure," he said.

The Salvinia Control Manual recommended a workable eradication space of less than one hectare, but the project tackled more than 500 hectares.

The group broke the overwhelming task into three parts, with the success of the first segment cementing confidence and funding into the next two.

Workers hit the weed with herbicide, removed vegetation acting as a harbour, drained infested dams, used containment booms, and literally hand-pulled weeds.

"If we missed one bit even the size of a fingernail, it could re-infest the area," Mr Carroll explained.

"The weed has no seeds, so if we get every single plant, it can't come back."

The last salvinia was found in July this year, but the group will run monthly follow-up surveys for the next three years.

A project report said the task proved larger scale eradication wasn't as impossible as previously thought.

Other control methods were tried in finding the best approach, with no success.

The group trialled flame-throwers and geofabrics to burn or shade salvinia trapped in mud.

The project incorporated help from the National Aquatic Weeds Management Group, Parks and Wildlife, Cook Shire Council, Cape York Weeds and Feral Animals Program, and local schools, landholders, traditional owners and volunteers.

Work in the region is elected and driven by the community, and Mr Carroll says community spirit really drove the salvinia task.

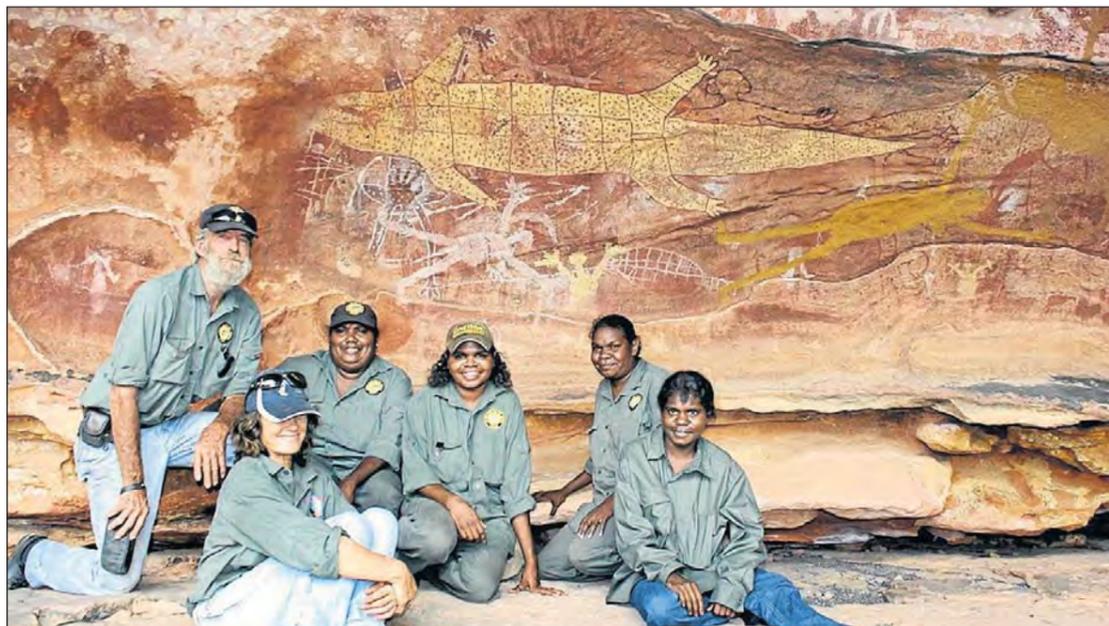
"We couldn't do it on our own. Traditional owners, government, schools, everyone came together to get this result; it was a really amazing thing and it's also given us the confidence to take on more," he said.

And the rangers and SCYC can do more to manage natural and cultural resources with recent approval of a \$200,000 Cape York Land and Sea Project from DERM.

The grant will be used to facilitate conservation and tourist site development.

Conserving internationally-listed rock art and helping develop the rangers as Aboriginal custodians of the land is another key direction.

Rangers have battled big obstacles like clearing out unmanaged cattle and pigs from a 30,000-year-old rock art site, dealing with erosion, vegeta-



ABOVE: Laura Rangers coordinator Ted Lees, Veronica Coleman, Ellen Lowdown, Tracy Lowdown and Megan Bramwell with (front) SCYC project officer Susan Marsh at one of the many rock art sites the group manages.

tion, weeds and visitor management.

They have built skills in rock art assessment and site recording and the data they collect is fed into DERM's state records database.

Mr Carroll said the work was critical for the conservation of the region's rock art.

Being a ranger holds a high status in the small community where it is the main employment.

The rangers go through a thorough application process, needing approval from traditional owners to access country based on clan links and background.

They are trained in job-specific skills like quad bike accreditation,



ABOVE: The five Laura Indigenous Rangers help manage natural and cultural resources across the northern tropics.

RIGHT: Protective fencing to keep feral animals at bay, is a large part of the rangers' work.



GPS, recording, and first aid training, and even rock art guiding courses to improve standards of visitor management.

The program has also helped steady the local climate, with the senior constable in Laura detailing the social benefits in a letter to SCYC last year.

He said it provided employment

with direct links to cultural heritage and increased self-esteem, with a noticed cut in alcohol-related problems.

The community's future looks bright, with Mr Carroll predicting more tourism and jobs to follow as well as several new bridge constructions allowing wet season access.

## Freshwater ecosystems reveal the real truth about turtles



IN THE beautiful and remote Kimberley region, volunteers are working together with the local indigenous people, the Wunggurr Rangers, to conduct vital environmental research.

Run by Earthwatch Australia and led by researchers Dr Nancy Fitzsimmons from the University of Canberra and Dr Tony Tucker, the Freshwater Turtles of the Kimberley research project is looking into how freshwater ecosystems are functioning and improving the understanding of the turtles in the area.

Snorkelling through rivers the researchers locate and catch turtles which they mark, measure, weigh and then release, and track turtle movements while assessing the habitat of turtles and collecting samples for analysis.

The information is used to guide future management decisions for these turtles, which somehow manage to survive even with the dramatic fluctuations of wet and dry seasons.

The Wunggurr Rangers share tra-

ditional knowledge passed down from the elders with the scientists and volunteers, while enhancing their own understanding of conservation and land management issues.

Employed through the Kimberley Land Council as part of the Kimberley Ranger Initiative, the Wunggurr Rangers are employed to look after country, with their field experiences counting towards a TAFE qualification in Conservation and Land Management.

"The rangers always look forward to the turtle project and talk enthusiastically about it," said the Wunggurr Ranger coordinator Sam Bayley.

"It's really important for us that organisations who undertake work in the Kimberley involve traditional owners.

"We believe the cross cultural learning environment of this project creates a much more memorable experience."

Through combining practical work with TAFE qualifications, the



ABOVE: Indigenous rangers with the team.

LEFT: An indigenous ranger holding a freshwater turtle.

Kimberley Ranger Program is enhancing the skills, health, well-being and overall social cohesion in communities.

Richard Gilmore, executive director of Earthwatch said the unique

program ensured that indigenous knowledge was combined with western technologies to carry out tasks and achieve holistic environmental outcomes for the benefit of the community and the environ-



## Landcare Focus

November 30 | www.landcareonline.com.au



PwC Partner, Alan Elliott, gets involved in Regenerate Day 2011.

## Haven rises from ashes

EARLIER this year the seed of an idea was sown that would see Landcare Australia and its partner PwC reaffirm their joint commitment to growth while giving back to the community.

The initiative, which became known as Regenerate Day 2011, was held on August 17 at St Andrews, 70kms north-east of Melbourne.

The purpose of the day was to bring together like-minded organisations to help revegetate the areas affected by the devastating Black Saturday fires in Victoria in 2009.

The twist was that native trees of the area would be grown from seeds by a group of enthusiastic but novice green thumbs in PwC's Private Client's team in Melbourne.

From the project's germination in February 2011, discussions among PwC staff helped the idea sprout.

In the backyard of a PwC Private Clients partner, the novice PwC green thumbs took part in a potting day, guided by Landcare Australia and representatives from Tree Project.

Tree Project is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to revegetating the Victorian landscape with native trees, shrubs and grasses.

For the next six months the PwC team tended, watered and protected their seedlings at home and shared news of their seeds' progress at work.

A healthy dose of competition blossomed among the team as to whose seeds were growing the quickest.

Tree Project was on hand too, to provide support and advice.

CEO Landcare Heather Campbell said the regenerate initiative was

something completely different.

"It wasn't just a day of tree planting; it was an ongoing commitment for several months and really took corporate volunteering to a new level," she said.

On Regenerate Day 2011, a team of 35 from the PwC Melbourne Private Clients team, Landcare Australia and the Tree Project joined up with like minded PwC clients with a passion for sustainability: Aussie Farmers, Direct and PEAK Adventure Travel Group.

Despite the wet conditions, 500 trees and 300 grasses were planted across properties affected by the Black Saturday fires in 2009.

One of those properties was Wildhaven, which was completely destroyed in the inferno.

Wildhaven owners Stella and Alan Reid spoke to the team on Regenerate Day 2011 and provided everyone with a moving reminder about why they were involved in this initiative.

PwC partner Alan Elliot said although their contribution, in the scheme of things, initially seemed quite small, he felt from listening to Stella and the other land owners they had made a difference.

"It made me feel very proud," he said.

Heather Campbell said the best way to tackle environmental issues was for like minded organisations to come together and collaborate.

"Regenerate Day 2011 is proof of how that can happen and how we can all work together to create a greener environment," she said.

"I look forward to Regenerate Day 2012."

# Friends gather for major Bushcare day

AUSTRALIA'S iconic bush got some much-needed care and attention during Landcare Week, when people gathered all around Australia to participate in the first national Bushcare's Major Day Out.

Like Clean Up Australia Day, Bushcare's Major Day Out aims to alert people to the issues of bushland management and the part they can play by creating a positive and caring culture towards it.

It all started in the Sydney suburb of Willoughby, where an annual bushcare day had met with such success over recent years that it inspired the idea of "a national day that gave people the opportunity to participate in activities that helped the bushland and were supervised," said Don Wilson, convenor of Bushcare's Major Day Out.

The first national Bushcare Major Day Out was made possible with funding and promotion from Willoughby Council and Landcare Australia, and was scheduled to coincide with Landcare Week.

"Landcare were looking for some way of raising the profile of Landcare in the larger towns and cities and Bushcare's Major Day Out fitted with their ethos," Mr Wilson said.

"We know that people love participating in these kinds of activities, sharing a yarn, a good morning tea and doing something positive."

Everyone was invited to attend a supervised session in bushland close to them.

There were more than 35 venues, in sand dunes of banksia scrub at the Gold Coast, along the Yarra in eucalyptus regans forest and, in the tribal lands of the Wajuk people amongst a paperbark forest of the Spectacles wetland outside of Perth.

People aged five to a sprightly 85 gathered from different groups and organisations.

Friends of Trees in South Australia were able to mobilise some of their 3000 strong contingent, and Friends of Narrabeen Lagoon – important coastal wetlands in NSW – had an informative day attracting dedicated newcomers.

Council-led bushcare groups were rallied in North Sydney, Blacktown, Canada Bay, Camden, Randwick, Wollongong and of course Willoughby where Bushcare's Major Day Out all started.

Activities for this year's Bushcare's Major Day Out were varied and designed to attract new volunteers.

Mandy Wilson, of Willoughby

Council, organised Willoughby and North Sydney councils to join forces for the day, attracting more than 70 people.

The mayor and councillors worked alongside professional bushcarers at a Middle Harbour location, followed by a Rotary cooked barbecue.

A Newcastle Council officer led an incredibly successful day that included a large plant giveaway, children's activities, frog pond building and introductory bush regeneration, attracting dozens of new volunteers eager to help out on the bush at Booragul.

"Next year we are hoping to have a popular and public figure support and promote us, somebody like Macca on a Sunday," Mr Wilson said.

"We'd like a sponsor to get us on TV and the internet, and most importantly we have the date – Sunday, September 9, 2012.

"Again it will be part of Landcare Week, spring will be just beginning and we have enough lead up time to generate maximum interest and participation."

■ Visit [www.bushcaresmajordayout.org](http://www.bushcaresmajordayout.org) or email: [info@bushcaresmajordayout.org](mailto:info@bushcaresmajordayout.org) if you wish to sign up for 2012.



## LANDCARE IN ACTION

NATIONAL LANDCARE AND CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE 2012  
29 FEB – 1 MAR



NZ Landcare Trust will host a 2 day conference at the Academy of Performing Arts, University of Waikato Campus, Hamilton, New Zealand on 29 February and 1 March 2012. The event will celebrate the work of rural communities from all around New Zealand and provide an opportunity to explore the role that community leadership plays in sustainable land and water management.

The conference will include a series of keynote sessions plus presentations from representatives of Landcare and community groups, local government, research providers and agribusiness. Keynote sessions will examine New Zealand, Australian and international Landcare and river management. The conference will showcase leading national initiatives from the farm level to the catchment scale.

[www.landcare.org.nz/conference](http://www.landcare.org.nz/conference)  
[conference@landcare.org.nz](mailto:conference@landcare.org.nz)



NZ LANDCARE TRUST

# No flooding fears for platypus

By GEOFF WILLIAMS and  
TANYA RUCOSKY NOAKES

MAJOR flooding in the Queanbeyan River over the past year presented a unique opportunity to study how resilient the platypus population is during these events.

If current climate models are accurate, the frequency of severe flooding is likely to increase in coming decades.

What are the implications as far as platypus conservation is concerned?

To date, that's been a difficult question to answer – partly because it's the nature of major floods to be sporadic and unpredictable events – not an easy subject for scientific investigation.

However, it would seem to be commonsense that platypus are more likely to drown or be injured as the force and turbulence of floods increase.

This idea is supported by the results of an Australian Platypus Conservancy study carried out in eastern Victoria in 2008.

In NSW, the best information about the impacts of flooding on platypus has been gained through live-trapping studies by Dr Tom Grant, who has been monitoring platypus in the upper Shoalhaven River for more than three decades.

Tom's work has confirmed that some marked platypus definitely survive (and resist being displaced by) floods that are more than eight times the normal river level.

The flooding that occurred along the Queanbeyan River in December 2010 was an opportunity to gain more insight into both the immediate and longer-term consequences of a one-in-30-year flood event on platypus.

Platypus Count volunteers have been monitoring the local population

at Queanbeyan township since May 2009.

In addition, the co-ordinated monitoring effort that has gone into native water-rats (or rakali) at Queanbeyan has also made it possible to see for the first time how this species responds to substantial flooding.

In short, there is no evidence that high flows were responsible for reducing the amount of activity by either platypus or water rats.

In fact, the number of platypus and water-rat sightings made from December 2010 to February 2011 are generally slightly higher than the number of sightings recorded one year earlier.

However, it's important to note that these findings do not necessarily mean that the flood had no effect at all on local platypus and water-rat populations.

For example, some Platypus Count participants noticed changes in where animals were most likely to be observed, particularly in the first few weeks after the flood.

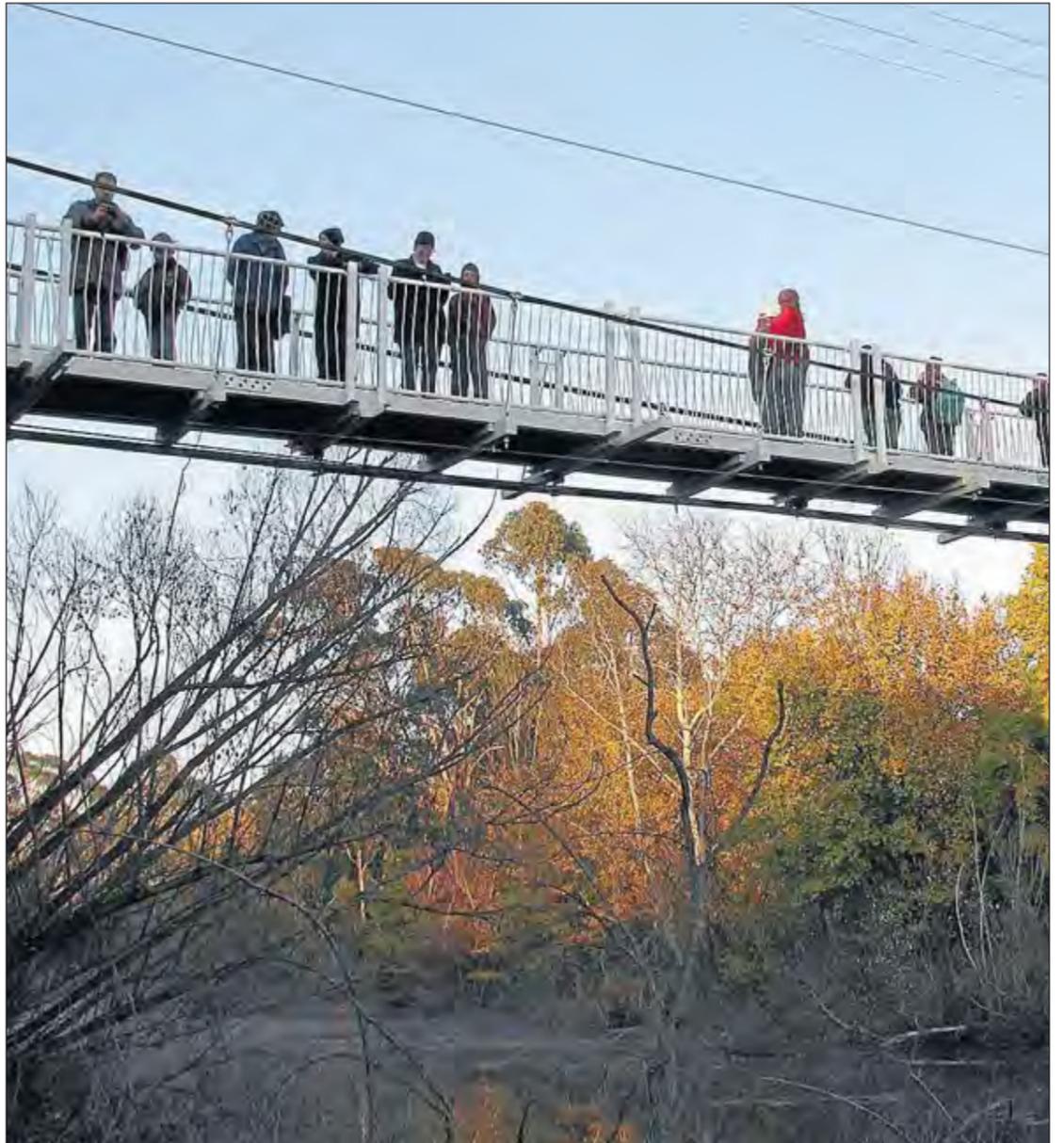
This may reflect the fact that aquatic insects (the main platypus food supply) are more likely to be washed away at some spots than others.

The post-flood quality of feeding sites may also change because of localised erosion or deposition of sediment.

Near Burra, many kilometres upstream of Queanbeyan township, one participant reported that platypus sightings along the Queanbeyan River crashed after the December flood event, with an animal not seen again until mid-March.

Flooding also caused the channel in that area to become wider and in some places deeper than it had been earlier, so it will be interesting to see whether this affects population recovery.

■ For more information email  
Tanya.rucoskynoakes@act.gov.au



Platypus Count volunteers in action.

## Bunyip community gathers to help rare bandicoot

THE Gippsland town of Bunyip is cementing a special relationship it has with an increasingly rare Australian native, the southern brown bandicoot.

A nationally listed threatened species, the southern brown bandicoot is in serious decline in many of the areas of Australia that it once inhabited.

But not around this little town in West Gippsland.

Here, the bandicoot population seems to be holding its own, and is apparently readily adapting to this partly urban and much-cleared rural environment.

Generally a shy creature, the bandicoot is nevertheless well known in Bunyip and surrounding areas.

Residents have stories of favourite bandicoots, or bandicoot families,

regularly visiting their properties, and not being too shy about it.

There are many accounts of bandicoots being hand-fed in the backyard, and even eating alongside family pets.

Teachers from one of the local primary schools also have stories of bandicoots using the school grounds and even coming into the classrooms on several occasions after school.

Many of these stories were recounted recently when the Bunyip Landcare Group held a Southern Brown Bandicoot community information evening – the first ever local community meeting focused on one of Bunyip's animal inhabitants.

The evening was a great success – more than 70 members of the local and surrounding communities attended, many of whom had no pre-

vious involvement with Landcare in the district.

The president of Bunyip Landcare Group and the evening's organiser, Susan Anderson, was surprised and delighted with the attendance.

The meeting heard speakers from Trust for Nature and the Department of Sustainability and Environment, along with local bandicoot ecologists, who spoke briefly about the species, the threats, and the recovery programs being implemented in local and regional areas to assist the species.

A local Bunyip Bandicoot Group was formed as a result of the community interest generated on the evening.

The group, an affiliate of the Bunyip Landcare Group and made up of Landcare and non-Landcare members, aims to gather and collate information about the local bandicoot population, collate records of bandicoot sightings and raise community awareness about the species.

Some of their activities will include talks and workshops at local schools and the dissemination of information to the wider community about the environmental funding programs available to assist local landholders.

The funds can be used to protect and increase the local bandicoot population by protecting habitat, controlling predators such as foxes, and creating habitat corridors.



To date, the Bunyip Bandicoot group has been working with other schools in the surrounding areas, and has set up a page on the community website for residents to record information on their sightings and experiences with bandicoots.

The page will also contain information on assistance available to landholders and current monitoring and research programs.

Recently, a Southern Brown Bandicoot regional recovery group was also formed for the Westernport region.

The recovery group will manage regional programs and implement some of the ideas in the national

recovery plan for the species.

The Bunyip Bandicoot group will be helping by contributing information on local bandicoot sightings collected on the group's website.

This will be used to inform programs implemented at a local, regional and perhaps even national scale.

■ Email Geoff Boyes, Regional Landcare facilitator  
gboyes\_cec@dcsi.net.au  
or contact (03) 5941 8446.

■ Visit  
www.bunyipvolunteers.com.au and follow the links to Bunyip Landcare group's page.





## Landcare In Focus

November 3rd 2011 ~ [www.landcareonline.com.au](http://www.landcareonline.com.au)



## Scouts build vegie patches

THE 1st Greystanes Scouts Group in Western Sydney had a plan – to involve the youth members in designing and building a vegetable garden at the back of the Scout Hall.

The idea became reality thanks to a Coles Junior Landcare School Garden grant of \$1000, which allowed the scouts to build and plant the garden.

The project also seeks to buy a rainwater tank and compost bin, to further understanding of sustainable living and recycling.

The entire project was designed as a “hands-on” learning tool for the scouting community to learn life skills.

The Scout members have been able to use this project to attain their scout Landcare Badge.

“What we didn’t expect was that the benefits of receiving the grant have been much greater than the monetary value,” said Assistant Cub Scout Leader, Julie Overton.

“The grant has opened many doors in the community, and we have had many offers of help either financially, in goods or in-kind, including Holroyd City Council, Yates, and our local Coles store in Merrylands to name a few.”

Holroyd City Council supported a tour of the Wentworthville Community Gardens; local businesses and family members donated a rainwater tank; Hilltop Road Public School is sharing gardening tips and information with the Scouts, while community members are propagating and providing heirloom seedlings.

The group was also asked to contribute food drawings to the Holroyd City Council community cookbook as part of the NSW Department of Climate Change and Water’s “Love Food Hate Waste” program.

■ Visit [www.juniorlandcare.com.au](http://www.juniorlandcare.com.au) for the complete list of 2011 Round 3 Coles Junior Landcare School Garden grant winners.

# Adventurers’ 13th trek in north west

By SARA SCHMUDE

FROM beginning to end, the 13th annual New England North West Landcare Adventure was a force to be reckoned with – the force of knowledge, experience, experimentation, innovation, networking, and capacity building on a regional scale.

Held in and around Guyra, NSW, the 13th Landcare Adventure attracted 150 participants.

The event was designed to help resource managers build their capacity to understand the factors shaping land management today – political, economic, social and environmental.

The program was diverse. It began with a visit to “Kenilworth”, Guyra, where Fiona and Derek Smith have taken “working with nature” as their motto and business idea.

Their approach embraces pastured eggs and grass-fed beef production, soil consulting, TAFE teaching and commercial vegetable production.

Derek, and local chemical-free potato producers Laurie Smith and Ian Holmes, gave the Adventurers an insight into creating biological and nutrient rich soils for producing food that is “nutrient dense, clean, green and energetic”.

NSW Industry and Investment’s Clare Edwards also spoke at “Kenilworth” on weed management, particularly Chilean Needle grass,

Coolatai grass and African Lovegrass, and the need for an innovative integrated approach to control.

At Guyra’s Mother of Ducks Lagoon, participants learnt about upland wetlands and the importance of these areas as the kidneys of hydrological systems within the Murray Darling Basin.

Dr Christine Jones spoke on the core importance of soil carbon to farming landscapes, impressing upon participants the need to learn how to rapidly build fertile topsoil and create on-farm carbon sinks that count.

Feedback from this session was very positive, and was underpinned with a talk by Regional Landcare Facilitator Project Manager for New England North West Landcare, Sonia Williams, on the carbon farming initiative.

Carbon was also on the agenda on day two, which began with a big Guyra Lions breakfast and an overview of a whole-of-landscape carbon audit undertaken by the Lower Apsley River Landcare Group.

The Adventure then trekked out to Robert and Fiona Kelly’s property “Mt William” to look at the environmental and production benefits of the high-intensity TechnoGraze system.

Rob also gave the participants a demonstration of how to quickly set up 50 metres of electric fencing

without stepping off his quad bike.

Speakers on this leg included Sally and Simon Wright on the Wongwibinda Landcare Group Composting Trial; MLA’s Cameron Allen on the multiple dimensions and objectives of sustainable grazing systems; and Roger Hegarty, Professor of Animal Nutrition at the University of New England, on how minimising methane emissions is equivalent to productivity gains.

In the field, participants cycled around hands-on skill building activities – pasture assessment and monitoring with Dr Lewis Khan from Agricultural Information Monitoring Services (AIMS) and sheep and cattle condition scoring with Jim Meckiff and Jason Siddell from NSW Department of Industry and Investment.

Local landholders Simon Murray, Wal Perry and John Winter-Irving, fielded questions on the bus about local land management practices.

(It proved to be the last time many would see Mr Winter-Irving, the highly-regarded chairman of Southern New England Landcare Coordinating Committee, who died suddenly on his farm in September.)

The Adventure closed with a celebratory dinner, and the honouring of those who have led natural resource management in the region.

Now planning is underway for the 2012 Adventure.

■ Visit [www.workingwithnature.net.au](http://www.workingwithnature.net.au)

# Holden lends ‘H.E.L.Ping’ hand to Landcare

HOLDEN has now delivered seven vehicles to Landcare Australia, as part of its national support of projects aimed at restoring and protecting the natural environment.

The Cruzes, Commodore and Colorados (pictured) are spread across four States and decorated with Landcare livery.

Holden will loan these vehicles to various Landcare programs across the country, including Holden Environment Landcare Partnership (H.E.L.P) initiatives at Wildhaven Wildlife Shelter, St Andrews, Victoria, the Bass Coast Landcare Network in Victoria and Landcare Australia offices in Sydney and Melbourne.

As part of Holden’s national sponsorship, each group will make use of their vehicle for 12 months to assist with the rebuilding of native habitats.

Holden has worked with Landcare Australia since 2002, supporting revegetation projects tailored to meet the different environmental needs of each area.

Holden Managing Director, Mike Devereux said Holden is committed to growing its support to further build on its Diamond partnership with Landcare Australia.

“Holden currently works with Landcare to protect and rebuild Australian environments, both around our facilities and in regional

areas. This is an opportunity to extend our support by providing a fleet of cars to Landcare.

“Holden’s continued support of these projects will ensure the protection of these natural environments for many years to come.”

Heather Campbell, CEO of Landcare Australia, thinks the Holden vehicles are integral to the work of Landcare groups across the country.

“From rescuing injured wildlife in St Andrews, to working with community projects on the Bass Coast or meeting with our corporate sponsors Landcare Australia will be able to travel further and work more effectively with the Holden fleet.”



## Landcare Australia Limited – What is our role?

We are the official not-for-profit organisation, owners of the trademarks and directly responsible for the promotion and marketing of the Landcare, Coastcare and Junior Landcare volunteer network. We develop innovative campaigns that highlight the importance of caring for our natural environment and deliver our message through a comprehensive network of media avenues.

We are also tasked with establishing strategic partnerships with some of Australia’s leading companies. Over the last 20 years we have developed a niche for brokering unique partnerships. Each partnership balances the needs and concerns of corporate, government and community

stakeholders to deliver meaningful environmental and sustainable agricultural projects. These partnerships are an invaluable contribution to the Landcare movement and help us distribute many millions of dollars worth of funding and in-kind support to Landcare groups and farmers each year.

Landcare Australia would like to thank all groups who have helped us achieve these outstanding results. We encourage all Landcarers to continue in their efforts as we commit to strengthening the Landcare community through ongoing promotional and financial support.



Landcare ambassador, Beau Walker with Landcare Australia Team: Odessa O’Brien, Heather Campbell (CEO) and Trish O’Gorman at the launch of the Be Natural Landcare grants program, August 2011.

For more information about Landcare Australia please visit [www.landcareonline.com.au](http://www.landcareonline.com.au)