



Murrumbateman Landcare Group

President's report 2024

I'm pleased to present this MLG wrap-up for 2024. It's been a great year with a few key changes but also continuation of the excellent work of the group.

MLG and membership

The set-up of the group went through some significant changes this year. Changes to tax legislation meant that we needed to become a charitable organisation – we updated our constitution and confirmed this with a special resolution of members in July, and then applied for the change in status. I am pleased to say this was granted:

*'We are pleased to confirm that the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC) has registered MURRUMBATEMAN LANDCARE GROUP INCORPORATED (ABN: 48825194113) as a charity.
The date from which your charity is registered is 1/07/2022.'*

A huge thanks go to Sheridan for sorting through the details and getting this over the line. She really led the way in YAN and indeed in NSW and provided a lot of valuable information for other groups going through this. We are now registered as a charity with the ACNC (Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission). Further, we have just been advised that the ATO has approved us as a DGR as an 'Environmental Organisation' with effective date 4 November 2024. This means that we can now accept tax-deductible donations.

We had 113 financial members at the end of the 2023–24 financial year and more than 600 Facebook followers. The slight increase in membership fees from 1 July 2024 does not appear to have deterred members from paying 2024–25 subscriptions.

Thanks to all the committee members for all their work, including Sandy Lolicato who stepped down from the committee this year. I'd especially like to mention Annaliese who was recognised for all her work in the Murrumbateman community in a letter presented to Parliament by our local member Wendy Tuckerman.

Places

We continued to manage the Murrumbateman **Crown Reserve** and **Bush Cemetery** this year. Both are areas of Box Gum Grassy Woodland with high conservation value. Recently the reserve was

transferred to the Onerwal Local Aboriginal Land Council, and we look forward to building a relationship with the council to continue to build conservation efforts.

Projects and activities

Our **native plant nursery** provided 7850 climate-ready plants to local members, plus more that were given away at Murrumbateman community and field days. Our amazing team of nursery managers and volunteers propagate and grow the plants every year and I would like to thank Gill, Annaliese and Lisa. The climate ready revegetation team were nominated to the NSW Landcare awards and it is well deserved recognition for their amazing work.

We've had some improvements to the nursery this year and some more help with coordination and management, so a big thankyou to everyone who has signed on for various tasks. Sharing the load across the community makes this much more manageable for our hard-working team.

We finalised and shared the *MLG complete nursery and planting guide* across YAN to provide some valuable information to members and landholders – not only about how to order from the nursery but about how to plan for and take care of plants, to make sure we have the best possible impact in the landscape of all this work. We also developed a landholder agreement and would like to encourage people who order plants to sign up to an agreement so we can track progress.

In March, the Board of NSW Landcare and NSW Agriculture Minister Tara Moriarty visited the nursery along with YAN and MLG representatives. It was great to get a chance to talk about local issues with the visitors.

We also acknowledge the work of the Alexander Maconochie centre in helping with propagation. This work got some good press this year (see below) in response to a press release sent out by the ACT Minister.



Green thumbs to beat jail time boredom

Peter Brewer

CANBERRA'S prison has been criticised repeatedly in independent reports for offering detainees relatively few capabilities for self-improvement to alleviate the terminal boredom behind bars.

But among the well-meaning folk at the Murrumbateman Landcare Group, the horticultural skills and efforts by a small group of prisoners at the Alexander Maconochie Centre are making a difference outside the wire - even if the prisoners can't get to see it.

AMC's production nursery and horticultural

program has propagated thousands of native plants for the group and Annaliese Caston, who manages the program, says her landcare members are quite envious of what the inmates have been able to achieve within the chain link fences and high voltage wire.

Seven detainees work in the nursery five days a week and are paid for their work.

"The plants they [the detainees] are growing are really good quality; sometimes we're a bit jealous because they [the AMC plants] are better than what we can grow," she said.

"It's a fabulous partnership; we can't grow enough

plants in our small nursery for distributing among the local region and this program has supplied us with almost 9000 plants over the last three years.

"The plants are being planted on private and public land in places like Sutton, Yass, Gundaroo, Wallaroo and so on and it's so important to do that because our local area which is box gum grassy woodland is a critically endangered eco-system in this region and we've lost 95 per cent of those woodlands and grasslands since European settlement."

The acting Commissioner for Corrections, Bruno

Landcare's Annaliese Caston, Corrections Minister Emma Davidson and AMC's horticulturalist Leigh in one of the greenhouses at the prison. Picture by Sitthixay Ditthavong

Aloisi, said programs like horticulture hopefully provide opportunities for employment and a connection with the community for when inmates leave the prison.

The success of the program - despite its modest size - has prompted plans to build on it further, with fish tanks for aquaculture and growing vegetables for use in the kitchen.

"I think it would be fair to say we are always looking to expand the opportunities for detainees whether that's in employment, education or industry; it's something we're committed to in the future," he said.

Events

We had a great line-up of events this year, with lots of valuable information going out to members and the local community. We had talks from Sonya Duus on growing plants that will survive climate change, Roger Farrow on insects and especially the Key's matchstick grasshopper, and a Q&A session on planting natives for Landcare outcomes with local Landcare experts.

Most recently we had a great walk and talk on the reserve from Aaron Chatfield of Dreamtime Connections, who shared his knowledge on native plant use, traditional tools and First Nations culture, as well as how to really throw a boomerang!

We also had several walks on local properties, including on Sue McIntyre's place to see the results of different strategies to create diverse plant and animal habitats in a previously cleared paddock, Fiona Hamer's place to do some tubestock planting and see the impact of 10 years of conservation planting, and Judy Hancock's place to see the results of regeneration on local wildflowers. We thank

all these local landowners for allowing these walks on their properties – it's really inspirational and allows others to see what works in the local area.

Along with member activities we have also held several community events, including stalls at the Community Showcase at the Murrumbateman markets and the Community Connections events at the school, and of course our annual stall at the Murrumbateman field days. This year's theme was insects and insectivores with lots of great information and kids' activities. We thank Fiona, Anneliese, Janette and Sandy for their organisation and an especial thankyou to Janette for some amazing artwork. We'd also like to thank everyone who signed up to staff the stall throughout the weekend. We got a lot of interest for potential new members at this event and handed out plenty of our new 1-page flyer (see below), so we hope to see some new faces during the coming year.

In conclusion, thanks and congratulations to MLG members and committee for all your great work over this year. I'd like to wish you all a very happy holiday season, and we look forward to seeing you at MLG events throughout 2025.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jacqui Stol". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jacqui Stol, President, on behalf of Murrumbateman Landcare Group, 5 December 2024



Murrumbateman Landcare Group

We work with the community to increase native biodiversity and environmental resilience in the Murrumbateman region.

Come and join us!



Events

We hold talks from local experts throughout the year on topics such as local animal and plant species and conservation, weed identification and landcare methods.

We also hold walks and workshops on local properties and reserves to find out about different approaches to landcare and see the results of regeneration.



Plants

Murrumbateman Landcare Group runs a volunteer community native plant nursery to support local climate-ready revegetation and biodiversity.

Free plants! Financial members of MLG can order native plants each year at no charge.

You can order specific species, or we have boxes of mixed species to suit your landscape:

- slopes – plants for grassy woodland and forest on better soils and lower slopes
- ridges – plants for dry sclerophyll forest on poor soils, upper slopes and rocky ridges
- riparian – plants for damp sites including streambanks, dams and depressions
- garden – plants for garden sites.



Information and resources

The MLG website has a wide variety of information and resources on our website, including local plant, weed and bushfire landscaping guides, and copies of MLG talks.

We maintain a library of books and references, and also have trail cameras and myna bird traps available for members to borrow.



Opportunities to get involved

We encourage volunteers to help out at the MLG nursery. The nursery is completely staffed by volunteers and regular working bees are held to propagate and look after the plants. We also invite members to get involved in local landcare projects such as planting and weeding.



Membership

To join MLG, email mlg_treas@yan.org.au. Membership is \$35 per year for a single or family.

Contact

Web: <https://landcare.nsw.gov.au/groups/murrumbateman-landcare-group/>

Email: President mlg_pres@yan.org.au Treasurer mlg_treas@yan.org.au
Secretary mlg_sec@yan.org.au Nursery mlg_nursery@yan.org.au

Murrumbateman Landcare Group is a registered charity.

We are part of the Yass Area Network of Landcare Groups and Landcare NSW.

