



Murrumbateman  
**Landcare**  
Group

## MLG Presidents' Report 2020

In the words of one of our members 2020 was “a very different year.” Drought, damaging storms, bushfires, smoke and the COVID-19 pandemic meant across Australia many families experienced hardship and tragedy, and or the constant stress of the unknown. Our thoughts were and are with them. Despite all activities and funded projects requiring us to be coronavirus safe MLG still managed to be both busy and successful thanks to our hard working and dedicated *volunteers* and our rising membership.

**Native Plant Nursery** Although *Lisa Borella* could not be here today, the tabled report shows how *Lisa, Gill Hall and Annaliese Caston* have been working hard alongside our many MLG member *volunteers* in working bees and took the opportunity coming out of the drought to harness a boom year for propagation where over 8000 plants were ordered by members for the Spring growing season!

**Membership** It was encouraging to see MLG's membership growing during the year despite coronavirus. As the Treasurer's report shows, MLG's financial position remains strong resulting from member contributions and four funding grants

**We continue our journey to become “climate ready”** with MLG members *Gill Hall and Sue McIntyre* engaged in a collaborative project across the Yass Area Network of Landcare Groups (YAN) to identify, source and propagate plants from selected species. Seed is being obtained from target areas most likely to deliver the genetic diversity for resilient revegetation in a changing climate. There is also a small trial to examine whether seed from other provenances will establish in a satisfactory way in our region

**We continue to provide information** to members on other regional landcare events and provide advice to the local community. *MLG's Facebook page* has an increasing following and is reaching an audience beyond our membership. MLG website content is growing, with much of the information added or revised in 2020 thanks to *Sheridan Roberts* efforts. The information provided by these media provides members and the wider community with up to date information and reporting on landcare activities

**Program of activities and events for 2020** As usual the MLG year started in February with an event planning meeting that generated a very promising program of outdoor and indoor events for 2020. In March *Annaliese Caston* led an evening inspection of the Murrumbateman Box Gum Grassy Woodland Crown reserve that was very well attended. Unfortunately, coronavirus concerns led to the cancelling of the *April workshop on propagation* from cuttings and the suspension of indoor MLG meetings. Our meetings started again in August, on Zoom, with *Tony Hill* presenting to large and appreciative audience on '*Soil Health and Holistic Farming*'. In September *Gill Hall* presented, via Zoom, the *Climate Ready Revegetation* project and activities in the YAN region. And the welcome rain and storms, rather than coronavirus, prevented what would have been a wonderful bird and wildflower walk on *Mcleods Nature Reserve* in October even after rescheduling a second date! Sadly, there was no Murrumbateman Field Days this year but it has been heartening to see small groups of members assembling their own small groups for coronavirus safe walks through the natural beauty that surrounds us here in Yass Valley.

**Murrumbateman Village Crown Reserve** Last year we partnered with enthusiastic and determined community members (including *Annaliese Caston*) to protect an endangered ecological community of Box Gum Grassy Woodland and derived grassland with very high conservation value. This 4.5ha crown land reserve in the middle of Murrumbateman Village is an absolute gem of rare plants and wildlife including the critically endangered Golden Sun Moth and was under threats of weed invasion and development. MLG now has the licence to manage the site for the community and environment protection. The project has support from Dept Crown Lands, previous Federal Member for

Parliament Mike Kelly (who facilitated a Commonwealth Stronger Communities Programme grant of \$9500 for acquittal 30/06/2021), the "Friends of the Murrumbateman BGGW", the Murrumbateman Progress Association and Yass Valley Council. The conservation, protection work and ongoing management is both educational and rewarding for all involved. Much activity on managing weeds has been done by hand weeding and chemical control. MLG engaged a local contractor for chemical control with volunteers assisting using backpacks and careful spot spraying to minimise risk to native vegetation (no chemical application was done in golden sun moth habitat). In October MLG engaged independent ecologist consultants from Umwelt Australia to undertake a biodiversity assessment of the site to independently document its conservation and legislative protection as an Critically Endangered Ecological Community. Three large vegetation plots were set up for the assessment and will be used for future monitoring and a report will be forthcoming in 2021. MLG has also submitted a grant application to the Crown Lands Improvement Fund (supported by Yass Valley Council and Crown Lands) for new fencing and entry points to the Crown Reserve.

**Murrumbateman Bush Cemetery** MLG applied for a community grant of \$3,200 from Yass Valley Council and the Murrumbateman Progress Association matched this funding for a total of \$6,400. The project will progress a Final Management Plan for the Murrumbateman Bush Cemetery to ensure that the conservation management of the cemetery is based on robust management guidelines. In October MLG engaged Umwelt Australia to survey part of the cemetery known as Draft Conservation Zone 2a with a plot established and assessed with a report to be available in 2021. Other activities include hand weeding and design/installation of educational signage.

We look forward to another great year of activities with all our members in 2021

Regards

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, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020*