# LANDCARE IN FOCUS

MAY 2026

Landcare Australia

## A Powerful and Passionate Voice for Landcare

Peter Garrett AM Appointed Chair of Landcare Australia

**Meet the Next Generation of** Landcare Leaders

**Eyes in the Sky: Using AI Drones** for Weed Detection and Prevention

**Dung Beetles at Work: Climate-Smart** Farming from the Ground Up

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**Landcare Australia is proud to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the Country on which we live and work. We value and respect their deep and continued spiritual and cultural connections to the land, waters and seas, and pay our respects to their Ancestors, and Elders past, present and future.**


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**Contact Us:**
We welcome content submissions to Landcare in Focus! The next edition is November 2026 and the content deadline is September 1, 2026. Submit your content to the editorial team via email at enquiries@landcareaustralia.com.au


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# Message from Landcare Australia Chair, Peter Garrett AM

**As the new chair of Landcare Australia, it's a great pleasure to welcome you to the latest edition of Landcare in Focus. This issue showcases the strength, innovation and community spirit that makes landcare a powerful movement across this amazing country.**

A big thanks to everyone who contributed articles. Your passion, insights and dedication are what brings the pages in this magazine to life. I hope these landcare stories leave you feeling inspired and encouraged.

In this May edition, you'll find articles from landcare groups, primary producers, schools, and a special feature on the next generation of landcare leaders.

From climate smart farming, investing in drought resilience and using AI for weed detection, to protecting shorebirds at a globally important wetland, this edition demonstrates the diversity of landcare and the people behind it.

My connection to Landcare is personal, and goes back to its earliest days, when the Australian Conservation Foundation/ National Farmers Federation proposal was taken to the former Prime Minister the late Bob Hawke to establish this pioneering national Landcare program.

I have watched the work of Landcare ever since, admiring its ability to bring people together in support of lasting environmental and sustainable agriculture action. When the opportunity came around to serve as chair, it felt like a chance to return home, and contribute to the sector in a meaningful way at this crucial time in our nation's history.

I sincerely thank the outgoing chair Doug Humann AM for his outstanding leadership over the past decade and his contribution to Landcare Australia's continued growth and impact to support the landcare movement.

For me, landcare has always been about connection. It brings together communities, primary producers, First Nations people and groups, volunteers and partners to deliver practical, on-ground action for healthier landscapes, agricultural lands, waterways and biodiversity, and more resilient communities.

Just as importantly, many people tell us their wellbeing is improved through their connection and contribution to landcare; a powerful reminder that landcare not only strengthens the environment and agricultural lands but also people and communities.

As we celebrate the people and projects featured in this edition, I encourage you to think about the volunteers and local champions in your own community who deserve recognition. Nominations for the 2026 State and Territory Landcare Awards are now open, offering a valuable opportunity to acknowledge the individuals, groups and organisations making an outstanding contribution to caring for our land and water. If someone comes to mind, I hope you will consider putting their name forward.

I look forward to the opportunity of meeting many of you at various events and conferences, and learning about your landcare work.

Enjoy reading.

Peter Garrett AM
Chair, Landcare Australia





**Pictured:** Landcare Australia Board Directors (left to right) - Natalie Sommerville, Former Chair Doug Humann AM, Peter Garrett AM, Robert Purves, Naomi Edwards, Brendan Foran and Anna Hooper. Not pictured is Rebecca Underwood.

> ***It has been a privilege to serve as chair of Landcare Australia, guided by the legacy of Phillip Toyne and Rick Farley and the national Landcare movement they helped to build, and, importantly, the women behind the origins of Landcare in Victoria, Heather Mitchell and Joan Kirner.***
>
> ***Board and management activity at Landcare Australia in the last decade reflect the collaborative Landcare spirit, and I thank fellow directors and Dr Shane Norrish and his team.***
>
> ***Together, we have strengthened governance, broadened and deepened relationships across the landcare community, and positioned Landcare Australia for growth to enable the work of the vigorous landcare community across Australia.***
>
> ***Landcare Australia is well placed for its exciting next chapter under new leadership with Peter Garrett. I couldn't be happier with his appointment.***
>
> — Former Landcare Australia Chair, Doug Humann AM

> ***Australia's Landcare has been an outstanding world first conservation program, bringing together community, farmers and First Nations people to produce healthy and productive landcapes. I relish the opportunity to take this role and help build on the great work underway right across the country.***
>
> — New Landcare Australia Chair, Peter Garrett AM

> ***We are delighted to welcome Peter Garrett as the new chair of Landcare Australia. Peter brings a strong belief in community led action and the power of people working together to care for our environment. His passion for conservation, protection of threatened species and advancement of Indigenous rights will bring a new momentum as we continue to grow the national landcare movement.***
>
> ***On behalf of Landcare Australia, I sincerely thank Doug Humann for his outstanding leadership and commitment as chair, where he has played a pivotal role in transforming Landcare Australia over the last decade.***
>
> — Landcare Australia CEO, Dr Shane Norrish



**Image credit** Annette Ruzicka

# Message from the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry



**For decades, Landcare has shown the best land management and environmental action happens at the community level.**

It is grassroots in every sense, bringing together farmers, land managers and volunteers who care deeply about the landscapes and communities they live and work in.

Their tireless efforts have laid the foundations for a more sustainable future, and I thank Landcare volunteers across the country for their extraordinary contributions.

I have met with many of you since my time in Parliament, and I am always impressed by the work that that you all undertake across our communities and regional Australia.

I recently had the opportunity to launch Project Ag-Resilience in Melbourne's Foodbowl – a $1.7 million investment bringing together Landcare networks, primary industry groups and local government to help farmers in the Port Phillip and Western Port region boost their productivity and protect biodiversity.

It was a great example of what can be done when farmers and key organisations are brought together to achieve a common goal.

Australia's agriculture sector is already leading the world in sustainable practices.

Our farmers are producing more food with fewer inputs and lower emissions than almost anywhere else.

A basket of agricultural goods produced in Australia generates 42 per cent fewer emissions than in the United States, 29 per cent fewer than in the European Union, and 12 per cent fewer than in New Zealand.

These are achievements we can be proud of, but we cannot afford to stand still. Fostering sustainable agriculture remains a major priority for the Albanese Labor Government.

To meet our commitment to net zero emissions by 2050 and to improve landscape health overall, we will need governments, industry and communities working together.

The Albanese Labor Government is supporting farmers to improve soil health, enhance biodiversity, strengthen drought resilience and support research and development – ensuring our agriculture sector remains productive, competitive and sustainable.

At the same time, we are responding to emerging global challenges.

Ongoing conflict in the Middle East has placed pressure on global fuel and fertiliser supply chains.

The Albanese Labor Government is working closely with industry to manage these risks.

Looking ahead, we are also investing in new opportunities for farmers and land managers, including over $1 billion to boost onshore production of low carbon liquid fuels, which has the potential to create new markets for bioenergy feedstocks grown on Australian farms.

As we develop a National Food Security Strategy, Feeding Australia, the role of farmers and land managers, and their ability to adapt to a changing climate, will remain central.

Together, through initiatives like the Natural Heritage Trust and the ongoing work of Landcare, we are charting a shared path towards a more sustainable, resilient and prosperous future for Australian agriculture and our unique environment.

Words by **Hon. Minister Collins** | Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

# Dung Beetles at Work: Climate-Smart Farming from the Ground Up

**Dung beetles prove that climate-smart agriculture doesn't always require new technology—sometimes it's just a matter of partnering with nature.**

On many Australian farms, climate-smart agriculture isn't happening in laboratories or control rooms—it's happening just below the soil surface. Dung beetles are quietly reshaping farmland by restoring natural processes that support healthier soils, productive pastures and more resilient grazing systems.

Before dung beetles became established, cattle dung often lingered on paddocks, fouling pasture and locking away valuable nutrients. Today, dung beetles act as nature's clean up crew. They bury dung into the soil, returning nutrients to plant roots, improving soil structure and kick starting natural fertilisation. For Landcare groups working to rebuild soil health, this is a powerful example of working with nature.

From a sustainable agriculture perspective, the benefits stack up. As dung beetles tunnel through soil, they improve water infiltration and reduce runoff. This helps farms cope with increasingly intense rainfall events while retaining moisture during dry periods. Better soil structure also encourages deeper plant root growth and more resilient pastures—key priorities under the Natural Heritage Trust, which has a focus on sustainable farming and land management.

Dung beetles also reduce reliance on chemical inputs. By breaking fly and parasite breeding cycles, they help lower the need for insecticides and livestock treatments. This supports cleaner production systems, healthier waterways and improved biodiversity outcomes.

**Main** Matthew Gunningham, Landholder and Tom O'Malley, Sustainable Agriculture Facilitator.

**Top Right** Bubas bison dung beetle



Supporting these observations from the field, Tom O'Malley—featured in the video and serving as Sustainable Agriculture Facilitator for Cradle Coast NRM, Tasmania—highlights how dung beetles physically enhance paddocks from the ground up:

**"The benefits they bring to soil structure, such as reducing soil compaction and allowing greater water infiltration, are facilitated by the tunnels they create."**

Most importantly, dung beetles show how small biological systems can deliver big, practical wins. They boost productivity, protect soils and strengthen farm resilience, all while cutting costs and environmental impact.

**Video:** Tom O'Malley, Sustainable Agriculture Facilitator, Cradle Coast NRM (Tas.), explains how dung beetles improve soil structure and water infiltration. Filmed as part of Our natural advantage—building the benefits of natural capital on farms project, funded by the Natural Heritage Trust's Climate-Smart Agriculture Program.

**View here:** https://share.viostream.com/dicbhzwr5m53oh

Content provided by the **Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF)**

# The Impact of Landcare in NSW

**Landcarers, Members of Parliament, and partners from across NSW gathered at Parliament House on 17 March 2026 for a very special Parliamentary Friends of Landcare event, celebrating the launch of a powerful film series highlighting the impact of the NSW Landcare Enabling Program.**

The event was hosted by the Hon. Steve Whan, Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education and Co-Chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Landcare, alongside fellow Co-Chairs Michael Kemp MP and Roy Butler MP. Thank you also to the Hon. Penny Sharpe, Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage, for her attendance and support of the night.

Proceedings began with a Welcome to Country delivered by Dharug Elder Aunty Leanne King in her traditional language. Guests then heard from key Landcare NSW leaders and partners, including Steve Bunnell, Chair of Landcare NSW, and Kate Lorimer-Ward, Chief Executive Officer of Local Land Services, who spoke to the strength and value of the partnership between Landcare NSW and Local Land Services.

Jodie Lovell, NSW Landcare Enabling Program Manager, highlighted the success of the Program to date and the measurable outcomes, strong returns on investment, and most importantly, resilient and empowered communities being supported through the Program.

A special highlight of the evening was a native food demonstration by Landcare NSW Ambassador, Mindy Woods, a proud Bundjalung woman.






Suzannah Cowley, Director of Nviro Media, spoke of her experiences travelling around the state capturing the stories and incredible work of Landcare Coordinators and groups having on-ground impact.

The film series captures the scale and diversity of Landcare across NSW with each film highlighting a different aspect of the NSW Landcare Enabling Program's impact — local projects delivering throughout the state, celebrating Aboriginal Partnerships and the importance of connection to Country, collaboration across communities and organisations, and bringing to life the real, practical outcomes Landcare in NSW is achieving.

Watch the film series here:
https://landcarensw.org.au/the-impact-of-landcare-in-nsw

Words by **Landcare NSW**

**Top** Jodie Lovell, NSW Landcare Enabling Program Manager

**Bottom** Landcare NSW Ambassador Chef Mindy Woods and Landcare NSW General Manager Marni Holden





# The NSW Landcare and Local Land Services Conference is Coming to Corowa in 2026!

**Taking place from 27–29 October 2026 in the beautiful riverside town of Corowa along the Murray River, this year's theme, The Sum of It All, celebrates collaboration, collective impact, and the strong connection between land and community.**

Corowa has a proud and active Landcare presence, led by Corowa District Landcare and the Murray Landcare Collective, a community alliance of agricultural, environmental, and not-for-profit groups.

Across three inspiring days, the conference will feature a fantastic lineup of speakers, plenty of opportunities to connect with Landcare communities, and the NSW Landcare Awards Gala Dinner.

Hosted in partnership with Corowa District Landcare, Murray Local Land Services, and regional Landcare groups, the event promises to be inclusive, engaging, and forward-thinking. With its rich landscapes of rivers, wetlands, woodlands, and productive farmland, Corowa provides the perfect backdrop to celebrate and help shape the future of Landcare in NSW.

This initiative is made possible by the NSW Landcare Enabling Program, a collaboration between Local Land Services and Landcare NSW, supported by the NSW Government.

Further information: www.nswlandcareconference.com

Words by **Landcare NSW**

**Image credit** North of the Murray

**Main** Lucy Bullock, Sustainable Agriculture Facilitator and Fiona McBean, cattle producer and FDF/Mulloon Institute CoPP host

**Right** Dr Bonny Stutsel, Researcher, WaterSmart Dams Project and Paul South, mixed farmer and WaterSmart Dams Project trial host



# Investing in Drought Resilience: Practical Solutions for Australian Landscapes

**Across Australia, dry conditions are once again testing farmers, land managers and regional communities. Drought is a familiar challenge, but climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of dry periods, making preparation more important than ever.**

While the seasons remain unpredictable, communities across the country are responding with innovation, collaboration and a strong focus on building resilience at both farm and landscape scale.

To support this work, the Australian Government established the Future Drought Fund (FDF) in 2019. Delivered through the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), the FDF invests in long term programs and partnerships that help agriculture and regional communities prepare for drought and manage climate risk.

Working alongside industry, Landcare and natural resource management groups, researchers, state and local governments and First Nations organisations, the FDF supports projects that build skills and knowledge, strengthen local networks and encourage practical, on-ground change.

## From Ideas to Action on the Ground

Across Australia, FDF-supported projects are translating research and innovation into real world outcomes for farmers and landholders.

One example is Mulloon Institute's Communities of Practice project, funded through the FDF's Extension and Adoption of Drought Resilience Farming Practices Grants program. The project brought landholders together to learn practical landscape rehydration techniques through workshops, mentoring and on-farm demonstrations. Participants are now applying these methods to restore degraded landscapes, improve water retention and strengthen ecosystem health. Reported outcomes include revitalised creek systems, increased ground cover and biodiversity, improved productivity and stronger community capacity to manage climate impacts over the long term.

Another initiative, the WaterSmart Dams Project, demonstrates how collaboration between growers, researchers and farming groups can improve on-farm water security. Funded through the FDF's Innovation Grants program, the project trialled a range of technologies — including subsurface drainage, evaporation covers and dam sealing products — combining scientific monitoring with farmers' practical experience. The work improved dam performance and increased confidence among growers to adopt scalable water management solutions for increased drought resilience.

Insights from the trials helped inform the development of the Water Evaluation Platform, giving farmers access to data and modelling tools to assess water saving options for their own properties.



## Building Resilience for the Long Term

While each project responds to local conditions, together they highlight a consistent theme: drought resilience is strongest when communities are supported to share knowledge, test new approaches and build practical skills that can be adapted over time.

Backed by sustained investment and strong partnerships, the FDF is helping Australian agriculture move beyond short term responses toward long term preparedness. By supporting innovation, leadership and collaboration, the FDF is strengthening the capacity of farmers and regional communities to manage drought and thrive in a more variable climate.

For more information about the Future Drought Fund, visit agriculture.gov.au/FDF

Words by **Drought Partnerships section Farm Resilience Division** | Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

# The Landcare Project That Redefines Retirement

**In a quiet over-50s lifestyle community nestled at the base of Queensland's McAllister Range, a powerful grassroots movement is growing led by a woman who believes that healing the planet begins with healing our relationship to it. Her name is Jenny Brown, and her work is reshaping not only the landscape but the lives of those who live among it.**

Jenny, 65, is the founder and coordinator of the O.V.E.R. the Hill Landcare Project (Occasional Volunteer Ecological Rehabilitation), a dynamic, community led revegetation initiative based at Botanica Lifestyle Resort near Cairns. Since launching in October 2021, the project has seen the planting of over 5,500 native trees, spanning more than 220 species, restoring a two-hectare nature reserve from a degraded, weedy slope into a thriving rainforest corridor.

But Jenny's work is not just ecological. It's deeply human. Understanding that many in her community yearned for purpose after retirement, Jenny created a landcare model that values every kind of contribution from soil donations and seed propagation to painting wildlife boxes and constructing trails. She gently guides over 70 active volunteers, many in their 70s and 80s, making space for them to reconnect with nature, each other, and themselves.

"People feel young again up here," Jenny says. And they do. One volunteer with PTSD credits the project for helping him feel "normal" again. Others, like 82-year-old Nancy, celebrate newfound pride in planting at such a rich age. The emotional, physical, and mental health benefits ripple outward, reinforcing the link between environmental restoration and personal wellbeing.





**"Downsizing from acreage was hard, but being involved in the landcare project has given me a renewed connection to nature. Jenny's support has been incredible — she's backed our ideas and aided to implement them. Her knowledge and passion inspire us all."**

- Karen Brand, Botanica Resident

**"Working on the landcare project with Jenny has been incredibly fulfilling. Her knowledge and guidance have helped me extend what I already knew from my past Bushcare experience and apply it in meaningful ways. It feels good to keep learning and to do something that truly makes a difference."**

- Jon Fearon, Botanica Resident

**Above top** Jenny standing by the restored agricultural relic, now a proud symbol of the site's transformation

Jenny and the tree that supports the Hercules moth caterpillar

**Above bottom** Community getting involved with the project



Jenny's vision is methodical and ambitious. Collaborating with ecological consultants and local partners like the Marlin Coast Men's Shed, she's built a replicable framework including canopy, infill, edge planting, and track building with each stage rooted in best practice science and community inclusion. She has introduced soil-building programs, organic waste recycling, native pollinator conservation, and art based engagement to increase accessibility and creative ownership.

In the wake of Cyclone Jasper, Jenny expanded the project to include erosion mitigation never seeing setbacks as obstacles, but as opportunities for innovative solutions. Plans for a second site are already underway, and her dream of seeing cassowaries roam amongst Botanica's landcare initiatives through a strengthened rainforest corridor speaks to both ecological integrity and local inspiration.

Jenny holds formal qualifications in sustainability education, but it's her informal, deeply empathetic leadership that makes her extraordinary. She's inclusive, strategic, humble, and above all, hopeful.

At a time when climate resilience demands local action and cross generational engagement, Jenny Brown is a blueprint for what empowered, community based environmental leadership can look like. Her work deserves to be recognised not only for its ecological success, but for its cultural and social significance.

Words by **Landcare NSW**

**Above** Residents Bob Hobson and Jenny Brown at a tree planting event

# Eyes in the Sky: Using AI Drones for Weed Detection and Prevention

**The Cotton Research and Development Corporation (CRDC) has invested more than half a million dollars across 11 feasibility studies for cutting edge projects that aim to tackle some of cotton's biggest future challenges. Landcare Australia is proud to be selected for their innovative project WildSeek.**

The successful projects in the CRDC Innovation Call, delivered by some of the country's leading startups, ventures, entrepreneurs, agribusinesses and research organisations, were selected following a national open call for innovative solutions to three cotton challenges – preparing for a low-pesticide future, optimising nitrogen use, and improving weed management. CRDC offered up to $50,000 to support each individual feasibility study, across these three key priority areas.

This project 'Eyes in the sky: Using AI drones for weed detection and prevention', delivered by Landcare Australia utilises drones and an advanced AI platform (WeedRemeed™) to detect hard-to-spot weeds before they spread through cotton-growing regions.

With a focus on riparian zones, where manual surveys are difficult or unsafe to carry out on foot, the system will process drone imagery using advanced colour picking and machine learning technologies to detect and geolocate weeds. Successful detection models will identify weeds at an accuracy of over 80 per cent.

The work will include defining a target weed species. This process will incorporate advice from ecological specialists as well as knowledge shared by local landholders and community groups. This will be followed by conducting suitability assessments, undertaking drone surveys, and training the AI models before the WeedRemeed™ technology is deployed through Landcare Australia's WildSeek hubs.



Katie Selhorst, Head of Landscape Restoration and Chief Remote Pilot, said "The WildSeek Weeds project is transforming how we detect weeds by combining cutting edge drone and new AI technology with on ground expertise. By finding infestations earlier and more accurately, we can protect productive landscapes and deliver better outcomes for growers and the environment.

Delivered alongside the Centre for Invasive Species Solutions and the Tamworth Regional Landcare Association, the project will expand the existing WildSeek and WeedRemeed™ frameworks to create a scalable, community-driven weed management tool.

The 11 successful applicants will now commence their feasibility studies. Growers will have the opportunity to hear more about the projects at the Australian Cotton Conference on the Gold Coast in August.

For more information: enquiries@landcareaustralia.com.au.

Words by Landcare Australia



# Citizen Scientists Reporting Condamine River Water Quality

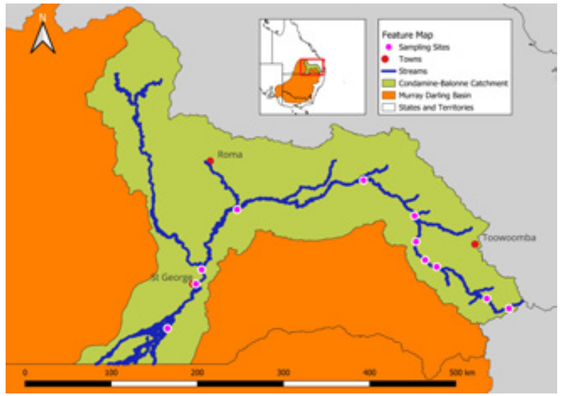
**The volunteer citizen science group, the Condamine Balonne Water Committee (CBWC), formed in the early 1990s with backing from 18 Local Governments and seven water user groups in the Condamine-Balonne-Culgoa catchment in Queensland.**

Following the world's longest blue-green algae bloom in the Darling River (1991) and community concerns about agricultural chemical usage, a CBWC workshop identified a need for a coordinated water quality monitoring network to supplement the basic ambient network of the Queensland Government.

The CBWC undertook a systematic seasonal water quality monitoring program (1993–2025) that measured and recorded a range of agricultural chemicals, nutrients and major ions at sites close to gauging stations on the Condamine-Balonne River from Killarney to Dirranbandi.

Data gathered are stored on the Queensland Government Project Science Database and the many CBWC authored reports are available at https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/library

The CBWC commissioned a pilot study evaluating a water quality assessment methodology for use in comparing data with the catchment's Queensland Government's Healthy Waters Management Plan (HWMP) targets.






For three water types, 14 key indicator data were collated and analysed to ascertain whether there were any significant trends over a 30-year timeframe (1995-2024). Results were also compared with the HWMP targets. Findings were:

- For individual variables, 29% of annual median values met target values, 31% did not and there was insufficient data for comparison in 40% of cases;
- Trend analysis indicated improvements for 8%, decline for 20% and no statistically significant trend for 72% of the variables examined;
- Overall water quality scores were mostly 3/5 or "Fair";
- Overall score confidence was "Poor" to "Very Poor" indicating the need for further monitoring.

As the CBWC data accounted for 69% of the available useful data, the project leader, Paul Webb, stressed the value of combining citizen science data with agency data to enhance condition and trend assessments.

*Contributors: Titmarsh, G#., Standley, J#., Webb, P*. and McIntyre G#.*

For more information: water@wowebbs.com

Words by **Paul Webb**

**Images** supplied by CBWC

# Why I Volunteer (and 5 Reasons You Should Too)

**Many years back, I started to volunteer in conservation in New Zealand with Conservation Volunteers and continue to volunteer to this day around where I live. So here are the reasons why I volunteer and what it offers and perhaps, why you should consider it too.**

## 1. Finding Connection

Almost every aspect of what we consume today is part of a global supply chain making it easy to disassociate from our immediate surroundings. I started to volunteer in conservation to connect with nature. Over time, it helped me understand the ecosystems we are part of, to recognise the trees and flowers and the seasons they herald when in bloom. It helped me recognise birds, mammals, reptiles and other fun creatures around the bush as well as gain access to beautiful reserves I wouldn't have visited otherwise. I remember in one of the sessions, I helped clean a stagnant creek, overgrown with weeds. The next time I went there, a family of ducks made it home. I'd like to believe I played a part. Gladstone. Its mission: to protect the ecological integrity and biodiversity of Central Queensland while promoting ecological sustainability.

## 2. Finding Joy

In learning about the environment, one also has the opportunity to encounter it at close quarters. Often while volunteering, some odd creature will pop it's head to say "Hello!" or more often than not run for it's dear life. But once in a while, when you're busy planting or pulling weeds a Magpie or Kookaburra will come patiently sit next to you, waiting for you to turn the soil and dig up a juicy snack for them. One morning, I found a slug had left behind a trail, glistening in the sun curving around little mushrooms growing in a bed of moss and there it was, a little piece of pure magic.



## 3. Building Community

Volunteering is a great way to meet like minded people, build community as well as network with people with similar values. Having moved to Sydney, Australia a little over a year back, volunteering helped me find people I could relate to and build a sense of community. Over time this community has grown into other activities from book clubs, hiking, photography and even trivia.

## 4. Getting Creative

Volunteering helped me discover things about myself and enhance pathways I was headed in. I've always struggled with meditation and volunteering in conservation turned out in more ways that one to be a very meditative practice. To be present, mindful and develop better listening skills (The last one I needed the most!). In addition, volunteering constantly offers new ways for me to get creative with my photography and offers constant inspiration to make art.

## 5. Find the Courage for an Alternate Career

I've always volunteered for causes I care about - be it marine conservation in Rajah Ampat in Indonesia to bush regeneration in urban reserves around Sydney. I find myself drawn to this space and exploring projects to combine my skills towards driving conservation outcomes. One project among others, was working on the Manly Dam Biodiversity Project which added a wealth of knowledge to over 420 species of fauna that you can encounter while still living in a city. I am hoping down the line I can combine conservation, volunteering and creativity in more meaningful ways.

Words by **Aditi Das Patnaik**

**Image** Slug trail glistening on moss



Landcarer

Bringing Volunteers & Experts Together in One Place.

The Landcarer website is a purpose built FREE online community for individuals, groups and organisations to share and discuss all things related to our common passion for conservation, sustainable land management and agriculture in Australia.

Build capacity for grassroots and community based groups

Promote your work, events or outcomes

Share ideas, experiences, knowledge and resources

Collaborate with others, explore opportunities and ask questions

www.landcarer.com.au

# Whitewater Creek Landcare: Caring for Platypus and Creek

**Whitewater Creek Landcare is a new and growing community group with a powerful origin story and a clear purpose to protect local waterways and the wildlife that depends on them.**

The group was founded by Kingston resident Jenny Forward after a life changing encounter in 2023, when she rescued an injured platypus from a roadside near her home and was envenomated in the process. During her recovery, Jenny found herself asking why the platypus had crossed the road – a question that led her straight to Whitewater Creek. What she discovered was confronting: a beautiful waterway choked with weeds and litter, posing real threats to platypus and other native species and nature.



With support from her local Coastcare group and Kingborough Council, Jenny established Whitewater Creek Landcare to turn concern into action. The group now focuses on weed removal along the creek banks, laying the groundwork for future riparian planting. These plantings will help stabilise banks, improve water quality, support aquatic habitat, strengthen biodiversity corridors and reduce flood impacts.




Whitewater Creek runs through a six hectare reserve where past rehabilitation has already restored habitat for the endangered Swift Parrot and an endangered forest community, making it an environmentally significant site. Sadly, at least four platypuses have died in the area in recent years due to looped waste. In response, the group is raising awareness about cutting loops before disposing of rubbish, while working with council to support an official Australian Platypus Conservancy survey site to help monitor platypus numbers.

The group brings together local residents, families and council staff, and hosts a popular annual Clean Up Australia Day event. With a growing online presence and enthusiasm for sharing their story during Landcare Week and Coastcare Week, Whitewater Creek Landcare is proving that local action can make a meaningful difference – for platypus, for people and for the creek they call home.

For more information, please visit their Facebook Page: Whitewater Creek Landcare

Words by **Landcare Australia**

**Left:** Jenny Forward at Clean Up Australia Day Event

**Top:** Whitewater Creek Landcare Volunteers taking part in the 2026 Clean Up Australia Day




**Main:** Jenny Forward (left) and Bridget Jupe, Natural Areas Interpretations Officer, Kingborough Council

# Protecting Shorebirds at Midway Point: Community Action for a Globally Important Wetland



## A Wetland Worth Protecting

At low tide on Pittwater–Orielton Lagoon, Eastern Curlews probe the mudflats while Pied Oystercatchers run the shoreline. For locals at Midway Point, these birds are part of everyday life  and a reminder that this wetland is both precious and fragile.

Pittwater–Orielton Lagoon located in southern Tasmania near Midway Point and Sorell is recognised as wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention. These coastal habitats support a rich diversity of native fauna and play a critical role in global migratory bird pathways.

However, these same environments are highly vulnerable. Historical monitoring and conservation reports across Tasmania have consistently identified predation by feral cats as a significant threat to shorebirds and small native mammals, particularly ground-nesting species.

## What the Evidence Revealed

Understanding the scale and nature of the issue was a critical first step. Community consultation and data collection provided insights into cat presence and movement across the landscape. These findings were reinforced through the deployment of infrared camera traps, installed by Matthew Pauza (Invasive Species Biologist) Biosecurity Tasmania, which confirmed the presence and activity of stray and feral cats within and around sensitive habitats.

Early consultation helped identify where cats were most frequently seen, how they were interacting with the landscape and what local concerns existed. This allowed the project to prioritise specific areas for monitoring and focus efforts where impacts on wildlife were most likely to occur.

Importantly, community feedback also highlighted practical constraints, particularly around access to veterinary services and the presence of unowned or semi-owned cats.

## Working Together on the Ground

Addressing these risks requires coordinated, place-based action. In Midway Point, a collaborative project brought together Ten Lives Cat Centre, Sorell Council, TassieCat and veterinary partners to deliver a targeted cat management initiative focused on protecting wildlife while responding to local conditions.

This partnership model was central to the project's success, enabling resources, skills and networks to be aligned toward a common goal.

## From Evidence to Action

In response, the project implemented practical, on-ground measures aimed at reducing the impacts of feral and stray cats. A low-cost desexing program was delivered to help limit population growth and reduce the number of cats entering the landscape.

More broadly, the initiative supported humane and strategic approaches to managing feral cat populations in surrounding bushland and peri-urban areas—where interactions with wildlife are most likely to occur.

**Top Main** Students at Sorell School participating in an educational workshop on the impacts of cats on native wildlife
**Bottom Main** Midway Point Project partners Ten Lives, Sorell Council and TassieCat at the project's media launch
**Above** Survey findings used to identify sites for camera installation to detect stray and feral cats

## Why Local Action Matters

The ecological significance of Midway Point extends far beyond Tasmania. As part of an international network of wetlands, it provides essential habitat for migratory species that travel thousands of kilometres each year.

Managing feral cats is one of the most effective ways communities can actively protect shorebirds and strengthen wetland ecosystems.  Their presence in areas of high conservation value such as Orielton Lagoon presents a clear and ongoing risk. Protecting these environments requires sustained effort, informed by evidence and supported through strong partnerships.

## A Model Other Landcare Groups Can Use

The Midway Point project demonstrates how collaboration between local government, animal welfare organisations and community stakeholders can deliver meaningful outcomes for both wildlife and communities. There was valuable engagement with the Landcare network. In particular, we worked closely with Landcare Tasmania. Bill Harvey, a board member at the time, played an important role in helping share information and raise awareness within the local community.

This connection helped extend the reach of project messaging and ensured that key information around cat impacts and management approaches was communicated through trusted community networks.

By combining on-ground action with shared expertise, the initiative provides a model for managing feral cats in sensitive environments.

As pressures on native species continue, integrated and collaborative approaches such as this will play an increasingly important role in safeguarding Australia's unique biodiversity.

Readers can find further information on feral cat management approaches, tools and resources on the Pest Smart website Feral cats - PestSmart  and the official website for the feral cat and fox program: https://feralcatandfox.com.au/

Readers can also record feral cat activity through  - FeralScan

For more specific enquiries or to discuss potential projects and collaborations, readers are welcome to get in touch directly via email at sara.balouch@invasives.com.au or feralcatandfox@invasives.com.au or contact the National Feral Cat and Fox Management Coordinator, yasmin.aly@invasives.com.au

Words by **Dr Sara Balouch**, Project Officer | National Feral Cat and Fox Management Coordination Program



## Who Made This Happen?

The project was delivered through a collaborative partnership involving local government, animal welfare organisations and veterinary services, each contributing specific expertise:

- TassieCat – represented by Sara Balouch, contributing to project coordination, community engagement and program delivery
- Ten Lives Cat Centre – represented by Noel Hunt, leading community outreach and program implementation
- Sorell Council – represented by Dibas Panta, supporting local coordination and integration with council priorities
- Hobart Community Veterinary Hospital – delivering desexing and microchipping services
- Matt Pauza – supporting the design and implementation of the camera trapping component

This collaborative model enabled the project to combine scientific, operational and community perspectives, ensuring a well-rounded and effective approach.

## Landcare Takeaways

- Start with local knowledge and evidence
- Partner early with animal welfare organisations
- Focus efforts where wildlife impacts are greatest
- Use community trust to support long term change



**Main and Left** Matthew Pauza (NRE Tasmania) installing an infrared camera at Oriental Lagoon, Pittwater, to detect the presence of stray and feral cats

# Give to Gain: Celebrating Women in Landcare

## Through the Story of Sophie George

**Each year, International Women's Day (IWD) inspires us to recognise the women involved in Landcare whose leadership strengthens communities, landscapes and Australia's landcare movement.**

For 2026, Landcare Australia marked IWD with a social media campaign that profiles remarkable women who exemplify the message Landcare Is For Everyone and embody this year's theme, Give to Gain. The campaign highlights women across research, Cultural leadership, sustainable agriculture, youth engagement and community restoration, showcasing how their generosity of time, knowledge and care enriches both people and place.

Among these leaders is Sophie George, Executive Officer of the Capricorn Conservation Council (CCC) which is a leading not for profit environmental advocacy organisation in Central Queensland. CCC is a community based conservation group committed to preserving and enhancing the region's natural beauty and biodiversity. Based in Rockhampton, its reach spans from the Capricorn Coast, including the Great Barrier Reef, west to the Northern Territory border, north to the Mackay Regional Council southern boundary, and south to Gladstone. The organisation's mission is to protect the ecological integrity and biodiversity of Central Queensland while promoting ecological sustainability.

Based on Darumbal Country in Central Queensland, Sophie is an environmental advocate, educator and researcher dedicated to community led conservation and Culturally informed environmental science. She leads programs that strengthen biodiversity protection, elevate community action and build meaningful Indigenous partnerships across Central Queensland.

For Sophie, caring for Country is deeply collaborative. She believes Landcare Is For Everyone because the responsibility to protect land and water is shared by all who call these places home. She reminds us that when we "give our time, knowledge, or hands to restoration, we gain connection, belonging and a future where nature and people thrive together."

Sophie's leadership is shaped by the guidance of Indigenous Elders and mentors, including Melanie Kemp, whose Cultural knowledge and dedication to Caring for Country continue to influence her work.

Through Sophie's story, Landcare Australia's 2026 IWD campaign illustrates what Give to Gain looks like in action: every act of stewardship enriches communities, strengthens Country and creates opportunities for the next generation.

For this year's International Women's Day, we celebrated leaders like Sophie whose generosity, collaboration and commitment continue to shape a thriving landcare movement for everyone.

To read more about the other women feature in Landcare Australia's Give to Gain: Celebrating Women in Landcare click **here**.

Words by **Landcare Australia**



**Main** Sophia George





# Little River Landcare Biodiversity Markets:

# Building Knowledge, Confidence and Choice for Local Farmers

**Understanding carbon and biodiversity markets can be complex. So, that's exactly why the Little River Landcare Biodiversity Markets project is focused on knowledge, not pressure.**

Supported by Landcare Australia's Biodiversity in Action program, the project is helping local land managers build practical understanding of natural capital opportunities and assess whether carbon or biodiversity projects make sense for their individual farming systems.

Since launching in September 2025, the project has generated strong regional interest, with more than 20 producers attending the first workshop to explore carbon sequestration, biodiversity co benefits and the commercial realities of participating in emerging markets.

## Learning First, Decisions Later

Feedback from the recent workshop highlighted that carbon and biodiversity markets take time to absorb, with many participants noting the value of hearing the information multiple times and gradually building understanding.

Each workshop delves deeper into the process, recognising that the carbon "space" is extensive and that producers are at different stages of readiness.

A key outcome of the session was the distribution of individual landholder reports generated by Renvo Ag. Each participant received:

- a mapped farm boundary,
- a link to Google Earth with multiple vegetation layers, and
- information showing how different vegetation types connect to current open markets.

This allowed producers to see, in real terms, how different carbon project options might perform on their own farms and included price differences, management requirements and potential ACCU returns per hectare per year.

For many, this practical, farm specific approach made opportunities clearer and more tangible.

## Knowing When Carbon Isn't the Right Fit

Just as importantly, producers are gaining clarity on when carbon or biodiversity projects may not be viable for their management system and this clarity is considered a positive outcome of the project.

Rather than driving sign ups from primary producers, the focus is on informed decision making.

One participant described the program as "refreshing", noting that there were no forced outcomes or expectations to proceed beyond learning and assessment.

## Project Progress so Far

The Little River Landcare Biodiversity Markets project has made steady progress since the announcement of the successful Biodiversity in Action grant and the release of an Expression of Interest for local participants.

Promotion through newsletters, social media, community newspapers and word of mouth has driven strong engagement across the region, reflecting growing interest in practical natural capital opportunities that deliver both environmental and business benefits.

The first workshop, held on 13 November 2025 at "Catombal", brought together more than 20 land managers to hear expert presentations on:

- carbon farming opportunities,
- associated risks and considerations, and
- biodiversity co benefits linked to registered projects.

Allan Nicholson, Principal Salinity Officer with the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW), presented on a 20 hectare site selected for an environmental planting project. His presentation examined soil type, hydrology and historic land use, while highlighting potential benefits such as improved water quality, reduced erosion and restoration of grassy box woodland habitat.

Project facilitator Phoebe Gulliver emphasised the importance of capability building:

**"The most exciting part of this project is the learning process — supporting producers to map their own properties and determine whether a registered project is a viable business decision for their farm."**

**"Farmers need simple processes and clear pathways. Understanding how to map their own farms and assess carbon sequestration potential is a practical first step."**

## What's Next?

These next stages will deepen participants' understanding of both environmental outcomes and commercial considerations, ensuring future decisions are grounded in sound science and real farm business realities.

For more information: ceo@littleriverlandcare.com.au or visit www.littleriverlandcare.com.au

Words by **Pheobe Gulliver**, CEO| Little River Landcare

**Main** Discovering and recording invertabrates
**Above** Installing Habitat boxes with Simon Cherriman

# Putting Wetlands Firmly Back on the School Radar

**In June 2025, the Hawkesbury-Nepean Landcare Network (HNL) set out to put wetlands firmly back on the school radar. Across HNL's four LGAs, wetlands are everywhere – and yet often overlooked. There are 159 significant wetlands in the Hawkesbury region of Sydney with 2,000 hectares in Penrith, 12 natural and constructed wetlands in Blacktown, plus 39 major sub catchments and more than 900 kilometres of waterways in The Hills Shire. Despite this abundance, there have been no dedicated programs highlighting their ecological importance within local schools.**

With support from the Cattai Hills Environment Network (CHEN), launched the landcare network launched the inaugural HNL Schools Wetlands Challenge in 2025 – a hands-on, community-driven initiative connecting students to the landscapes of the Hawkesbury-Nepean River system.

The idea is simple but powerful: each participating school "adopts" a local wetland. Over the course of the Challenge, students build a genuine relationship with their site, using citizen science and nature-based solutions to monitor and care for it. Learning moves beyond the classroom and into muddy boots and water testing kits. Science, geography and Cultural learning come together in real time.

The year culminates in the HNL Schools Wetlands Challenge Awards, where students present their projects and compete for HNL Wetland of the Year. Judging looks at the depth of citizen science, how environmental education has been embedded across the school, and the level of demonstrated care through restoration efforts.





The winner of the 2025 HNL Schools Wetlands Challenge was Lorien Novalis Steiner School in The Hills Shire Council area. Their chosen "wetland" was Dooral Dooral Creek, a waterway running behind their school and known to have platypus. Although the school was not located near a traditional wetland, the creek offered easy and meaningful access for students, making it the ideal site for their project.

By bringing together students, teachers, councils, Landcare groups, environmental educators and scientists, the Challenge builds a community of care around local wetlands.

Landcare isn't just restoring habitat. It's empowering the next generation to understand, value and protect the ecosystems that sustain us all.

For further information: landcare@wswa.nsw.gov.au

Words by **Monique Bailey**, Local Landcare Coordinator | Hawkesbury-Nepean Landcare Network & Western Sydney Weeds Authority




**Main** Students from participating school Marsden Park Anglican College presenting their findings on their chosen wetland at the HNL Wetland Challenge Awards 2025.

**Above** Sydney Waters Education Team facilitating an activity with participating school students to teach them about urban impacts on wetlands at the HNL Wetland Challenge Awards 2025.

# Cultivating Connection:
## Primary School Students Co-creating Biodiverse Spaces of Wellbeing

**Finding a place of belonging during lunchtime can be challenging for some students. The playground can feel overstimulating, while the library's structured environment doesn't suit everyone. In NSW, Trinity Grammar School's 'Green Patch' offers a unique alternative, a natural space where the calming rhythms of nature creates an environment of equality. With digital devices not permitted, students are free to slow down, observe, and reconnect with the world around them. This green haven, create an equigenic effect: sporting prowess, academic success, or musical ability carry no weight; instead, curiosity, calm, and community flourish.**

Green Patch became the setting for the student led environmental project: an eight week construction program in which 26 students, aged 7–12, learned to design and build a biodiversity pond to support local wildlife. As they worked, students who had previously felt disconnected gradually grew their sense of belonging, evolving into a close-knit community, united by purpose, shared experience and making a difference to climate future.




This initiative formed part of a research study using mixed methods of data collection, including questionnaires, interviews, observations, and the Climate Emotions Wheel. Three key findings emerged.

First, students developed a stronger connection to place and nature, alongside an increased sense of responsibility for environmental stewardship.

Second, their wellbeing was enhanced, with improved mental health and a noticeable reduction in eco anxiety.

Third, the project fostered a deeper sense of community and belonging as students collaborated and supported one another.

The project concluded with the Pond Opening Party, where families gathered to celebrate the students' achievements and take pride in their collective effort.

Looking ahead, the Green Patch will continue to connect with other local and international schools in sustainability initiatives to improve waterways and local habitat, promoting hope, collective action, and environmental care.

For more information: www.trinity.nsw.edu.au

**Main** The new jewel of the Green Patch: Our Biodiversity Pond

**Above** The Connection Tree - Our Agreement to Flourish. All students signed with their thumb prints, agreeing to work as a unified team, bringing the project to completion.

Words by **Melinda Bargwanna**, Specialist Environmental Educator [Primary Years] | Trinity Grammar School





# Seeing the System, Not Just the Symptoms

## Jessica Lovegrove-Walsh on community, conservation and leading for the long term.

Jessica Lovegrove-Walsh is an emerging conservation leader driven by the belief that caring for nature is inseparable from caring for people. As founder and Executive Officer of Friends of Parks Queensland, she supports volunteers working across national parks, conservation parks and state forests - often with limited resources but deep commitment.

In this interview with Landcare in Focus, Jessica reflects on her journey into conservation, the value of community led action, and what it takes to stay sustainable in long term environmental work.

**Above** Jessica Lovegrove-Walsh at the NaturallyGC event
**Right** Jess at Daisy Hill
**Top Right** Jess at the Landcare conference Felixer

### What Gap Did the Pandemic Reveal That Led to Friends of Parks Queensland?

During the pandemic, there was a surge in grassroots Friends of Parks groups as people reconnected with nature. While the energy was incredible, many volunteers were working with limited support, resources or coordination.

Friends of Parks Queensland was created to back those passionate people—to amplify their voices, strengthen relationships with land managers, and ensure volunteers aren't left to navigate complex systems alone.

Volunteers are essential to caring for protected areas, and they deserve support, recognition and advocacy.

### How Have Communities and Traditional Owners Shaped Your Conservation Approach?

It has reinforced one core truth: conservation is built on relationships.

Real, meaningful relationships take time - time that is often undervalued because it doesn't fit neatly into KPIs or productivity metrics. But without it, everything falls short. Partnerships lack depth, engagement risks becoming tokenistic, and trust can erode.

Climate change and biodiversity loss are complex challenges that can't be solved in isolation. Long-term collaboration, respect and trust are essential. Without those foundations, even the best intentions will fail.

### What Sparked your Connection to Nature and Made you Realise This was Your Path?

I realised I wanted to work for the natural world while standing in a pathology lab, looking out a small window at two galahs perched on a church roof.

Up until then, my path had been shaped by curiosity and a desire to help people. I studied health science and, after graduating, worked in a pathology lab helping diagnose illness.

But outside of work, I was being pulled somewhere else. I spent my free time exploring my local national park, becoming fascinated by the small details many people overlook and the ecosystems behind them. The more I learnt, the more I understood how closely environmental health and human health are connected.

That moment in the lab made everything click. Diagnosing illness treats symptoms. Protecting nature helps prevent them. I realised I didn't want to spend my life analysing fragments of life - wanted to work with the systems that sustain it.



### What Are You Most Proud of, and Still Learning?

I'm most proud of having the courage to dream and the persistence to turn those dreams into reality.

I'm learning that leadership isn't about having all the answers. Leadership is about being willing to step forward, stay curious, and keep going even when the path isn't clear.  Growth comes from doing, not waiting.

For more information: **Jessica Lovegrove-Walsh**
Executive Officer, Friends of Parks Queensland.
https://friendsofparksqld.org



### How Have Volunteering and Paid Work Shaped You as a Conservationist and Leader?

My career in conservation didn't begin with a job—it began with showing up.

I started out as a volunteer, wanting to help restore my local national park after seeing how much it had declined while I was living overseas. Even with very little experience, I helped start a Friends of Parks group and volunteered with other organisations, learning from people with the technical knowledge I didn't yet have.

That experience shaped everything. I learned that conservation is never a solo effort — real change happens together. And sometimes, you don't need all the answers to begin, just enough faith to take the first step.

Those lessons still shape my work today. I still volunteer most weeks, and it keeps me grounded, learning and connected to community. For me, leadership grows from service.

### How Have You Sustained Yourself While Running a Grassroots Organisation?

People, without a doubt.

I'm lucky to be surrounded by people who believe in me and in the work — my partner, our Management Committee, rangers, local MPs and councillors, community groups, family and friends. That support means everything, and I try to pay it forward by backing emerging leaders too.

Personally, I've had to be intentional about balance. Yoga has been a big part of that, and I've had to relearn how to enjoy national parks without feeling responsible for everything that needs fixing.

When things feel overwhelming, I come back to a perspective from my healthcare days: is this life or death? The answer is almost always no. It helps me keep going sustainably, because burnout helps no one.

Interview by **Eleanor Slade** | Landcare Australia

# When Macca's Isn't Fast Food: Feeding Carnaby's for the Future

**Rehabilitating Roe 8 (RR8) is a ten year project to restore land cleared for the now defunct Stage 8 of the Roe Highway in Western Australia. The project is State funded, managed by the City of Cockburn and community led. Now in its eighth year, huge improvements have been made. Some recent work has focused on threatened species such as Black-Cockatoos.**

Ngoolark (Carnaby's Cockatoo, Zanda latirostris) is one of 22 birds on the federal government's 100 Priority Species list. Since 2018, RR8 has carried out the following work: planted over 25,000 Banksia and Eucalypt seedlings to provide foraging and roosting habitat; run a comprehensive weed and feral animal control program to enhance Banksia woodland ecosystems (which are threatened in their own right) and installed Perth's first off grid Cockitrough watering station to provide a safe and reliable water source.

Last year there were many reports of starving Ngoolarks, possibly due to heat waves, bushfires and poor seed set in forage tree species. This news prompted the RR8 Advisory Committee to consider how to accelerate food availability in the Roe 8 wildlife corridor. An innovative initiative to plant Macadamias was chosen as a solution.




Macadamias are a great fit, since humans and Ngoolarks are the only species capable of cracking their nuts and they provide a high calory food source. There was a challenge along the way. How to provide reticulation to these tropical plants in a dryland bushland corridor. The challenge was met with installation of a 3,000L water tank at the top of a hill, with a 200m pipe running downhill. Each of the trees has a manual valve and is watered weekly by volunteers through the dry season. This initiative was implemented with the help of the Cockburn Community Wildlife Corridor and their amazing volunteers! It is hoped that the mature grafted trees will provide nuts in the next two years to help sustain this iconic species.

For more information: apeck@cockburn.wa.gov.au

Words by **Adam Peck**, Rehabilitating Roe 8 Project Manager, City of Cockburn.

**Images** CCWC volunteers planting Macadamias in April 2025. A. Peck
Carnaby's waterer 6 the Town of Victoria Park

# Forever Wild Shows How Working Landscapes Can Support Threatened Species for Local Farmers

**Across Australia, many of our most threatened species now persist in landscapes shaped by people, including grazing country, fire-managed savannas and mixed-tenure regions where conservation must work alongside production. Two Forever Wild projects, one in Western Australia's western deserts and the other in Far North Queensland's tropical wetlands, show how practical, landscape-scale action can deliver meaningful biodiversity outcomes while strengthening the resilience of working landscapes.**

In Western Australia, the Malleefowl is one of the world's few remaining mound-building birds and has declined dramatically over the past century. Once widespread across southern Australia, the species has disappeared from much of its former range and is now listed as Vulnerable. In the vast grazing landscapes of the western deserts, little was known about remaining Malleefowl populations until recently.

**"Large parts of Australia's grazing country have received very little focused biodiversity survey effort," says Misty Neilson, Director of Strategy and Finance at the Forever Wild Initiative. "That does not mean they lack conservation value. In fact, it often means the opposite."**

Through a partnership between Forever Wild and Samphire Wild at Narndee Station, this knowledge gap is beginning to close. Early surveys across more than 10,000 hectares have documented a surprisingly widespread Malleefowl presence, including active breeding mounds and extensive signs of feeding and movement. Initial mapping suggests the area may support one of Australia's more significant remaining Malleefowl populations.

**"Finding breeding activity at this scale in a working grazing landscape challenges the idea that important threatened species can only persist in formal reserves," Neilson says. "It reinforces how critical landholder partnerships are to effective conservation."**

Monitoring has also revealed threats operating at scale, particularly high feral cat activity, alongside gaps in understanding fire history and habitat condition. The project has delivered broader biodiversity gains as well, including the discovery of a rare plant previously known from only one other site nationally, and the collection of extensive acoustic and ecological datasets.

**"These outcomes highlight why monitoring matters," Neilson says. "Good data does not just tell us what is there. It tells us how the system is functioning and where management effort will have the greatest benefit."**

Further north, in Queensland's tropical savannas, a different threatened species story is unfolding. Northern Quolls were once common across northern Australia but are now Endangered, with populations impacted by cane toads, invasive grasses, altered fire regimes and feral predators. At Forever Wild's Tropical Wetlands Shared Earth Reserve near Mareeba, however, quolls are performing strongly compared to many other regions.

The Tropical Wetlands reserve sits within a large, connected landscape of savanna woodland, wetlands and permanent water, adjoining national park and linking into surrounding cattle country. Connectivity and structural diversity play a key role in supporting quolls, providing refuge from intense fires and access to food and shelter.

**"Functioning landscapes give species options," Neilson explains. "Connectivity, habitat structure and water availability all increase resilience, but those values only persist if they are actively managed."**

At Tropical Wetlands, Forever Wild is working with Gulf Savannah NRM to control invasive grasses such as Gamba grass, manage feral cats using AI-enabled Felixer® traps, reduce pig impacts in wetlands and apply strategic fire to manage fuel loads. Monitoring by the Australian Wildlife Conservancy has shown increased quoll detections and activity in 2025 compared to the previous year, alongside reductions in several key threats.

**"For Landcare groups and landholders, the takeaway is clear," Neilson says. "Conservation and production are not mutually exclusive. With the right information and partnerships, working landscapes can play a leading role in threatened species recovery."**

For more information: www.foreverwild.com.au

Words by **Misty Neilson**, Director or Strategy & Finance | Forever Wild Initiative
















# Protecting Guda: Delungra Students Lead the Way in Conservation

**Delungra Public School in NSW is a shining example of how education, community, and environmental stewardship come together to create lasting positive impact. At the heart of their efforts is a passionate commitment to protecting not only the beloved Aboriginal totem Guda—the koala—but also the rich diversity of local wildlife.**

This inspiring environmental program is an integral part of the school's High Potential and Gifted Education strategies. By engaging students in meaningful, hands-on learning experiences, Delungra Public School nurtures their curiosity, creativity, and leadership skills, empowering them to become passionate advocates and future leaders in conservation.

The school is actively working to preserve and create habitat for native animals through education, raising awareness, and supplying seedlings grown in their greenhouse. These seedlings support local biodiversity and help restore and expand safe spaces for wildlife throughout the community.

The school's vibrant program begins with teaching students about Guda, the koala, highlighting its cultural significance and the important role it plays in the local ecosystem. But the learning extends far beyond, as students actively monitor a wide range of native animals around the school grounds.

Strategically placed cameras capture weekly sightings of koalas and other fascinating creatures—from colourful birds to shy reptiles and curious marsupials. This rich collection of wildlife data is carefully collated by the students and shared with the Atlas of Living Australia, contributing valuable insights to national conservation efforts.

When any animal, including koalas, is observed in distress, the school promptly alerts wildlife rescue services, ensuring timely care and support. To help local wildlife thrive, the school has installed watering stations around the campus, providing crucial hydration during heatwaves and droughts.

Delungra Public School's garden program grows much more than fruits and vegetables. It includes koala food trees and native plants that support the broader ecosystem, welcoming birds, insects, and small mammals, and benefiting the entire community.

Education at Delungra Public School extends to teaching about wildlife health challenges such as injuries, diseases, and the impacts of climate extremes like heat and drought – empowering students and community members to become knowledgeable caretakers of their natural surroundings.

In a remarkable community effort, the school built and installed 10 additional nesting boxes to create safe habitats for koalas and other tree-dwelling animals. These homes are monitored termly via camera extensions, providing students with ongoing opportunities to observe and appreciate wildlife up close.

Delungra Public School's work is a heartening story of connection — connecting students to their land and Culture, connecting communities with nature, and connecting education with real-world conservation action. Through this inclusive and enthusiastic approach, embedded within their High Potential and Gifted Education strategies, the school is helping to safeguard a thriving future for koalas and the wonderful variety of native animals that share their home.

**Images** Courtesy of Delunga Public School

For more information: www.delungra-p.schools.nsw.gov.au

Words by **Toni Withers**, Principal | Delungra Public School

# The Right Kind of Fire: Building Landscape Resilience

**In the Gold Coast hinterland, a cool ecological burn moves quietly through a private property. The fire is low and controlled, leaving a mosaic of burnt and unburnt patches. Jagun Alliance leads the burn, working alongside landholders and building capacity with the local Kombumerri Rangers.**

Two days earlier, this area was almost impossible to walk through, filled with dense lantana (Lantana camara) thickets. Introduced as a garden plant 185 years ago, lantana now infests millions of hectares across Australia.

**"You're never going to win, and there'll always be something to do," the landholder says. "But you can get it to a point where you're happy with it, where the forest's resilience starts to win again."**

For 17 years, landholders Catherine and Dave have worked to reduce lantana. They used integrated weed management techniques, returning again and again. Slowly, thick infestations shrank to smaller patches.

Then a superstorm hit in late 2023. It tore through the canopy, opening the forest and allowing weeds to surge back. Within two wet years, lantana was waist-high, fast-growing and reclaiming ground that had taken over a decade to restore.

**"It was clear the forest needed something more," says Dave. "A natural force to tip the balance back on a larger, more holistic scale."**



There is no single way to burn, and in some ecosystems, the right choice is not to burn at all. Here, fire is used carefully and deliberately, drawing on knowledge built over millennia thanks to Indigenous fire management and a landholder attuned to the changes in their properties' wellbeing and methods to reinstate its health.

This is the first burn in the area in more than 35 years. In the weeks that follow, Catherine and Dave have experienced other changes.

Movement through the landscape is easier again, for people and wildlife. With the opened understory, lantana and weedy vines can be spot-treated, making it much more targeted and manageable. Their camera traps pick up increased activity: kangaroos bounding in, frogs hopping along, and koalas passing through. In their visits to the burnt area, they find fluorescent fungus coming up that they haven't seen there before.

The result is an open, checkered landscape that's easier to manage.

Fire alone won't fix lantana infestation. But used well, it can reset the system—and make the work possible again.

For further information: www.qtfn.org.au

Words by **Nicola Grobler**,Communications and Marketing Coordinator and **Dave Madden**, Restoration Project Manager




**Main** Jagun Alliance watching the fire progress

**Above** Landholders Catherine and Dave

# Experience Landcare: Start Planning for Landcare Week

**From 3–9 August 2026, communities across Australia will come together to celebrate the people, places and projects that make landcare such a powerful force for environmental conservation and sustainable agriculture practices.**

This year's Landcare Week theme, 'Experience Landcare', shines a spotlight on the many different ways Australians connect with nature, community and caring for Country through landcare.

Whether it's restoring bushland, protecting coastlines, planting native species, improving farm sustainability, sharing knowledge, or simply spending time outdoors with like-minded people, landcare means something different to everyone. Landcare Week 2026 is an opportunity to celebrate those experiences and invite more Australians to get involved.

Across the country, local groups, volunteers, schools, First Nations organisations, farmers, landholders and environmental champions will be hosting activities and sharing stories that showcase the incredible diversity of landcare in action.

To help communities get involved, Landcare Australia has launched a range of initiatives and free resources designed to make participating in Landcare Week easy, engaging and impactful.

For more information: www.landcareweek.org.au



## Landcare Through the Lens Returns for 2026

The much-loved Landcare Through the Lens photo campaign is also returning in 2026, offering participants the opportunity to showcase what landcare means to them.

Participants are invited to submit a photo and a short description of 100 words or less capturing their personal landcare experience. Entries could feature anything from revegetation projects and wildlife conservation to sustainable agriculture, Coastcare activities, school projects or community planting days.

The winning entry will receive $1,000 for their local landcare group, helping support grassroots environmental action.

Entries close on 31 August 2026.

Visit our website here.



Landcare Australia

# Landcare Week

## 3-9 AUGUST 2026



# Experience *Landcare*

## Caring for our land and waterways



## Share Your Experience Through the Landcare Week 2026 Survey

One of the key initiatives this year is the annual Landcare Week 2026 Survey, which aims to capture the experiences, motivations and impacts of people involved in landcare across Australia.

The survey explores how landcare contributes to wellbeing, community connection, environmental stewardship and volunteering, while also identifying the support local groups and participants need into the future.

Landcare Australia is encouraging participation from volunteers, community groups, First Nations organisations, educators, farmers, landholders and organisations supporting environmental restoration and sustainable land management.

The survey takes around 10 minutes to complete and closes on 30 June 2026. Findings will be shared during Landcare Week as part of the national Experience Landcare campaign.

**Take the Survey**

## Showcase Your Events on the National Landcare Calendar

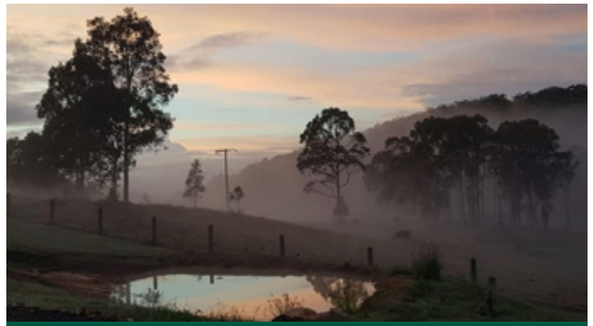
Landcare Australia is also encouraging groups and organisations to register their activities on the National Landcare Calendar through the Landcarer Portal.

From planting days and clean-up events to workshops, field walks and community celebrations, listing events helps showcase the breadth of landcare activity happening across Australia while making it easier for people to discover local opportunities to get involved.

The national calendar plays an important role in highlighting the collective impact of landcare and building stronger connections between communities, volunteers and environmental initiatives.

For more information: https://www.landcarer.com.au/events/calendar





## Ways to Experience Landcare in 2026

Landcare Week is an opportunity for everyone to connect with landcare in a way that feels meaningful to them.

Australians are encouraged to:

- Complete the Landcare Week 2026 Survey
- Enter the Landcare Through the Lens photo campaign
- Download and use the free campaign toolkit
- Share stories and activities on social media using #LandcareWeek2026
- List events and groups online to encourage participation
- Volunteer with local Landcare, Bushcare, Coastcare, Dunecare or Friends of groups
- Offer professional skills such as communications, photography, grant writing or environmental expertise
- Support local groups and initiatives through donations and partnerships

As communities prepare for Landcare Week 2026, the message is simple: everyone has a place in landcare.

Whether you are restoring landscapes, building community connections, learning new skills, or simply spending time caring for nature, this year's campaign invites all Australians to experience the many benefits of landcare — for people, place and future generations.



## Free Campaign Toolkit Available

To support local promotion and community engagement, Landcare Australia has released a free Landcare Week 2026 Campaign Toolkit.

The toolkit includes editable templates and promotional materials that groups can customise with their own branding and event details. Designed to make communications simple and consistent, the toolkit helps local groups confidently promote their activities while contributing to the broader national campaign.

Resources include:

- Social media graphics
- Posters
- Website banners
- Media release templates
- Promotional copy and communications resources
- Practical tips for social media and communications planning

The toolkit is designed for groups of all sizes and experience levels, helping communities share their stories and encourage broader participation during Landcare Week.

For more information: https://landcareaustralia.org.au/resources/campaigns/landcare-week/

# **Platypus, Planting and Pride in Place:** Stroud Junior Landcare Celebrates a Standout Year

**Stroud Junior Landcare is getting ready for a vibrant and inspiring year ahead following a busy 2025. Their work has enabled children to experience landcare by deepening their connection to nature, Culture and community. Throughout 2025, the program delivered a rich mix of hands-on environmental experiences that nurtured curiosity, creativity and a lasting sense of responsibility for the natural world.**

Children took part in tree planting, bushwalks, riparian restoration, water quality monitoring and macro invertebrate testing, alongside STEM based explorations of local ecosystems. A standout highlight was the partnership with the MidCoast Council Water Catchment team, who delivered engaging workshops focused on the platypus as a flagship species. Through the Platypus Guardians program, young Landcarers explored local waterways and learned how healthy ecosystems support these iconic animals, while contributing to their protection.

Connection to Country remained central to the program. During NAIDOC Week, Stroud Junior Landcare hosted a smoking ceremony led by Worimi Traditional Owner Uncle Justin Ridgeway. The experience offered children and their families a meaningful opportunity to engage respectfully with local Culture and better understand the deep and enduring relationship Traditional Owners have with land and waterways.



The program's success was built on strong community partnerships, particularly with Jonno and Joël from MidCoast2Tops Landcare, whose guidance and enthusiasm enriched every session. Families and volunteers shared skills and knowledge, watching children grow in confidence and environmental awareness.

Reflecting on the year, coordinator Rachel Barry said, "When children fall in love with their local place, caring for it comes naturally — that's what Junior Landcare is all about."

Looking ahead, volunteer Michelle Weick will step into the coordinator role in 2026, while Rachel takes a well earned break to welcome two new babies. With strong community support and a proven program, Stroud Junior Landcare is well placed to continue inspiring the next generation of environmental stewards and Platypus Guardians.

For further information: www.midcoast2tops.org.au

Words by **Rachel Barry**

**Images** Stroud Junior Landcare, a subgroup of Midcoast2tops Landcare



















# Planet Ark Calls for New Site Coordinators to Plant for National Tree Day's 30th Anniversary

**Australia's largest community tree planting event, National Tree Day, is celebrating 30 years of planting this July 26.**

Planet Ark's National Tree Day is made possible by the thousands of individuals who volunteer their time each year to do something positive for the environment and their local community. These are council staff, teachers, Landcare members, faith groups, community groups and families from all over Australia.

Planting native trees, shrubs and grasses not only contributes to supporting local ecosystems but also fosters a shared sense of responsibility and care for the places we live, for generations to come. Since 1996 when National Tree Day was founded, over 28 million native seedlings have been planted by over five million volunteers as part of the program.

This year, volunteers will be planting with the next 30 years in mind, and Planet Ark are challenging the younger generations to dig in. We're inspired by people like Shiloh Herzberg Nicholls, who at 16 is National Tree Day's youngest site coordinator. Shiloh's grandmother Helen has been involved in Landcare since 1998 and nurtured Shiloh's passion for the environment from a young age.

**Left top**: Landcare groups are an important part of making National Tree Day a success, with groups holding plantings around the country.

**Left bottom** There's opportunities to get involved in all parts of Australia, whether you are two or four legged!

**Above** National Tree Day provides a great opportunity to introduce younger generations to nature care.



Shiloh now runs the Coastcare group Forest Heart in Redhead and hopes to encourage more young people to participate in events such as National Tree Day to advocate for our environment.

**"There's a lot going on in the world today, but it's important not to forget the earth on which we stand, the value it holds, and the threats it faces," Shiloh says.**

**"Though these challenges are overwhelming, I hope and believe that we as young people have the drive and the power to stand up and bring about this crucial change."**

Being a National Tree Day site coordinator involves organising and hosting a local planting event, from selecting and preparing a suitable site to rallying volunteers and coordinating logistics on the day. It's a hands-on role that brings the community together to plant native trees and plants, helping to restore and protect the local environment.

For more information or to register: nationaltreeday.org.au.

Words by **Emma Lucey** | Planet Ark Environmental Foundation

# From Worms to Whole Systems on Kangaroo Island

**What if improving your soil started with just a handful of worms?**

At Stokes Bay on Kangaroo Island, Sarah and Michael Stanton are testing that idea—alongside Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and biofertilisers—across their market garden and broader mixed farming system.

Rather than chasing a single solution, the focus has been on practical questions: can they reduce chemical inputs, improve soil function, and build a more resilient system?

Through a Kangaroo Island Landscape Board Grass Roots Grant, Sarah established two commercial worm farms, with Michael heavily involved in setting up and managing the system. Together, they are producing high-quality vermicast. Small amounts—around 2 kg—can be turned into up to 1000 litres of extract, with similar products selling commercially for up to $1500 per 1000 L. The system is working well, but like many biological inputs, the real test is how it performs in the paddock.

At the same time, the property is an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) demonstration site with entomologist Dr Paul Horne. In the market garden, pest management has shifted from routine spraying to monitoring and timing. In some cases, natural predators are already doing the work—highlighted by cobwebbing across crops.

Supported by the Kangaroo Island Landscape Board's Grassroots Grants program, Sarah Stanton hosted a community vermicomposting workshop in December 2025, featuring live demonstrations, practical tips and morning tea in the garden.





**Biofertilisers have also been trialled across both horticulture and pasture, with variable results and no consistent production response so far.**

**That's the key message: these approaches show promise, but they are not silver bullets.**

**Baseline soil testing has been completed, and plant SAP testing is planned to better guide decisions and track responses.**

**For Sarah and Michael, the value is in testing, observing and adapting—an approach that may matter more than any single input under Kangaroo Island conditions.**

For further information, please contact: Vanessa Wilson, Communicaitons and Media Coordinator Vanessa.Wilson3@sa.gov.au or visit their website: http://www.landscape.sa.gov.au/ki/

Words by **Cassandra Douglas-Hill**, Agriculture Extension Officer | Kangeroo Island Landscape Board.

**Above** At Stokes Bay, Sarah and Michael Stanton are testing practical ways to grow healthier crops with fewer chemical inputs and stronger soil function.





**Main** From worms to vermicast — Sarah and Michael's system is producing a high-value biological input now showing encouraging signs.




# Bega Valley Shire Council Honours Local Landcare Work

**On 28 January, Bega Valley Shire Council honoured Chris Allen, co founder and president of the Bega River and Wetlands Landcare Group (BRAWL), and his partner and fellow group member Jenny Spinks, with Australia Day – Bega Valley Medals.**

Jenny and Chris have been active members of the Bega Valley community since moving to the region in 1987. Soon after arriving, Chris became involved with the Tantawangalo Catchment Protection Association, where he played a key role in protecting the Shire's main water catchment from planned logging. From 1996, he managed research programs into local wildlife populations and, from 2001, coordinated further research and habitat rehabilitation through NSW's Environment Department.

Chris co-founded BRAWL in 2006 and later helped establish the Koala Action Network in 2019, which operates under the umbrella of the Far South Coast Landcare Association.



**Image** supplied by Mark Jekabsons

Since its establishment, BRAWL has led the rehabilitation of a two kilometre stretch of the Bega River and surrounding urban wetlands near the town centre, significantly improving wildlife habitat and creating enhanced environmental and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike. Chris has served as BRAWL's president since its inception and continues in this role today.

In addition to their environmental work, Jenny and Chris have made lasting contributions to the community through social enterprise and cooperative initiatives. In 1988, together with five others, they purchased Candelo Bulk Wholefoods in Bega and transformed it into a thriving community hub. In 2006, Jenny led the business's transition into a workers' cooperative. The enterprise continues to grow and remains the only not for profit workers' cooperative food business in Australia.

In 2002, Jenny and Chris also co founded a not for profit volunteer group that created Bend, now a well established eco neighbourhood in Bega, recognised for its social and economic diversity.

Separately and together, Jenny and Chris have contributed to a wide range of sustainability and community organisations across the Bega Valley, demonstrating a long standing commitment to environmental stewardship and community resilience.





After advising the Mayor that they were not prepared to receive their medallions on 26 January, Council arranged an alternative presentation before councillors and staff two days later. At the ceremony, Jenny and Chris expressed their love for Australia and thanked Council for accommodating a presentation date other than one that is difficult for many in the community.

They emphasised that their achievements have been made possible through the efforts of many volunteers and expressed their deep gratitude to the Djiringanj people for their connection to Country over many thousands of years, and for their continuing Cultural resurgence.

Words by **Erin Moon** | Bega River and Wetlands Landcare (BRAWL) Community Coordinator

For more information, please visit: www.brawl.org.au

**Top left** BRAWL Volunteers
**Bottom left** Jenny Spinks and Chris Allen
**Top Right** Chris Allen and Jenny Spinks being presented medallians by BVSC's Mayor Russell Fitzpatrick

> “By supporting locally led projects, this partnership is helping landcare groups address real challenges on the ground from water security to habitat connectivity.”
>
> **James Link, Head of Partnerships, Landcare Australia**

# Powering Nature and Communities: A Strong First Year for ENGIE and Landcare Australia

**Partnerships between corporate organisations and community-led Landcare groups play an increasingly important role in delivering practical environmental outcomes. In its first year, the ENGIE–Landcare Australia partnership has shown how targeted funding and hands-on involvement can support local priorities while strengthening environmental resilience across regions.**

Established in 2025, the three-year partnership focuses on supporting on-ground Landcare projects in regional communities likely to be impacted by the energy transition, alongside a commitment to corporate environmental volunteering. During its inaugural year, three projects were funded across South Australia and Victoria, each responding to distinct local challenges while contributing to shared goals of sustainable land management and community connection.



In South Australia, Tarcowie Landcare Group addressed a longstanding water security issue. With no access to mains water, the group has relied on rainfall and donated water to support decades of revegetation work. ENGIE’s partnership funding enabled the installation of a 30,000-litre rainwater tank at the Tarcowie Town Hall, providing a reliable supply for watering seedlings during their first year and an important backup resource during fire emergencies. This important infrastructure supports ongoing revegetation, building on more than 100,000 native trees and shrubs already planted by the group.

“Regional communities are playing a critical role in the energy transition. Partnering with Landcare allows us to give back in a practical way, supporting communities to protect and restore their local environment while giving our people the chance to make a positive, lasting contribution.”

Krystin Dudley, ENGIE Australia & New Zealand

**Main and top right** ENGIE corporate volunteering at Westgate Park





Across Victoria, projects in the Latrobe Valley, nearby to ENGIE's Hazelwood Rehabilitation Project, and Benalla Shire - home to the Goorambat East Solar Farm, focused on habitat connectivity and recovery following disturbance. The Latrobe Catchment Landcare Network's Biolink Enhancement Project is strengthening wildlife corridors through fencing, revegetation and waterway protection, while also providing opportunities for ENGIE staff to participate in planting and restoration activities. In Benalla Shire, Gecko CLaN has supported multiple local Landcare groups with native plants, tree-guards and nest boxes to reconnect fragmented landscapes after severe weather events.

Corporate environmental volunteering has complemented these projects. In the first year, 88 ENGIE employees have contributed 478 volunteer hours across four events, supporting plant propagation, revegetation, citizen science and habitat restoration alongside local Landcare groups.

As the partnership enters its second year, planned planting activities in autumn 2026 will build on this groundwork, highlighting the importance of sustained partnerships in delivering long-term outcomes for both landscapes and communities.



For more information on corporate volunteering with Landcare Australia, please visit: www.landcareaustralia.org.au

Words by **Landcare Australia**



**Main** ENGIE Corporate volunteering - team in Gooroombat painting nest boxes

**Top left** ENGIE Corporate volunteering - planting along Dandenong Creek

**Bottom right** ENGIE Corporate volunteering - team in Gooroombat nestboxes

# Landcare on the Shelf




## Habitats of Australia, New Guinea, and the Solomons: A Field Guide for Birders, Naturalists, and Ecologists | By Iain Campbell, Charley Hesse, Phil Gregory

**A visually stunning, meticulously researched field guide to all the major habitats of Australia, Papua New Guinea, and the Solomon Islands.**

When visitors think of Australia, they expect strange wildlife such as kangaroos, platypus, koalas, and cassowaries. Yet nothing prepares people for the otherworldly landscapes of mallee and mulga woodlands, karri forests, and spinifex and gibber deserts.

This illustrated guide covers every major habitat found on the continent together with those of New Guinea and the Solomons. Making the otherworldly understandable, it presents an easy-to-use system for exploring and enjoying habitats by combining wildlife assemblages with descriptions of habitat structure, climate, soils, and botany.

Packed with invaluable information, Habitats of Australia, New Guinea, and the Solomons completely redefines how we experience the landscapes and wildlife in this spectacular region of the world.




## In The Weeds | By Dr Sonia Graham

**In the Weeds: Nurturing Community through Landcare is the culmination of five years of social research exploring what makes long-term groups successful.**

What is it that keeps Landcare groups going for decades, through bushfires, floods and even a pandemic? According to Dr Sonia Graham, it's not just a shared love of the land – it's the strong social connections that form along the way.

Dr Graham's new book, In the Weeds: Nurturing Community through Landcare, brings together five years of social research exploring what makes long term Landcare groups successful. Drawing on more than 20 years of experience studying collaboration in weed management, Sonia has seen first hand how landcare creates a unique space where neighbours support one another, both practically and socially.

Her most recent research focused on seven Landcare groups across south east NSW, each working to control weeds and restore diverse landscapes. Despite their different locations and challenges, these long running groups shared seven key attributes – from setting realistic goals and welcoming new members, to valuing contributions, sharing leadership and managing conflict. Importantly, they weren't afraid to ask for – and accept – help from outside organisations.

Sonia takes readers into the stories of Brogers Creek, Upper Kangaroo Valley, Tapitallee Budgong, Tathra, Candelo, Towamba and Deua Rivercare. She explores how these groups have adapted over time, navigated setbacks, and continued to evolve while staying true to their purpose.

In the Weeds is for anyone working on environmental issues that rely on collaboration – whether you're starting a Landcare group, looking to reinvigorate an existing one, or wanting to showcase what your group has achieved.

https://www.publishing.csiro.au/book/8218/

Dr Sonia Graham has recently been appointed to the Board of Directors for Landcare NSW.



## Smart Soil Resource library | By Abigail Jenkins

**It will be no surprise to readers that healthy soil is fundamental to Australia's environmental, economic and social wellbeing and that those involved in caring for the land need easy access to quality, technically-sound information. Soil Science Australia has developed an information portal for all things soil: the Smart Soils Resource Library to meet this need.**

Understanding soil is the vital first step in effective land management and it is encouraging to see the recognition of this growing. This is evidenced by the development of Australia's National Soil Strategy and the associated National Soil Action Plan. Paradoxically, at the same time there has been a fracturing of knowledge networks, and a decline in accessibility to both technical expertise and information. There is, in most cases, ample foundation knowledge and many regional and industry-specific case studies that focus on soil management, but this information is often hard to source.

A large part of Soil science Australia's role in improving the capacity of landholders and their advisers lies in improving access to information resources that will enable them to balance productivity and ecological health-on farm, to effectively manage the land. So they have developed the Smart Soils Resource Library with over 400 resources. It provides self-education opportunities to increase user capacity to manage soils and improve soil health. As a curated library, users can be assured that content is freely available, of high quality and includes proven climate-smart approaches to soil management and soil fundamentals including soil carbon and soil biology.

The Resource Library is part of the Smart Soils project run by Soil Science Australia, supported by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry through funding from the Climate-Smart Agriculture Program under the Natural Heritage Trust.

For more information: Smart Soils library via www.soilscienceaustralia.org.au/smartsoils
National Soil Science Extension Team Coordinator - extension@soilscienceaustralia.org.au

By Abigail Jenkins

# Meet the Next Generation of Landcare Leaders

**Across Australia, a new wave of Landcare leaders is stepping forward with fresh energy, ideas and determination to protect and restore the environment. These young changemakers are not only caring for landscapes but reshaping what Landcare can look like, combining creativity, community and practical action in inspiring ways.**

From coastal revegetation projects driven by music and art to hands-on urban restoration efforts, this next generation is finding innovative ways to engage people and spark lasting change. They are connecting communities, building knowledge and showing that environmental stewardship can be both impactful and accessible.

In this feature, we meet some of the passionate young people leading this movement, each bringing their own perspective and drive, and together helping to secure a stronger, more sustainable future for Landcare across the country.

Many of the young people featured are involved in Landcare Australia's NextGen Landcare Working Group. For more information about being involved please contact **enquiries@LandcareAustralia.com.au**



# WYLD Projects: Reconnecting Culture and Conservation

**WYLD Projects (Where Youth Live Dreams) is a community based Indigenous Corporation that specialises in developing legacy-based learning projects that provide improved opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youths aged 14-24, in the Burnett Mary Region and throughout Queensland. Through their contextualised Certificate II in Conservation and Ecosystem Management, WYLD is helping protect Milbi, the critically endangered White-throated snapping turtle, while passing on knowledge that links ecological science with Culture.**

Milbi is more than a critically endangered species. Her life cycle is intimately tied to the health of rivers, seasonal cues, and the cultural knowledge of local Aboriginal people. Protecting her supports both biodiversity and living connections to Country, showing how conservation and Culture are inseparable.







**WYLD's work is guided by strong, respectful partnerships with the Taribelang Bunda Elders and Taribelang Aboriginal Corporation, the Butchulla Men's Business Aboriginal Association, Government and Natural Resource Management groups. Throughout colonisation there were many attempts to destroy Songlines, but through WYLD Projects relationship with Milbi, where reviving those connections, ensuring our youth led conservation projects are grounded in both Culture connections and science.**

**Photos** supplied by WYLD Projects











Over the past eight years, WYLD has built a deep understanding of Milbi by observing her during nesting seasons and tracking her connections to the reproductive cycles of key plants such as Black Bean, White Cedar, and Lomandra. A particularly important discovery came when a female Milbi was found deceased at Paradise Dam. An autopsy revealed Black Bean seeds in her gut, confirming that Milbi only feeds after laying her eggs — this connection between WYLD's observations Cultural knowledge and ecological insight began to uncover Cultural and historical events that, previous to colonisation had been passed down through generations.

The work has also revealed ancient Songlines running along the Burnett River, Mary River, Baffle Creek and across states. These songlines link Black Bean, Fig, and Bunya trees, marking historic nesting banks and seasonal gathering sites on the lands of the Traditional peoples. They show how Milbi's life is woven into a much broader Cultural and ecological landscape and how protecting her is part of keeping these Songlines alive.

WYLD's approach demonstrates how being a part of Country is key, and ecological science complement each other. Young people gain hands-on experience and a deep understanding of species, seasons, and landscapes, while Milbi benefits from Culturally informed conservation. The project protects a critically endangered species while also restoring connections between Elders, Uncles. youth, community, and Country — a model for conservation that works on multiple levels.

Milbi's story and WYLD Projects work are just the beginning. For those interested in learning more about the turtle, the conservation program, or how Indigenous youth are stepping up as the next generation of land and water stewards, get in touch with WYLD Projects.

For more information: brad@wyldprojects.org
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/wyldprojects
YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9wbs3YV4_uk

To make a tax deductible donation to WYLD Projects (ACNC registered charity) contact Brad Crosby via email.

Words and photos by WYLD Projects

# Get to Know About Wattle, The Youth-led Charity

**In 2025, Wattle delivered a wide range of youth-led landcare and environmental activities across Melbourne and Victoria.**

The Landcare in Focus team sat down with James Henderson, founder of Wattle, to find out more about this year's activity and how people were involved.

Activities included community park, river and foreshore clean-ups, native tree and groundcover planting days, weed removal and habitat restoration working bees, and environmental education sessions for young people. We also hosted larger community events and summits that combined on-ground restoration with learning, storytelling and social connection.

## Key Highlights Included:

- Engaging over 350+ young people in hands-on restoration projects
- Planting 400+ indigenous plants along the Birrarung to restore native seedbank
- Hosting several local MP's at our urban wildlife corridor
- Educating young people through our panel and biodiversity workshops at Melbourne Zoo
- Being featured in the 'Birrarung Big Swim' documentary which screened at Fed Square
- Facilitating a Birrarung 'Floating Youth Summit' to advocate for a swimmable Birrarung
- Presenting at the NextGen Landcare Summit

### What Are You Planning to do This Year?

Wattle plans to expand its landcare program through regular monthly youth-led landcare days, larger scale revegetation and habitat restoration projects, and deeper partnerships with existing environment/landcare groups.

We also aim to further engage community members through placemaking, using both community led initiatives and creative arts to attract people who may not typically be involved in environmental activities.

In addition, Wattle plans to leverage the upcoming Victorian state election as an opportunity to advocate for the health of the Birrarung (Yarra River), working with young people to engage local MPs and push for stronger protections for this important ecosystem.

### Who do You Partner With?

Wattle has partnered with a range of community organisations in 2025, including local councils and park authorities, Urban Guerrillas, Regeneration Projects, Yarra Riverkeeper Association, Friends of Bats and Bushcare, Young Ocean Innovators, university student groups and local Friends/ Landcare groups.

Wattle primarily works alongside Friends of Merri Creek and Friends of Merri Creek Labyrinth.

We hope to expand our connection to additional landcare groups in 2026 and are particularly keen to work with Intrepid Landcare!



### What Has Been Your Impact in 2025?

In 2025, Wattle engaged 350+ young people in environmental action and education across more than 20 community events and planting days. A major focus of the year was creating urban wildlife corridors along the Birrarung, with hundreds of native plants and trees planted across urban and peri-urban sites.

In addition, through community clean-ups, significant volumes of waste were removed from parks and waterways. Wattle also delivered multiple workshops, summits and community education sessions, as well as hosted its first ever Groundwork gig night, engaging musicians and the broader community in landcare through arts and culture.

### Did Your Activities Support Endangered Species (Fauna and Flora)?

Yes. Part of Wattle's Birrarung nature corridor includes the cultivation of Murnong, an indigenous Wurundjeri food source that has become endangered since colonisation. Wattle is also undertaking plans in 2026 to build habitat to support the endangered Growling grass frog.

### How Many People Were Involved in Your Events?

Approximately 350-400 people participated in Wattle's landcare and environmental events in 2025, with many individuals attending multiple activities throughout the year. Our biggest individual event was National Tree Day which hosted 120 young people at our Burnley wildlife corridor.

### If You Had Funding, How This Could Support Your Activities?

With additional funding, Wattle could scale up restoration and revegetation projects, purchase tools and equipment, fund youth leadership and coordination roles, expand regional landcare partnerships, and improve accessibility by covering transport, food and participation costs. Funding would enable Wattle to deliver more sustained, long-term ecological and social impact.



## Testimonials

**"Wattle nurtures leadership in climate action, ecosystem restoration, and social justice, strengthening both community and nature."**
— City of Yarra Community Awards

**"Wattle focuses on making environmental volunteering accessible, fun, and community driven. It is not just about planting trees, but also about building leadership, knowledge, and networks among young people."**
— Inner City News (Tony Milne)

Fore more inforrmation: team@wattle.org.au

Words by Landcare Australia

**Images** supplied by Wattle

# Brisbane Intrepid Landcare

**Brisbane Intrepid Landcare is a youth-led volunteer group bringing together people who are interested in citizen science, bushcare, and ecological learning to support environmental stewardship and community connection.**

Brisbane Intrepid Landcare recently achieved their first funding success with the launch of the Enoggera Creek Project, supported by Landcare Australia and Bupa through the Healthy Cities Community Grant. The project will restore habitat along Enoggera Creek by planting 4,000 native grasses, shrubs, and trees to enhance biodiversity and improve creek health. Additionally, the project creates an opportunity for the community to connect and positively impact the local environment together.

The project has so far facilitated various opportunities, including a collaborative event to craft a planting list, wildlife camera monitoring, plant identification skill-building, learning site history and characteristics, and community planting events. The successful outcome of the working bees and planting events were achieved in collaboration with the Picot Street Habitat Brisbane Bushcare Group and the Bulimba Creek Catchment Coordinating Committee.

They have taken an adaptive and dynamic approach to this project by aiming to minimise their environmental footprint and opted out of using tree guards. Having lost multiple plants due to cheeky-natured bush turkeys from their first planting, they have adjusted their planting techniques, and saw significant improvement in the second planting, where only a few plants have been damaged.



Participants shared that they enjoyed the relaxed social aspect while contributing to the project, and many learnt new skills and knowledge. They expressed that participating in hands-on conservation work boosted spirits and allowed them to enjoy time in nature.

Significant progress has been made so far, with 770 plants now in the ground at Enoggera Creek. For anyone whose interest is now piqued, we have more upcoming community planting events. Find out more on our Instagram and Facebook @BrisbaneIntrepidLandcare

Words and photos by Leah Hogg, Michelle Phung, Sophie Smith and Alex Vanek | Brisbane Intrepid Landcare

# Mallee Intrepid Landcare

**Hattah-Kulkyne National Park is home to delicate orchids unexpected of the red Semi-arid sands of the Mallee. They stun their observers and inspired the final push for Mallee Intrepid Landcare's hard-launch in far Nort West Victoria. The group organised the Orchid Hunt & Meet 'N' Greet– Hattah-Kulkyne NP.**



The eventual discovery of orchids amongst unassuming Mallee scrub induced a great sense of urgency for a debut event, given they bloom and move-on quickly. An Orchid hunt was hastily planned and, with one weeks notice, spread over social media. The pitch: a "newly formed... grassroots volunteer group to bring young people together with a shared passion for conservation".

In typical field-observation antics, with eyes honed in, more and more orchids just "appeared". Mallee-Spider Orchids were the star of the day, but so much stunning fauna and flora created buzz and conversation. The excitement inspired and proved there's a place for Mallee Intrepid Landcare in the community.



For more information: malleeintrepidlandcare@gmail.com

Facebook and Instagram: www.facebook.com/malleeintrepidlandcare
www.instagram.com/malleeintrepid

Words by Intrepid Landcare Mallee

**Left** Mallee Spider-Orchid
**Above** Tana Mera Walk 'N' Talk



# Clancy Lester

**Clancy Lester is bringing a fresh, strategic perspective to Intrepid Landcare as one of its newest board members, driven by a desire to explore new ways of creating meaningful environmental change. With a strong interest in both advocacy and communication, Clancy is focused on how the movement can expand its reach, not only through grassroots action but also by influencing decision-makers at higher levels.**

A key motivation for joining the board was the opportunity to bridge the gap between community engagement and policy impact. While hands-on conservation remains central to Landcare, Clancy is particularly interested in how storytelling and digital platforms can elevate its message. Social media, in particular, is seen as a powerful tool to raise awareness, inspire curiosity and help more people connect with nature. At the same time, Clancy is equally focused on ensuring these conversations extend into boardrooms and policy discussions, where long-term, systemic change can be shaped.

One area that has captured Clancy's attention is the growing momentum behind simple, localised environmental actions. Initiatives such as planting native species on nature strips are gaining traction, demonstrating how accessible and cost-effective sustainability can be. These efforts have not only resonated with communities but have also attracted broader media attention, highlighting a shift towards practical, everyday environmentalism.





Clancy is also passionate about deepening Cultural and ecological understanding, particularly through initiatives that promote awareness of Indigenous seasonal calendars. From classrooms displaying educational posters to broader public engagement through media, these efforts help reconnect people with the rhythms of the natural world and the knowledge systems that have long existed alongside it.

As Clancy steps into this leadership role, the focus remains clear: to help more people appreciate and engage with nature, while also strengthening the movement's ability to influence lasting change at every level.

For more information: beesandblossoms.org

Words by Landcare Australia

**Photo credit:** Clancy Lester

# Co-Exist Australia

**Kurt Jones is CEO of Co-Exist Australia and began his journey into Landcare with a deep, lifelong connection to nature, shaped by an early awareness of the environmental challenges facing local communities. From habitat loss to growing disconnection between people and the natural world, he recognised both the urgency of these issues and the need for more inclusive ways to address them. What started as a personal desire to make a difference quickly revealed a broader gap, with few young people participating in traditional conservation spaces. In response, Kurt set out to create something new.**

As the driving force behind Co-Exist Australia, Kurt has built a youth-focused conservation movement designed to make environmental action more accessible, social and engaging. At its core is the belief that caring for the environment can also strengthen community, improve wellbeing and give young people a sense of purpose. What began as a small idea has grown into a nationwide network of volunteers, with thousands of young people stepping up to take part in local initiatives.

The impact of this collective effort is already significant. Through Co-Exist Australia, more than 46,000 trees have been planted, nearly six tonnes of litter removed and over 450 environmental events delivered across the country. For Kurt, these achievements are not just numbers, but a reflection of the power of grassroots action and the people behind it.

A major focus of the organisation is the development of youth-led conservation communities, which host clean-ups, tree planting days, citizen science programs and nature-based workshops. Supporting this is the recently launched Co-Exist app, designed to help young people discover local events, connect with others and track their environmental impact. The platform aims to remove barriers to participation and create clear pathways for ongoing involvement, while also fostering the next generation of leaders. To date, more than 120 young people have been supported into leadership roles through the initiative.



Co-Exist Australia responds to some of the most pressing environmental challenges of our time, including biodiversity loss, habitat destruction and pollution. At the same time, he recognises that there is also a critical need to address the human side of the equation, helping people reconnect with the natural world and feel empowered to take action. By creating welcoming, community-driven opportunities, Co-Exist Australia is turning concern into meaningful, local impact.

Looking ahead, Kurt is focused on growing a more connected and engaged network of young environmental leaders across Australia. He believes that young people are already shaping the future of Landcare, bringing creativity, energy and a strong sense of purpose. By continuing to create spaces where they feel supported and empowered, Kurt is helping ensure that the movement not only endures, but continues to evolve and thrive.

For more information: coexistaus.org

Words by Landcare Australia

**Photo credit:** Co-Exist Australia







# Urban Guerrillas

**Beth Hebden's journey into environmental volunteering began with a practical goal to build experience alongside her degree. Initially working in research assistant roles, Beth shifted her focus to community-based volunteering after the birth of her first child, using her maternity leave as an opportunity to stay connected to the environmental sector in a more flexible, hands-on way. What started as a short-term adjustment quickly evolved into a lasting commitment.**

Four years on, Beth remains deeply involved; drawn not only by the environmental impact of the work, but by the strong sense of community it fosters. For her, Landcare is as much about connection as it is about conservation: bringing together like-minded people who share knowledge, support one another and take pride in improving the natural spaces around them.

As a member of Urban Guerrillas, Beth is part of a grassroots group making a tangible difference across multiple sites in Victoria. This year marks an important milestone, with their first Gardiners Creek project moving into its maintenance phase. The lessons learned there are now being applied to new sites in Upwey and Rooks Reserve, while a second Gardiners Creek project (delivered in collaboration with the KooyongKoot Alliance) enters its second year. The scale of ambition is significant, with plans to reintroduce 12,000 indigenous plants and create vital pockets of habitat for local wildlife, including birds, frogs and rakali. For Beth, this work represents both ecological restoration and a deeper investment in the resilience of urban ecosystems.

Operating in urban environments presents a unique set of challenges. Beth describes a landscape shaped not only by familiar pressures - such as invasive weeds, littering and off-leash dogs - but also by broader societal shifts. Balancing the push for greener, less car-dependent cities with the impacts of increased recreation on natural spaces can be complex, and at times overwhelming. In response, Urban Guerrillas has expanded its focus on education, delivering more workshops designed to channel concern into action. By encouraging people to “zoom in” on the beauty and value of their immediate surroundings, the group helps foster a more hopeful and proactive approach to environmental stewardship.





Beth has also witnessed a surge in environmental awareness in recent years. Sustainable habits, like shopping second-hand or reducing plastic use, are becoming increasingly mainstream, while activities such as hiking, birdwatching and nature-based recreation are drawing in new audiences. This growing engagement is mirrored in the Landcare movement itself, particularly among younger generations.

For Beth, being part of the next generation of Landcare leaders is both exciting and affirming. Where environmental interest among young people was once dismissed as idealistic, she now sees a shift toward genuine recognition and influence. Looking ahead, she hopes to see urban bushland preserved and strengthened, ensuring future generations can maintain a meaningful connection to nature - even in increasingly built-up environments. Whether it’s climbing gum trees or discovering wildlife in local creeks, Beth believes these everyday experiences are essential to sustaining Australia’s deep cultural connection to the natural world.

For more information: urbanguerrillasofficial@outlook.com

Words by Landcare Australia

**Photo credit:** Beth Hebdon

# Breathe Easy

**Aussie's journey into environmental work began with a simple but enduring interest in native plants. Growing up in regional South Australia and working in agriculture, he was constantly surrounded by the natural environment. Over time, that everyday exposure developed into a deeper curiosity about how ecosystems function and the role people play within them. As his knowledge expanded, so too did his passion for environmental stewardship.**

Today, as part of Breathe Easy, Aussie channels that passion into a unique blend of conservation, creativity and community engagement. What keeps him motivated is not only the environmental impact of the work, but also the strong social connections it fosters. Bringing together musicians, artists and volunteers creates an atmosphere that is both collaborative and energising. For Aussie, the work is as much about people as it is about the environment, offering a space where ideas can be shared, creativity can flourish and meaningful change can take place.

One of the standout initiatives led by Breathe Easy has been the "Band Together" event, a community-driven fundraiser that highlights the group's creative approach to Landcare. Held at the Seacliff Yacht Club, the sold-out event attracted more than 300 people and featured local bands, acoustic performers and donated artwork. With everyone contributing their time and talent, the event successfully raised funds for a coastal revegetation project along South Australia's Mid Coast. That momentum carried through to a planting day, where volunteers gathered among live music in the dunes to put native plants into the ground. The project also enabled the establishment of a protected native grass seed bank area, safeguarded from grazing animals. For Aussie, it was a powerful demonstration of how music, art and community spirit can translate into tangible environmental outcomes.



Much of Breathe Easy's work focuses on coastal revegetation, where ecosystems face ongoing pressures from erosion, dune instability and the impacts of urban development. The introduction of invasive plant and animal species has further reduced habitat quality and biodiversity. In response, the group works closely with local councils, the Fleurieu Environment Centre and other partners to restore these landscapes. Their efforts aim to improve habitat, stabilise dunes and support vulnerable species such as the hooded plover. Central to this work is a simple but effective approach: bringing people together to plant native species and actively care for their local environment.

Over time, Aussie has seen not only environmental improvements, with earlier plantings now well established, but also a steady growth in community engagement. Increasingly diverse groups of people are getting involved, supporting events and contributing to projects. This growing interest is, for him, one of the most rewarding aspects of the work.

Looking ahead, Aussie hopes Breathe Easy will continue to experiment, evolve and offer a platform for people to pursue creative ideas while making a positive local impact. He believes young people have a significant role to play in shaping the future of Landcare, with a unique opportunity to bring fresh energy and new approaches. For Aussie, the key is simple: give things a go, bring others along and have fun while creating something meaningful for both the environment and the community.

For more information: breatheeasy.revegetation@gmail.com

Words by Landcare Australia

**Photo credit:** Breathe Easy















# BirdLife Australia

**Jayden Gunn's connection to Landcare is rooted in a lifelong affinity with nature. Drawn to wildlife from an early age, particularly birds, he has always found a sense of belonging in the bush, where interconnected systems thrive and every species plays a role. For him, Landcare was a natural extension of that connection. Today, his work with BirdLife Australia in Central West NSW reflects both a deep personal passion and a broader commitment to protecting the landscapes and species he values most.**

Central to Jayden's motivation is the community that surrounds Landcare. Through his experiences with Intrepid Landcare, as well as the support of organisations like Mid-Lachlan Landcare and Landcare Australia, he has seen firsthand the impact of empowering young people to engage with the environment. These experiences have helped shape his own journey and inspired him to create similar opportunities for others. For Jayden, Landcare is not just about restoration; it is about fostering a sense of purpose and belonging. Giving back to the movement that helped him find his place remains a driving force behind his work.

In his role with BirdLife Australia's Birds on Farms project, Jayden works closely with landholders across Central New South Wales to improve habitat for threatened and declining woodland bird species. The initiative focuses on practical, on-ground actions that support biodiversity while maintaining productive agricultural landscapes. By helping farmers better understand the birdlife on their properties and the steps they can take to protect their habitat, the project demonstrates that conservation and agriculture can coexist. Jayden sees this work as building a stronger future for woodland birds, one property and one patch of habitat at a time.

Habitat fragmentation remains one of the most significant challenges facing the species he works to protect. Many birds are now confined to isolated pockets of habitat within heavily altered landscapes, limiting their ability to thrive. Jayden recognises that this fragmentation is not only ecological, but also human. A growing disconnect between people and the natural world can make conservation efforts more difficult.




Jayden believes that when individuals come to understand and appreciate the life on their land, they are far more likely to protect it.

Encouragingly, Jayden has seen this shift begin to take hold. Birds that were once overlooked are now recognised and valued, while everyday spaces such as paddocks, roadsides and remnant vegetation are increasingly understood as important habitat. This growing awareness reinforces the power of Landcare not just to repair landscapes, but to transform perspectives.

Looking ahead, Jayden hopes to continue turning concern into meaningful action, particularly for species like the Glossy Black-Cockatoo and other woodland birds. Just as importantly, he is committed to opening doors for the next generation. He believes young people bring energy, creativity and a deep care for the future, and that with the right support they can become confident leaders in environmental stewardship. For Jayden, strengthening these pathways is key to ensuring that Landcare continues to grow, adapt and thrive in the years to come.

For more information: birdlife.org.au

Words by Landcare Australia

**Photo credit:** Jayden Gunn

# Tamworth Regional Landcare

**In 2025, Tamworth Regional Landcare launched Intrepid Landcare in their community — a dynamic and fast-growing network of young changemakers passionate about shaping a sustainable future for agriculture and the environment.**

Bringing together emerging leaders from across the region, the group fosters connection, knowledge-sharing and hands-on learning, empowering participants to build resilient landscapes and communities. Intrepid Landcare is already gaining momentum as a hub for innovation, curiosity and leadership in natural resource management.

A recent highlight was the Intrepid Landcare Property Tour at Kamilaroi Cattle Company, hosted by Intrepid Landcare member Charlie Thurgate. The day brought together an engaged group of participants whose thoughtful questions and open discussion reflected the spirit of the program. As both a host and active member of the network, Charlie led with clarity, confidence and humility, creating an inclusive environment where complex ideas around breeding, soils and business were made practical and accessible.

Kamilaroi Cattle Company, operated by Charlie Thurgate and Valentina Aliprandi, is a vertically integrated paddock-to-plate beef enterprise supplying premium beef direct to consumers across Australia. Running approximately 140 breeders on 270 hectares, the business is notable for its chemical- and vaccine-free approach. The property is transitioning toward improved pasture function and soil health through strategic soil amendments and carefully managed grazing, with livestock used as a regenerative tool to rebuild soil fertility and increase biological activity.





Genetics are central to the operation, with an Angus-based herd being developed into a composite through Angus, Tuli and Mashona breeding. The aim is to produce cattle that are environmentally adapted, efficient and suited to grass-finished systems. Kamilaroi also produces F1 and F2 bulls designed for adaptability and performance in diverse conditions.

Charlie's openness in sharing both successes and challenges made the day especially valuable. The tour highlighted how innovation, environmental stewardship and strong business practices can work together in a commercially viable system — a powerful example for the next generation of land managers.

For further information: North-West Intrepid Landcare
Kate Spry, North West Youth & Education Coordinator
kate@trla.org.au | 0428 267 912

Words and photos by Intrepid Landcare Tamworth






# Monique Bailey

**Monique Bailey from Sydney brings both passion and practical expertise to her work with Landcare in the Hawkesbury Nepean region of Sydney, where she is focused on strengthening connections between landholders, conservation initiatives and community-led action. Her work spans multiple programs, all united by a commitment to supporting people to actively care for the landscapes they live and work on.**

A key focus for Monique is her involvement in programs like Wandering Wallabies and Land for Wildlife. These initiatives help fill an important gap for landholders seeking guidance on how to manage their properties for conservation outcomes. For Monique, Land for Wildlife is a particularly personal passion. In her role as a regional provider, she now facilitates training and offers ongoing support, equipping landholders with the knowledge and confidence to protect and enhance biodiversity on their own land.

Beyond working directly with landholders, Monique is also committed to engaging younger generations in environmental stewardship. Through a Landcarer sport initiative delivered in partnership with local schools, she has supported programs that encourage students to connect with nature in active and meaningful ways. By advocating for and helping deliver these initiatives, she is contributing to a growing awareness of environmental responsibility among young people in the region.

Monique's work is further strengthened through her involvement with the Western Sydney Weeds Authority. This collaboration provides additional support and resources, including a dedicated weed control team and a group of trainees who are building their own skills in environmental management. The partnership highlights the importance of coordinated, cross-organisational efforts in tackling complex challenges such as invasive species.



**With the backing of her host organisation and a strong network of collaborators, Monique is part of a collective effort that combines on-ground action with education and capacity building. Her work reflects the evolving nature of Landcare, where supporting people, sharing knowledge and fostering partnerships are just as important as the environmental outcomes themselves.**

For further information: Monique Bailey, Local Landcare Coordinator | Hawkesbury-Nepean Landcare Network & Hawkesbury River County Council | www.hrcc.nsw.gov.au

Words by Landcare Australia

**Photo credit:** Monique Bailey

# Canberra Intrepid Landcare

**Driven by a desire to turn academic knowledge into tangible impact, Rosie Hughes found her entry point into Landcare while studying environmental science. Wanting a practical way to address the issues she was learning about, she joined ANU Intrepid Landcare, a youth-led group focused on hands-on conservation. What began as a way to connect theory with action quickly became a deeply meaningful commitment. Working on projects close to home - whether planting hillsides of native vegetation or clearing invasive weeds - gave her a clear sense of purpose and the satisfaction of seeing real, immediate results.**

For Rosie, Landcare has been as much about learning as doing. Surrounded by passionate and knowledgeable volunteers, she has developed a strong understanding of local ecosystems. A self-confessed “plant nerd,” she has relished the opportunity to deepen her knowledge of native flora, while also gaining practical skills that extend beyond the classroom. As her confidence and experience grew, so too did her involvement. In 2023, she led a Glossy Black Cockatoo Habitat Restoration project, designing plantings to support the threatened species while also managing a grant process and engaging with the broader community.

Now a key member of Canberra Intrepid Landcare, Rosie is helping to lead a new wave of youth-driven environmental action in the ACT. She co-founded the group alongside friends to encourage greater participation from young people in Landcare, recognising that the scale of environmental challenges requires fresh energy and ideas. Their first event - a Black Gum Planting Day delivered in partnership with Landcare ACT and other organisations - focused on restoring habitat for the threatened Eucalyptus aggregata. By planting genetically diverse seedlings alongside other woodland species, the group is working to strengthen the resilience of a fragile local population. The day also introduced many first-time volunteers to Landcare, reinforcing Rosie’s belief in the importance of accessible, welcoming entry points.





Her work unfolds against a backdrop of mounting environmental pressure. Despite Canberra’s reputation as the “Bush Capital,” urban expansion, habitat loss and invasive species continue to place strain on local ecosystems. While many dedicated groups are tackling these issues, Rosie sees a clear need to grow the volunteer base particularly among younger generations.

Encouragingly, she has already witnessed a steady increase in youth engagement, along with the emergence of creative, youth-led Landcare initiatives across the country. Looking ahead, Rosie hopes Canberra Intrepid Landcare can help make environmental volunteering a mainstream pursuit for young people - something viewed less as an obligation and more as an opportunity for adventure, skill-building and community connection. By reshaping perceptions and making Landcare more accessible and relevant, she believes her generation can play a vital role in shaping a stronger, more sustainable future for the movement.

For further information: Canberra Intrepid Landcare
canberraintrepidlandcare@gmail.com

Words by Landcare Australia

**Photo credit:** Landcare ACT



Nominate today!

# 2026 STATE & TERRITORY LANDCARE AWARDS

**The 2026 State and Territory Landcare Awards stand as a prestigious biennial national Landcare Awards program. The Landcare Awards honour individuals, groups and organisations that are making outstanding contributions to sustainable agriculture and environmental conservation in their local communities.**

In each State and Territory, the Landcare Awards will be granted to recognise the achievements that encompass climate action, environmental leadership, sustainable agriculture, First Nations Peoples, women in landcare, youth, Coastcare and children.

Nominating is free. You can nominate yourself, or you can nominate someone you know who should be recognised for their work to restore, enhance and protect the natural environment in their community.

The winners of the nine national Landcare Award categories in each State or Territory will advance as finalists to the 2027 National Landcare Awards.

**Nomination close at 11.59pm AEST on Friday 31 July, 2026**.

The ACT Landcare Awards will close at 11.59pm AEST on Sunday 14 June, 2026.

There will be NO extension to the deadlines.

## National Landcare Award Categories

- Australian Government Landcare Innovation Award
- Australian Government Sustainable Agriculture Landcare Award
- Australian Government Individual Landcarer Award
- Australian Government Community Partnerships Landcare Award
- Coastcare Award
- First Nations Landcare Collaboration Award
- Women in Landcare Award
- Junior Landcare Award
- NextGen Landcare Award

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## Check Out Our Communications and Media Kit Resources

Landcare Australia has developed useful communications tips and guidelines to help you create awareness of your group's activities.

**Learn more here**

## National Landcare Legends and Landcare Honour Roll

Landcare Australia would like to recognise the many individuals or groups that have made a significant contribution to caring our environment across Australia. If you know someone or a group who have been contributing for 10 years that you would like to honour please send a photo and 100 word biography. For more information or to make a submission please click **here**.

There is also a Landcare Champions page to recognise the outstanding efforts of landcarers **here**.

## National Landcare Directory

The National Landcare Directory (NLD) is an online directory of community environmental 'care' groups and schools across Australia who are working in their local community on environmental conservation and sustainable land management activities. Ensure your group is listed by adding your group or update your group details so that people can find you to volunteer or for partnership opportunities.

**Learn more here**

## Do You Have Before and After Landcare Photos in Your Collection?

Submit your photo for the Landcare in Focus photo gallery and your image could be the cover of the next edition of Landcare In Focus magazine. The quality needs to be a minimum of 300 dpi and include a caption that explains what the image is about, the location and the people involved. It is important that you have copyright of the photos so that we can publish. Submit your photos here: **digital@landcareaustralia.com.au**

## Tell Us What You Think

Your feedback is important to us so that can continue to improve what we do to support the landcare movement. You are welcome to share your thoughts on the Landcare in Focus magazine and other Landcare Australia activities.

**Take our survey here**

## Stay Connected and Subscribe to Our Newsletters

Landcare Australia's newsletters are jam-packed with the latest updates on grants, education resources, case studies, project updates, events, campaigns, partnerships, new programs and much more! Make sure you know what is happening by subscribing to our online magazines and newsletters – Landcare in Focus, Landlink, Coastcarer, Junior Landcarer and Landcare Agriculture.

**Subscribe here**

## Landcare Australia Events Calendar

### 2026

- **2026 State and Territory Landcare Awards** – nominations close July 31, 2026. No extensions.
- **Landcare Week** – Monday 3 to Sunday 9 August, 2026
- **2027 Bob Hawke Landcare Award** – nominations open August 31, 2026
- **Landcare in Focus November edition published** – content deadline September 1, 2026
- **2027 General Jeffery Soil Health Award** – nominations open December 5, 2026
- **Coastcare Week** – Monday 7 to Sunday 13 August, 2026

### 2027

- **Landcare in Focus May edition published** – content deadline March 1, 2027
- **Landcare Week** – Monday 2 to Sunday 8 August, 2027
- **2027 National Landcare Conference** – Sunday 5 to Wednesday 8 September, 2027
- **2027 National Landcare Awards** – Tuesday 7 September, 2027
- **Landcare in Focus November edition published** – content deadline September 1, 2027
- **Coastcare Week** – Monday 6 to Sunday 12 December, 2027