

The Landcare Perspective

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Upper Shoalhaven and Upper Deua Catchments

**SPRING
2013**

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25 Years of Landcare celebrated in the Upper Shoalhaven

By Ben Gleeson

On March 21st representatives from Landcare, the National Farmers Federation (NFF) and the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF), joined together to commemorate 25 years of cooperation in Landcare. This event was held in the Upper-Shoalhaven district at Geoff and Sally White's property 'Mundango'. It was attended by Don Henry (ACF CEO), Matt Linnegar (NFF CEO) and David Walker (Chair of the National Landcare Network). Representatives from Braidwood Rural and Braidwood Urban Landcare Groups, the Upper-Shoalhaven Landcare Council and South East Landcare were also in attendance.



Don Henry (ACF CEO), Matt Linnegar (National Farmers Federation CEO), Ben Gleeson (USLC) and Martin Royds (USLC) planting trees with Bob Hawke's famous shiny shovel at the 25th anniversary celebrations of

Geoff and Sally provided a tour of Mundango, showing the various farm and environmental improvements that have been inspired and enabled by their participation in Landcare over the years. Don, Matt and David all acknowledged the great benefits in Australian land management that Landcare has brought to our landscape. They also spoke of the need for continued support for the efforts of Landcare volunteers across Australia in future. To commemorate the historic act of cooperation between the NFF and ACF, which

paved the way for the modern Landcare movement, David Walker provided Matt Linnegar and Don Henry with a sculpture of the 'Landcare hands' logo. Geoff and Sally also presented them with copies of Geoff's book 'Mundango: a Braidwood pastoral symphony'. The day culminated in the planting of a eucalypt by Don and Matt using Bob Hawke's original ceremonial shovel with which he ushered in the first decade of Landcare.

LANDCARE EQUIPMENT: FOR HIRE

Marquee



Measuring 3 x 6m, this new marquee is great for parties, field days, etc. Requires at least four people to set up.

HIRE COST: \$50.00 PER DAY
(\$100 deposit required)

RIPPER



Three-point-link, single-tine ripper. For preparing soils, removing stumps, rocks and more. Replaceable / reversible ripper tooth. Fits easily to tractor.

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Hamilton Tree Planter



Australian designed and made tree planting tool. Ideal for smaller-scale or community planting projects. We have several of these available for hire!

HIRE COST: \$5.00 / WEEK

HIRING LANDCARE EQUIPMENT

When hiring equipment, a \$50 deposit will ensure the safe return and good condition of items. Call 02 4842 2594 to book!

Update from the Executive Committee

The USLC Executive committee has been very busy behind the scenes over the past couple of months with a focus on a couple of significant activities. We can now offer a belated welcome to Dr Su Wild-River who has joined the USLC as the Temporary Landcare Support Officer until 30 June 2014. Su's focus over that time will be on activities that will benefit Landcare groups and the work of the USLC in meeting the needs of Landcare groups and members. Many thanks again to the South East Local Landcare Service office, especially Donna Hazell and Chris Presland as well as General Manager Gavin Whitely for their support in providing the funding to engage Su in this short term role.

We also welcome Rebecca Hall to the role of Project Coordinator of the Regional Producers project. Rebecca will be coordinating a series of education and training activities and working with community groups and commercial groups to facilitate the USLC's work in supporting the growth in local and regional food production for individuals, community and commercial purposes. This project will run until 30 June and will provide a strong base for the USLC to continue working in this field into 2014-15.

The USLC will continue to work with the South East Local Land Services (SELLS) in Braidwood to ensure we establish a strong and effective relationship with SELLS into 2014-15. We will represent the Landcare groups and members in our region as we determine how to best interact with the SELLS and their work on Landholder and Community Resilience, Profitable and Sustainable Farming and Resilient Land and Seascapes.

Enjoy the cooling days!

Colin McLean, President.



Greetings from the Temporary Landcare Support Officer

Greetings Landcarers,

Well it's an honour and a pleasure to be on the other side of the desk, writing an editorial for the trusty old Landcare Perspective newsletter. I've been hired for 12 weeks as the Temporary Landcare Support Officer for the Upper Shoalhaven Landcare. So hopefully if neither of us blink, you'll be seeing me a bit in this role.

After that, if all goes well, the job should be advertised for a longer term, and there'll be some stability in your Landcare Support Officer again. I've got quite a hefty set of tasks to complete while I'm here. As well as this newsletter (tick) you'll be hearing from me as follows:

- **Cleaning up the mailing list.** If you didn't get this newsletter by email, but would like to in the future, please email me on upper.shoalhaven@gmail.com and I'll make it so.



- **A Landcare Group Health Check.** Expect a phone call from me to set up a meeting with you if you are the President or Secretary of a group. I will be joined by a member of the USLC Executive Committee and we would love to know how you are going and whether we can help. We also have news about our constitution and the insurance we have for groups.

- **Updating the website.** We'll be adding some new links and functions so that you can find out all the new happenings and search for information in old Landcare Perspectives and share ideas with others.

So thanks for having me, and I'll see you around the ridges.

Su Wild-River, Temporary Landcare Support Officer USLC.

Contact details: upper.shoalhaven@gmail.com.

Ph 48422594

Tarwyn Park field day

By Ben Gleeson

On Monday April 14th a Natural Sequence Farming (NSF) field day was held at Tarwyn Park in the picturesque Bylong Valley. The day was conducted in tandem by Peter Andrews and his son Stuart as part of a new educational program run under the name of 'Tarwyn Park Training'. Together, Peter and Stuart provided visitors with an overview of landscape history and function and a tour of nearby pastures with stops along the way for demonstrations and further discussion. The Upper-Shoalhaven Natural Sequence Farming Association organised an overnight tour from Braidwood and seven locals took this opportunity to see Tarwyn Park, the place where Peter Andrews first began to practise his innovative form of farm landscape management.

Peter purchased Tarwyn Park when it was a tired and infertile farming operation, degraded after years of conventional grazing practices. Using his keen powers of observation and reflecting upon the natural function of the Australian landscape, Peter developed some unconventional techniques which he used to build the property into the verdant and fertile farm landscape it is today.

Stuart Andrews is now the owner/manager of Tarwyn Park and although he has shifted the property away from horse breeding and into cattle production he continues to apply the insightful management perspectives developed by his father. Judging by some of the friendly banter between them, Stuart might not always have been the most



Three generations of Andrews at the Tarwyn Park field day.
Photo by Pete Hazell.

compliant pupil, nor, perhaps, was Peter always the most patient teacher, but the two Mr Andrews' made a very good instructional team on the day. Peter was in fine form and provided his familiar brand of illustrative anecdotes and insightful arguments, whilst Stuart was able to expertly step in when necessary to reinterpret or rephrase particular points. Other attendees chipped in to the discussion on occasion and impromptu conversation between like-minded attendees on walks and during the lunch and morning tea breaks also provided great value and learning opportunities. Along with the perfect weather and beautiful Bylong Valley scenery the day was a very enjoyable and enlightening experience.

At one point, as a simple encapsulation of NSF principles, Stuart emphasised the following rhyme which was also provided in a Tarwyn Park Training leaflet:

“SLOW the flow

Let ALL plants grow

Careful where the animals GO

Remember, to FILTER is a must know”

Tarwyn Park Training will be conducting a series of educational modules starting in late May. These are designed to be taken sequentially and will equip participants with a thorough understanding of Natural Sequence Farming and the ability to apply it. Contact Duane Norris via duane@nsfarming.com for further details.



Lush pastures at Tarwyn Park. Photo by Ben Gleeson.

Heritage and the Land

By Su Wild-River

The small town of Braidwood celebrates its 175th year in Autumn 2014. The event is being marked by picnics, walks, a heritage parade, art prizes and more. Uncle Max Dulumunmun Harrison, initiated Yuin elder, was at the Heritage Picnic to give the welcome to country for the celebrations. He shared messages about rivercare and landcare which are as important now as they were for over 40,000 years of earlier heritage.

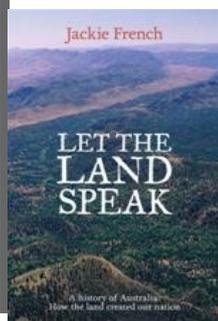
Uncle Max urged us to watch the waterways. We may barely notice the Shoalhaven, Mongarlowe or Deua Rivers as we speed across them in cars. And the same for their many tributary creeks like Monkittee, Flood, Jembaicumbene, Majors, Tantulean, Mulloon, Jerrabuttgulla, Back, Reedy Windellama and more. But these waterways are a whole other set of pathways connecting all of the land, providing water and carrying fish and other aquatic life, as well as nutrients and sediments. There's value in remembering how it all fits together.

Aboriginal landcare architecture is still in the local landscape today and you'll see it if you know where and what to watch for. Uncle Max told how the land kept Aboriginal



Uncle Max Harrison and Bronwyn Richards at the Braidwood Heritage Day picnic. Photo by Alex Rea, Braidwood Times.

people warm in dwellings that were dug into the ground like giant wombat holes. Jackie French's describes other Aboriginal architecture in landscape plantings in her 2013 book *Let the Land Speak*. It is still possible to follow the walkway of spring flowering clematis which shows the way to stands of stringy bark traditionally used to make waterproof fishing line, string and other woven products. The path and others showing food and medicine resources are marked by the woody-descendents of signposting trees planted by Aboriginal women hundreds and thousands of years ago



There is a lot for modern Landcarers to learn from this ancient wisdom. For one thing, if you can learn to read the signposting in the Aboriginal plantings, you may still find the bounty they signal. And it's wise to think, watch and learn before transforming landscapes, because the changes can last generations, and mistakes may be impossible to undo.

Farming the generations

Pete Harrison, Mayor of Braidwood, spoke at the Heritage Picnic about the exceptional endurance of the local colonial people. He described a property in the local area that is perhaps the only original colonial land holding held and farmed continually by the one family since first acquired in the early 1800s.



Julie Baker's artwork "Braidwood Yesterday, Today Tomorrow" from the Heritage Art Exhibition at the Braidwood Re-

The Heritage Art Prize included a painting celebrating a similarly long local family farming history. The painting by Julie Baker lists John Buckle Bunn as the patriarch of seven generations.

The description of the work is as follows.

"The Land the everlasting, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow.

The People, Seven Generations.

Living off the Land, Through the Land, With the Land, On the Land.

The Land was there before they were born.

It is there now supporting their lives;

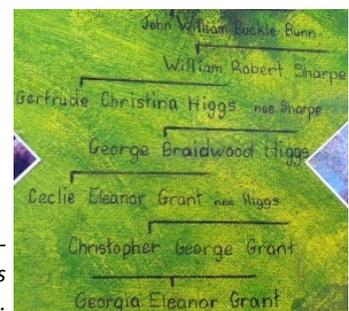
And it will be there after they are gone;

Still continuing its vigil of creation, destruction, resurrection,

Changed by the contact but existing forever.

A reminder of Braidwood and its Creation Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow".

Detail from Julie Baker's artwork listing seven generations of local land custodians.



Landcare 'Community Table' at the Braidwood Farmers' Market

By Ben Gleeson

The Upper-Shoalhaven Landcare Council would like to draw attention to its new table at the monthly Braidwood Farmers' Market (first Saturday at the National Theatre). The USLC was keen to contribute a table at the market to show our support for this great community venture and to provide Landcare-related information to interested market goers. We were subsequently approached by the Farmers' Market committee to see if the Landcare 'Community Table' would be able to provide a space for small or occasional producers to sell their wares. We are pleased to announce that we can now provide this facility for USLC members to use.

In general, the Community Table is intended to host small producers whose level of production means they cannot afford to pay for their own insurance and a full Farmers' Market membership (for example, someone with a few dozen eggs or a small excess of home-grown vegetables or fruit to sell). It will also allow for sellers who have produce for only one market per year, or who would like to 'test the waters' before committing to their own stall at the markets. Landcarers, Di Bott and Sarah Merriman, have already used the table



Caroola stall at the Farmers' Markets. Photo by Alex Rea, Braidwood Times.



Brimar stall at the Farmers' Markets. Photo by Alex Rea, Braidwood Times.

to good effect. Di sold all of her Egyptian onions in one day; and Sarah has since become a full member of the Farmers' Market and maintains her own great stall as a regular fixture.

The USLC insurance policy provides product liability coverage for USLC members using the Community Table. All existing (paid up) members of any local Landcare group in the Upper-Shoalhaven automatically qualify for membership of the USLC; other interested folks can become 'direct' USLC members (subject to approval and payment of a \$5 per annum membership fee). Contact Secretary Ben Gleeson on 0424286590 or email upper.shoalhaven@gmail.com.

The USLC encourages all Landcare network members to utilise their local farmers' market, whether as sellers or buyers or both. See you there!

*NB: The Upper-Shoalhaven Landcare Council looks forward to further supporting and augmenting Braidwood's burgeoning local-food industry through its upcoming 'Regional Producers Project' recently funded by Southern Rivers CMA-Ag (now South East Local Land Services).

THE SALEYARD

Currajuggle Creek Nursery

Tubestock available now

We have a selection of local hardy Eucalypts, Acacias and understorey species. For windbreaks, landscaping and bush regeneration. Please ring Lyn or Murray on 4842 8066 for advice and to order.



Hazelwood Farm stall at the Farmers' Markets. Photo by Alex Rea, Braidwood Times.

The one-stop-shop is open for business without green tape: what do all of these three-word slogans mean for Landcarers?

By Su Wild-River

Change is the new constant for rural landholders. The new Local Environment Plan is on the way. The NSW Native Vegetation Regulations have commenced. And a One-Stop-Shop will take the Australian government out of most environmental decisions. What does it all mean for rural landholders?

One take on it all is that the pendulum is swinging away from tight government control, to greater landholder control over development decisions with both positive and negative impacts. Let's take a brief look at some of the detail.

The swinging pendulum of environmental decisions



Image by Su Wild-River, using pendulum image from <http://solongfreedom.wordpress.com/2012/09/06/>

The Palerang Local Environment Plan

Strategic land use planning identifies and defines land use priorities for different areas within a region. In February this year, Palerang Council agreed to [send its draft Local Environmental Plan \(LEP\)](#) for approval to the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure. This single LEP covers all of Palerang and is required to meet NSW government standards for the zones to which it applies and the land uses allowed within them.

The earlier draft LEPs had been developed by Palerang Council staff over several years of painstaking mapping of existing land use and condition with current and new schemes to propose which of the new zones were most suitable for every land holding in Palerang. Planners took care to identify important ecological corridors and areas of high conservation value in their decisions. In some cases this meant that the proposed new zones applied restrictions to existing allowable land uses. The zoning would not have disallowed existing activities, but could have restricted future developments.

There was heated debate in particular about some land proposed for the *RU2 Rural Landscape* zone with its goal of maintaining and enhancing the natural resource base, maintaining the rural character of land and providing for compatible land uses such as extensive agriculture. The *E3 Environmental Management zone* also came under fire, with its objectives of protecting, managing and restoring areas with special ecological, scientific, cultural or aesthetic values, and providing for limited development

that does not adversely affect those values. The [debate became so heated](#) that both zones were dropped entirely from the draft plan, in stark contrast to neighbouring Queanbeyan which reported no protest or real estate concerns.

On the down side, council will have less ability to refuse developments that degrade important ecological and rural values. Think multi-dwelling houses on hilltops, warehouses in forests and intensive livestock on floodplains. Even if some of us want this on our own block, most of us don't want to see it elsewhere in the local area.

On the up side, some landholders who want to run novel, ecologically-friendly activities, like ecotourism and environmental education may be more able to do so without the RU2 and E3 zones.

Changes to the Native Vegetation Act

The NSW Native Vegetation Act 2003 frames the way we manage native vegetation by preventing broadscale clearing unless it improves environmental outcomes. Under the Act, there are a range of activities and forms of clearing that landholders can undertake without requiring approval. These include Routine Agricultural Management Activities. They can also submit Property Vegetation Plans (PVPs) for approval to describe how they plan to manage native vegetation on their property.

The [Native Vegetation Regulation 2013](#) has introduced self-

assessable codes for certain types of clearing activities. Three codes have already been developed and will come into effect by mid-2014. These are for:

- Clearing isolated paddock trees in cultivated areas,
- Thinning of native vegetation,
- Clearing invasive native species.

The new regulations have also increased the number of defined RAMAs where clearing is allowed without government approval. Routine Agricultural Management Activities are now defined for:

- Non-rural infrastructure such as sheds and tracks,
- Dual occupancies
- Telecommunication infrastructure on private land,
- Private powerlines,
- Local government land management activities,
- Buffer distances for some rural infrastructure,
- Gravel pits and cemeteries, and
- A more flexible way to demonstrate a history of rotational farming practices in order to change the regrowth rate.

On the up side, these changes reduce landholders' need for government approvals. On the down side, with responsibility to make decisions comes the need for further knowledge. Local Land Services will have a role in supporting the Native Vegetation Act implementation. If the codes are adopted, Local Land Services will assist by running field days, providing advice and tools to support for landholders applying the codes.

Under the codes, landholders will need to notify on-line, or through the Local Land Services Office before undertaking clearing.

Notification can allow landholders to access extension services, enables the government to distinguish between lawful and unlawful clearing.

Contact Local Land Services on 48422594 for more information non the Native Vegetation Act.



Green and Gold Bell Frog. One of the endangered species potentially affected by the Dargues Reef Mine, which therefore required Australian government approval under the EPBC Act.

The draft Codes are open for public comment until 26 May. See <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/vegetation/index.htm>

The One-Stop-Shop for environmental approvals

The Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC) 1999 is the Australian government law that protects matters of national environmental significance (MNES). Those include:

- World heritage properties,
- National heritage places,
- Wetlands of international importance,
- Listed threatened species and ecological communities,
- Migratory species,
- Water resources in relation to coal seam gas development and large coal mining development.

Up until now, any developments that could impact on MNES have been referred to the Australian government for assessment, approval and conditions in addition to whatever approvals are required from local and state governments. The Dargues Reef Mine is a local example of an activity that triggered the EPBC Act. Up to [13 listed threatened species and six listed ecological communities](#) may have been affected by mining activities, and so an Australian government approval was required. Landcare projects sometimes trigger EPBC Act assessments as well, with examples including tree planting in wetlands used by migratory birds.

The Australian government's "one-stop-shop" for environmental approvals will remove the Australian government approval in most cases. Instead, state government approval processes are being accredited for use in approving and conditioning developments that affect matters of MNES.

The government goal is to deliver to developers the benefit of quicker approvals and simpler conditions. Many environmental groups are [concerned](#) that states will deliver more development approvals with fewer conditions, and also that the rare cases where the governments step in to stop damaging projects will become seriously endangered.

There will be a chance to comment on the [NSW Bilateral Agreement](#) relating to Environmental Approval later this year. You can subscribe to receive newsletter updates at: <http://www.environment.gov.au/apps/web-forms/subscribe/talking-shop.html>

Corridor Links and Carbon Sinks: Biodiversity for Carbon and Corridors (B4CC) in the Upper Shoalhaven & Upper Deua

The 'Corridor links and Carbon Sinks: Biodiversity for Carbon and Corridors' project is supported through funding from the Australian Government's Clean Energy Future Biodiversity Fund.



Australian Government

The B4CC program has been in full swing with revegetation projects totalling just over 11ha occurring this Autumn. Expressions of interest are now being sought from landholders for further revegetation and restoration projects that will be ready to go in spring. Contact Felicity for an application form if that sounds like you.

Wetlands Dams and Waterways Workshop

A Wetlands Field Day at 'Durham Hall', the property of James and Belinda Royds on the Jembaicumbene, was held in March to an excellent reception by Landholders from the area.

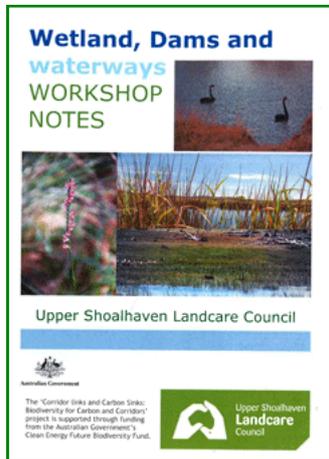
Cassie Price from our partner group Wetland Care



Allan Nicholson, addresses the crowd. Photo by Felicity Sturgiss.



Above: James Royds explains the changes he has witnessed in an area he and Belinda have restricted cattle access to.



Australia made the trip down to Braidwood from head office in Ballina to talk to us about their organisation. Some excellent new connections were made with Cassie. Allan Nicholson held court explaining his work on

Hydro-geological

Landscapes and how understanding them can help us understand the quality of our water and whether dams will be ground water or run-off filled, as well as how vegetation in different areas can affect the overall water and salt balance of an area.

A 32-page booklet detailing farm planning techniques, what habitat in a waterway looks like, pictures of a few locally important reed and tussock/poa species that work well as filters, and flora and fauna lists for the Jembaicumbene was produced for the Field Day and is available from the Landcare office if you would like a copy.

Habitat Restoration Field Day

Felicity Sturgiss, Sky Kidd, and Rainer Rehwinkel presented a Habitat Restoration Workshop on

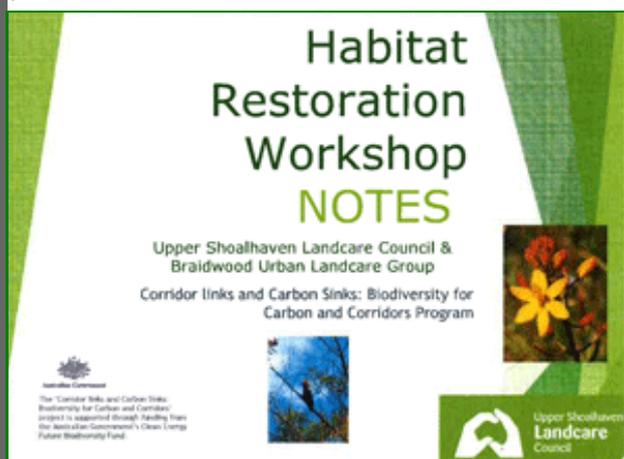
Saturday 22 February at Flood Creek where the Braidwood Urban Landcare group has done a great deal of excellent work. The workshop was led by Skye Kidd, Felicity Sturgiss and Rainer Rehwinkle, and attended by about 20 adults, eight kids and a snake.

Strategies for keeping projects manageable were highlighted, focussing on how to achieve positive outcomes with least possible effort and cost.

Smart approaches include taking photographs every time you visit sites, and making a plan for what you aim to achieve. The 'Bradley method' of Bringing Back the Bush was recommended – working from the most in-tact areas to the most degraded so that habitat is not lost during transition.

An example discussed by Rainer was of hawthorn trees, which are abundant but non-native. The thorns on these provide some protection for small birds roosting in them. If landowners want to replace native vegetation then its beneficial to replace this landscape value before removing the hawthorns. A suitable native tree shrub would be *bursaria spinosa*, which is also spikey and also produces abundant white flowers in mid-summer, attracting insects as a food source for the birds. Wildlife will benefit most if *bursaria* is planted and matures before the hawthorns are removed.

A manual for the workshop was developed with highly practical advice, examples, links and publications relevant to the Braidwood area. This



can be made available in electronic format for those interested. Help is also available for those interested in developing a habitat restoration plan.

The focus was on small-scale habitat restoration. Practical advice and demonstrations were the focus for the morning, recognising that in reality, most regenerators have limited time available.

'Dhurga' Indigenous language taught in Upper Shoalhaven Primary School



Julian Laffan and Trisha Ellis at the opening of the Walawaani Yaranbul Garden at St Bede's Primary School in Braidwood. Photo by Felicity Sturgiss.

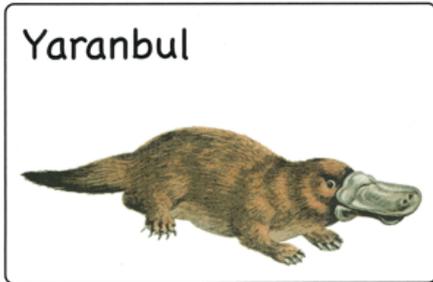
St Bede's Primary School students in Braidwood have been participating in an Aboriginal cultural learning program, with a focus on biodiversity and language that is marked by the development of a garden in their school grounds that they have named 'Walawaani Yaranbul'

Walawaani Yaranbul means 'safe journey platypus' in the Dhurga language. Dhurga is the language of the Mankata Djuwin who were the original inhabitants of the Braidwood area.

Project coordinator Felicity Sturgiss, said that ten years ago Dhurga had no written form and was spoken by only a few Aboriginal families and elders on the coast. "Due to the extraordinary efforts of primary school teachers and Brinja Djuwin people, Kerry Boyenga and Waine

Corridor links and carbon sinks, continued from p 9

Donovan, Dhurga has been translated into a written format, it is a remarkable feat”, Felicity said.



“Through a forensic study of historical audio recordings, consultation and

collaboration with the living speakers of Dhurga and professional linguists, a written alphabet and phonetic structure was developed. Subsequently, Kerry and Waine developed a wonderfully effective teaching methodology”.

The Dhurga language education program has been delivered to students in primary schools and TAFE’s on the coast before now being shared with Braidwood primary school students.

The opening of the garden was preceded by a smoking ceremony and a welcome to country by educator and Brinja Djuwin woman Trisha Ellis and followed by the students singing 'Gugunyal

Yalada’ ('Kookaburra Sits it the Old Gum Tree') in the Dhurga language.

Renowned woodcut artist and St Bede’s kindergarten teacher Julian Laffan has worked with students, teachers and other community members to design the garden, organise the opening ceremony and champion the delivery of the project at the school. Julian’s exceptional work is a feature of the garden. Six carved figures of local animals sit alongside their corresponding Dhurga name on impressive ironbark blocks. The animals Yaranbul (Platypus)



Some of the St Bede’s children’s artwork. Photo by Felicity Sturgiss.

Bilima (Turtle) Djinug (Echidna), Buru (Kangaroo) Gugunyal (Kookaburra), Gari (Snake), and Budjaan (Bird) where chosen by the children. “I hope that the St Bede’s Primary School program will act as a pilot for the delivery of a similar program to the other schools in the area,” said Felicity.

This program has been delivered through funding from the Southern Rivers CMA-Ag, the Upper Shoalhaven Landcare Council’s (USLC) Biodiversity Program, and with much expertise and energy from the staff and students of St Bede’s Primary School, Braidwood.

B4CC at Youth Fair in Ryrie Park

The irrepressible youth advocate Jo Parsons was at it again in April with a youth-run youth event in Ryrie Park. It was an upbeat vibe for the day - but hopefully in the future there will be more representatives from the adult world, sharing ideas and insights into their working world and listening to what the students think about things. Like how eels can drain all the blood from your body if they get a good hold on you, or how the Reidsdale drop bear colony was responsible for a a spate of unexplained livestock deaths and an unreported wwoofer disappearance last year...

Well we were there with a Biodiversity program stall with as many fine books and other bits and pieces as possible on display. Scats and funnelwebs were the winning displays.



The display at St Bedes. Photo by Felicity Sturgiss

Upcoming Events

Revegetation & Fencing Options Field Days:

Bungonia: Friday June 20th

Windellama: Saturday June 21st

Reidsdale: Thursday June 12th

Araluen: Friday June 13th

Get ready for the spring planting season with the full range of the most local and detailed advice you will get anywhere from the revegetation specialist Richard Stone.

Email Richard: Richard_Stone@clearmail.com.au or felicity.sturgiss@lls.nsw.gov.au for more details

Habitat Restoration Field Day

Jacqua/Bungonia/Windellama - date TBA

Inspired by local legends like Carina Clarke, we will detail some simple techniques for putting back the habitat and dealing with invasive species using long-term planning and local species awareness to inform your decisions. If you are interested in being part of this event please contact me (Felicity) on 02) 48422594.



Squirrel gliders in a nest box. Photo Hollow Log Homes

New and emerging weed...

STINKING ROGER: *Tagetes minuta*

Noticed by Di Bott s a new Mongarlowe roadside weed on the Little River Road and brought in for identification - it was determined that the towering annual was a Stinking Roger - common in

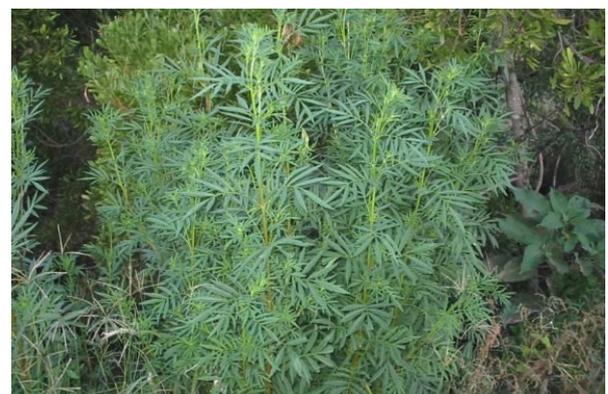


Stinking Roger weed information display at Youth Fair. Photo Felicity Sturgiss.

Queensland and sparsely seen in our climate. It is an Asteraceae native to South America and with wind borne seeds and a reported ability to 'rapidly colonise' making it troublesome in disturbed

areas.

Stinking Roger has been noted in the Araluen Valley since at least 2006, but since there are so few above the Valley it would be prudent to pull these out and burn them or compost for many months in a sealed plastic bag to slow or halt their welcome to the higher country. Fruiting is in summer-autumn.



Stinking Roger infestation . Photo from Queensland Government Weed Information Fact Sheet.

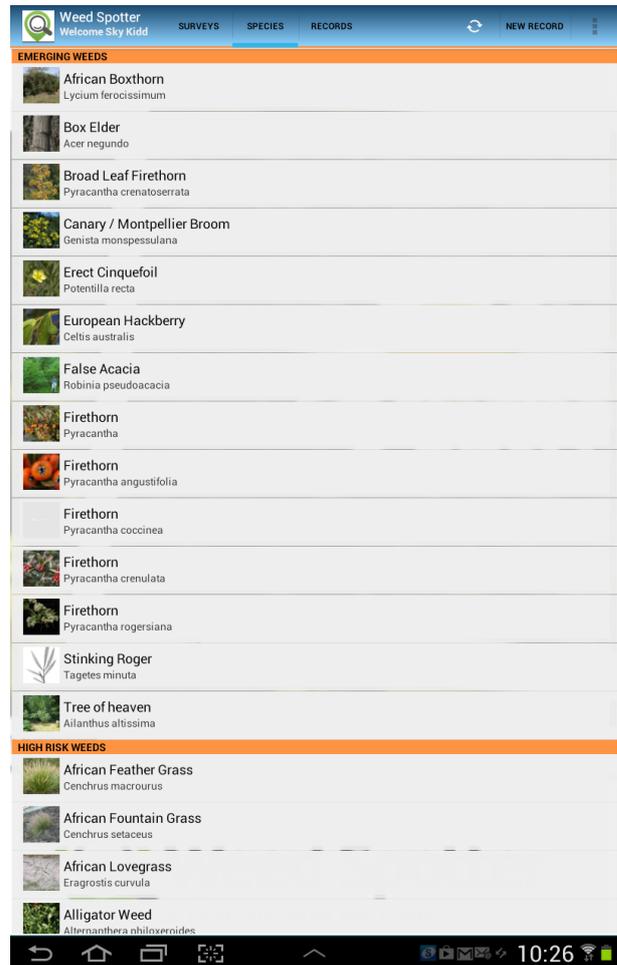
ACT and Southern Tablelands Weed Spotter Website

The Atlas of Living Australia (ALA) ACT and Southern Tablelands Weed spotter web portal and mobile phone weed mapping application (weed mapping app) is designed to map and record weed infestations.

It has been developed by the ALA with the ACT Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate, ACT Parks and Conservation Service, the Southern Tablelands Regional Weeds Group and Palerang Council as major partners. There has also been significant contribution from Catchment groups and Landcare groups across the region including the USLC.

The web portal and associated weed mapping application (App) allows individuals, industry, government and community groups to:

- Identify your plant by using the Weed Identification Tool (has over 200 weeds and 200 native lookalikes from the region and over 40 botanical features of each to assist in accurate identification).
- Electronically map weed infestations in the field, including:
 - What the weed species was,
 - Where it was seen,
 - When it was seen,
 - How many plants were seen, and
 - How dense the infestation was.
- Record weed control activities, including:
 - What type of control,
 - When it was controlled,
 - Which species were targeted, and
 - How effective the control effort was.
- Store that information on the Weed spotter web portal,
- View, manage, review and analyse this information



A screenshot from the Android Weed spotter App – Map and report a Single Weed sighting

and generate maps and reports on this information to help in future weed management planning.

The information will also alert Council Weeds Officers and other stakeholders of new and emerging weeds, to track changes of weed occurrence over time and track weed control effort.

WHAT IS ON THE WEBSITE AND APP?

Weed species of interest

This section includes:

- Weed species of interest to the 10 local government areas and the ACT government. These are lists of weeds that NSW local government areas (LGAs) and the ACT government have identified as weeds that could become

a problem, are starting to become a problem or are already widespread in our region (the weeds of interest vary across the different LGAs and in the ACT). The ACT and NSW LGAs are particularly interested in new and emerging weeds that are at risk of becoming invasive and becoming the next problem weed.

- Species profiles - detailed information and photos to assist users to identify listed weed species in the field using the App, or otherwise on the website.

Identification Tool - a Weed Identification Tool that assists all users to identify those hard to pick weeds (this includes look-alikes that are not weeds, including native look-alike plants) in the field (using the App) or on the website.

Mapping - How to contribute

There are three mapping tools on the website and available through the app. Each of these mapping tools allows users to photograph weeds of interest, weed infestations of interest or weed control effort and lodge them on the portal. This will assist in confirming weed identification and also tracking change over time.

- A general weed mapping tool - which allows users to digitally record in the field or through the portal, a single weed species at a single site.
- A more advanced weed mapping tool - which allows users to digitally record (field based and directly into the website portal) a weed infestation - including multiples species, the infestation area and the infestation density at one site.
- A tool for recording weed treatment/management information at a particular site.

To use the mapping tools - register for the site.

Weed sightings to date

This area of the website allows users to look at what they have mapped, what else has been mapped in the region - by location, species, date and type of record (single species, multi-species of weed control effort); analyse this data, develop a report and maps and print these documents. This also provides a link to the broader Atlas of Living Australia website and all the biodiversity data that can be accessed

through the ALA website.

HOW DO I GET HOLD OF THE MOBILE PHONE APP?

The Atlas of Living Australia (ALA) ACT and Southern Tablelands Weed spotter mobile phone applications are available (free) in iPhone and Android Smart phones from the [Apple iTunes Store](#) or from [Google Play](#).

Feedback about the App and website are welcome. Please send comments to Sky Kidd using the contact details below.

More information

- Go to the Weed Spotter Portal and register at <http://root.ala.org.au/bdrs-core/act-esdd/home.htm#>
- You can access the portal online through the website and/or download the App on your phone
- For more information contact Sky Kidd on 02 6238 8111 or email Sky.Kidd@palerang.nsw.gov.au

The screenshot shows the 'Map and report a single weed sighting' form in the Android app. The form is titled 'Record an observation of a weed species listed on this site.' and contains the following fields:

- Species ***: Stinking Roger (Tagetes minuta)
- How many were there?**: 8
- Local Government Area ***: Palerang
- Point ***: No location supplied (with 'Start GPS' and 'Map' buttons)
- Date ***: May 2, 2014
- Add a photo of the weed**: No photo selected (with a camera icon)
- Are you a member of one of these groups?**: Other (specify in notes below)
- Notes**: Mongarlowe Landcare
- Contributor**: (empty field)

The bottom of the screen shows an Android keyboard with the text 'andcare' entered in the notes field. The status bar at the bottom indicates the time is 10:30.

A screenshot from the Android Weed spotter App – List of species

Landcare – past, present and future A perspective from the South East Regional Landcare facilitator.

By Peter Pigott

Landcare is in reasonably good shape at 25, starting to show some maturity but still with plenty of growing to do. As an ethic, a movement, a support structure and a brand, Landcare is resilience in action - when faced with shocks and threats, Landcare always seems to bounce back, holding on to its key functions and values: local community action, caring for the land and its people through stewardship and volunteer effort. At the time of writing, Landcare in NSW is getting to know a new key partner in the landscape: Local Land Services have replaced the Catchment Management Authorities as regional natural resource management organisations across the state and, as such, the holders of much of the government Landcare support resources.

Landcare can be defined as the grassroots movement that encompasses individuals and groups embracing the ethic of caring for their local environment, including all 'Care' groups, 'Friends of' and 'farmers' production groups.

Landcare has been, and will continue to be, many different things to different people. Farming systems groups, local food and fibre production, landscape scale conservation and connectivity, coastal rehabilitation, river health, soil health, weeds, community networks, local government education, training, art, health and wellbeing all contribute to Landcare's diverse portfolio. It is this diversity and the common thread of social connection that brings

great strength to Landcare and a demonstration that Landcare is governed by people, their interest, passion, connection and actions on the ground.

Past

The Landcare ethic has been around for much longer than the name and caring hands brand we associate with it today. The movement and focus of Landcare as we know it took hold in the 1990s:

"In 1989, with increasing interest in environmental issues, the Australian government released national conservation and soil conservation strategies and provided extra funding for tree growing, soil conservation and salinity control. However another fruitful alliance had developed – between Rick Farley of the National Farmers Federation (NFF) and Philip Toyne of the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF). Farley and Toyne recognised traditional conflicts between conservationists and farmers hindered the resolution of environmental issues. Drawing on their diverse experience, and encouraged by several Canberra politicians – Peter Cook, John Kerin, Bruce Lloyd, Graham Richardson and Prime Minister, Bob Hawke – they secured bipartisan support and Australian Government action." Youl, R et al. 2006

There are several good accounts of the last 25 years of Landcare: "A Brief History of Landcare Support in NSW" (NSW Landcare Gateway/Projects) and "Landcare in Australia - founded on local action" (Youl, R et al. 2006) are two examples. Both accounts tell a story of expansion over the 25 years of Landcare and one of changing circumstances and broadened focus beyond trees, salinity and soil conservation. Youl et al. wrote their account in 2006, two years after the Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs) formed and were given the role of



Celebrating 25 years of Landcare are (L-R,) Mandi Stevenson (SEL SouthEast Landcare), Ben Gleeson (USLC), Don Henry (Australian Conservation Foundation CEO), David Walker (National Landcare Network Chair), Matt Linnegar (National Farmer's Federation CEO), Martin Royds (USLC).

coordinating investment in natural resources at a regional level. Youl et al. identified coordinating government investment, partnerships, support staff and regional allocation (all roles of the CMA) as key elements of the Landcare story going forward. Nine years later, with a variety of CMA-Landcare partnership experiences around NSW; government support, regional and local coordination and the balance of autonomy and effective support are still high on the agenda for Landcare. The challenge now is to learn from those experiences as a new partnership is established with Local Land Services.

Present

I have been involved in Landcare in southeast NSW for the last seven years and have had the great privilege of working with Landcare organisations and volunteers on the coast and tablelands. Based with the Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority and now South East Local Land Services, I have become a strong supporter of the enabled community group model where groups of volunteers and farmers can get on with the actions that are meaningful to their group and landscape. An enabled community is defined as one that is aware, engaged, active, skilled and resourced. Volunteers and land managers will put their energy into what they are passionate about. Build into this support opportunities to develop trust and accountability, a common vision, a degree of innovation and flexibility and the bounty that is Landcare in action should follow. It is through these enabled groups that Landcare fosters the care ethic, supports innovation and contributes to the social fabric of communities.

A snapshot of Landcare in the South East

Landcare in the South East is made up of over 300 groups in 13 local network areas of the south coast and tablelands. Groups vary significantly in size, focus, approach and level of activity. Landcare in the region is split into three regional networks: Murrumbidgee Landcare, LachLandcare, South East Landcare. In addition to these, there are groups and local networks in the Goulburn and Southern Highlands area. A significant component of support for these regional network areas came from the CMAs they shared a region with. Landcare has also worked with a range of government, non-government, private sector, research, individuals and other community groups to harness the resources required to reach their objectives. Local government support in some Council

areas is significant with Bushcare programs and other activities, generally funded through a Council environmental levy.

Landcare has great relevance with our local Aboriginal communities and the strong cultural connection to the land and the concept of caring for country. Many groups and networks have developed cultural connections with the land and worked with community to address land management, employment and community wellbeing issues.

Last year, South East Landcare and the Southern Rivers CMA carried out a Landcare and LLS transition activity, holding workshops in six Landcare districts in the Southern Rivers region. These workshops identified a number of values and opportunities to take forward including:

“The message from the Landcarers participating in the workshops is for Landcare networks to be proactive in developing a relationship with South East LLS; making the most of the opportunity of change; knowing what their needs are and being able to articulate this to LLS; mapping skills and expertise they have and being able to present this to any new partners; inviting LLS staff, politicians, Australian government staff, auditors etc. to events and ensuring other organisations are aware of what Landcare is doing.”

Many of these were reinforced at a roundtable discussion held in November 2013 for Landcare in the new South East LLS region. Landcare representatives at the roundtable voiced that:

“Landcare values its autonomy and independence. Groups and networks appreciate government support with grant management and group administration, providing coordination, direction, guidelines and technical expertise - providing this is done without taking over. Landcare groups place enormous value on their local support staff, often regarded as fundamental to the existence and present strength of Landcare in the area.”

Networks at the local and regional level were seen as a *“great vehicle to share knowledge, resources and connections, and provide appropriate scale for projects, planning and advocacy.”*

Roundtable participants agreed to work on communication, being proactive and establishing a functioning relationship with LLS.

Landcare, Past, Present and Future, continued from p 15

Regional networks are currently engaged in a discussion about how Landcare can effectively communicate and collaborate as Landcare groups and networks in the region and with partners. Landcare and LLS in the South East are at the forefront of LLS-Landcare partnership development activities around the state.

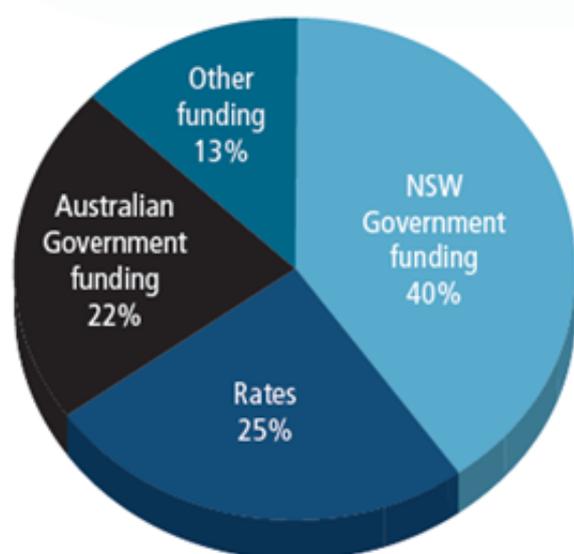
How will LLS work?

Local Land Services (LLS) has been formed from the amalgamation of the Livestock Health and Pest Authorities, Catchment Management Authorities and extension services of Department of Primary Industries. LLS consists of eleven LLS regions, managed by 11 local boards across NSW: Central Tablelands, Central West, Greater Sydney, Hunter, Murray, North Coast, Northern Tablelands, North West, Riverina, South East and Western regions.

Each region is accountable for delivering services that add value to local industries, enhance natural resources, protect industries from pests and disease and help communities prepare and respond to emergencies like flood, fire and drought. LLS will be funded through the NSW State government (40%), ratepayers (25%), the Australian government (22%) with the remainder made up from other sources (13%).

Landcare is considered a major partner of LLS. LLS will look to engage with and support community groups, supporting capacity building where required. It will seek to set high

Graph: Funding structure of LLS



Note: percentages are indicative only based on information known at the time of printing and are subject to change

standards for governance, accountability and transparency and will expect similar high standards from partners. LLS will have a strong customer focus - Landcare, in its various forms and roles, will be at times a partner, a customer and a supplier of services. LLS will seek to engage local communities and groups in their local area. Regional networks will still have a part to play but LLS will look to be local through its local areas and local teams. LLS is keen to listen and continue the dialogue with Landcare about partnerships and the delivery of a range of services to landholders and the community.

Future

I am confident about the next 25 years of Landcare for a number of reasons. The first is that at its basis, Landcare is a community movement that will continue to function regardless of the government and other investment in activities; that volunteers and farmers will continue to gather and care for their land and each other, and continue to innovate and be valued by the community.

The second reason is that a great deal of work has been carried out at a national and state level to put in place frameworks that articulate the value of Landcare to those making decisions about investment. These include:

- The Australian Framework for Landcare and Community Call For Action were developed by Landcarers to articulate a national vision for Landcare, stakeholders and partners and a framework for action - with a future based on strong partnerships.
- The National NRM regions localism position paper aims to provide a framework for regional NRM organisation to give effect to localism.
- The Statement of Common Purpose has been drawn up by representatives of Landcare communities and regional NRM organisations (CMAs and now LLS) and articulates the strengths that each of these two groups bring to a partnership that is working towards: *“fostering communities that are aware, engaged and active in ensuring Australian landscapes are healthier, better protected, better managed, more resilient and provide essential ecosystem services in a changing world”*.
- The existence and parts played by the National Landcare Network and NSW Landcare Inc - there is

grass-roots Landcare representation at state and national level, building relationships with government and other partners.

- A series of tools, training and resources developed by Landcare NSW Inc with support from the NSW DPI Landcare Support Program are available to support groups with a range of their day-to-day and partnership needs, including the NSW Landcare Gateway.
- Landcare musters, held biannually are indicating greater unity and positive outlook from Landcare towards the challenges of the future.
- The desire for, and effective pursuit of, a functioning partnership between Landcare and LLS. A working group established at a Landcare roundtable for networks, groups and support staff in the South East LLS region was assigned the role of exploring regional models for communication and collaboration. In early May 2014, South East LLS met with members of the Landcare working group in the region to start the conversation about a partnership and what its foundations might look like. A “partnership framework” document will be circulated soon, presenting the outcomes of this meeting and a template for Landcare and LLS to agree on as a way to be in partnership.

What does all this mean?

Landcare, at 25, is standing proud as a young adult; happy to take risks but also looking out for family, community and the land. For many, Landcare continues to be confined to the action on the ground and in the local group: the working bee and social activities on the weekend, or the project with your neighbour to look after the gully, fix up some erosion, and try and improve a bit of marginal country. It might be about learning a new skill or meeting

like-minded people, developing farming systems that will be more sustainable and profitable or experimenting with entirely new concepts of land management and community action. You might say that this is where the heart of Landcare lies.



I think that the few who choose to represent Landcare at the group, district, regional, state and national level are doing a great service to Landcare, encouraging ongoing investment in the support structures that underpin the networks and groups on the ground. They are telling stories, sharing experiences and making connections. They are showing leadership. Landcare is a movement that provides a pathway for those looking to contribute skills to help lead, communicate, represent and motivate at different scales. Perhaps they represent the mind of Landcare.

If the heart and mind of Landcare are communicating well, then Landcare will stay healthy into the future. I look forward to supporting Landcare networks and groups in the South East region in the role of Regional Landcare Facilitator.

The Regional Landcare Facilitator project is funded by the Australian government through South East Local Land Services



Braidwood Landcarers learning together. Photo by Kristy Moyle

Extreme weather events and communities workshop, focusing on fire

By Su Wild-River

Local Land Services is off to a sizzling start in its development of an Natural Resource Climate Change Adaptation Study. On 1 May Kristy Moyle ran the first of a series of workshops to build Natural Resource Management (NRM) capacity into climate change resilience.

Kristy ran the workshop with colleagues Brent Jacobs and Louise Boronyak both from the University of Technology Sydney Institute for Sustainable Futures together with Peat Leath from the University of Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture. The aim was to learn how the Palarang community copes with extreme weather events. Twelve community members attended from different volunteer and community agencies, giving personal perspectives on bushfires and natural resource management.

The research team is using the NSW Emergency Management Cycle as a framework to guide their analysis. The cycle was developed to protect people and property from extreme events and covers the four PPRR stages:

- Plan,
- Prepare,
- Respond,
- Recover.

The workshop focused on bushfire threats to NRM because the Palarang region has a high level of exposure to bushfire risks. This will likely increase due to climate change in the future. It is anticipated that a combination of wetter summers and autumns than could increase the fuel load before warmer, dryer springs and summers.

The lively discussion moved across each of the four PPRR stages. Participants were asked to examine the stages considering how much time is spent in each part of the cycle and how we know which stage we are in.

We talked about how the community learns about fire risk and what we do to respond. There was a sense of reduced neighbourly interactions due to more absentee landholders and new people moving in from big cities. The internet and radio were described as generally being sketchy and even more likely to

drop out during emergencies, making them poor substitutes for community networks.

Regardless of whether your family has been here for generations, or if you are new to the landscape, some

- Local radio station, 98.5FM, relays information from the ABC stations during emergencies.
- Mongarlowe Fire Brigade also has a phone tree which extends outside its geographic area.

knowledge is hard to get. Even the most motivated people struggle for good advice on setting up a comprehensive home and asset sprinkler system. And it is hard for anyone to maintain momentum when the bushfire smoke leaves the sky. This was discussed at the workshop: about 90 people attended Mongarlowe fire briefings as the Eastern Budawangs burned over 6000Ha last Spring. But only 20 or so regularly and actively participate during the rest of the year.

The workshop was a good reminder that now is the time for bushfire prevention. One option is to book in with the Rural Fire Service State Mitigation Crew who will come out and help with a Fire Preparedness Plan. You can book on-line, but there's a long waiting list - Mongarlowe for example, has only been able to have three Plans completed to date. The local Fire Mitigation Officer can also help but has a pretty long list of people applying for assistance. There's heaps of great information on-line, and there are no really good reasons for not having a [Bushfire Survival Plan](#). But how many of us do?

The table shows some ideas for enhancing natural resource resilience to fire.

Stage	Signs	Possible Actions
Prevent	Not bushfire season	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plant fire retardant species in wind breaks, not wind tunnels. • Install a sprinkler system for assets, and static water sources for fires. Remember to provide for plants and animals when planning water resources.
Prepare	Smoke in the sky	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put out water for native animals • Wet down key habitat areas where possible.
Respond	Flames approaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep water and refuges available for native animals if possible.
Recover	Fire is out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look out for injured wildlife and provide care if needed through WIRES. • Put out spot fires around key refuge areas. • Re-seed burned grasslands for erosion control with non-invasive species. • Identify and manage new, emergent weed species.

An update on the Carbon Farming Initiative

By Su Wild-River

The Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI) allows farmers and land managers to earn carbon credits by storing carbon or reducing greenhouse gas emissions on the land. The credits can then be sold to people or businesses wishing to offset their greenhouse gas emissions. Participation is voluntary.

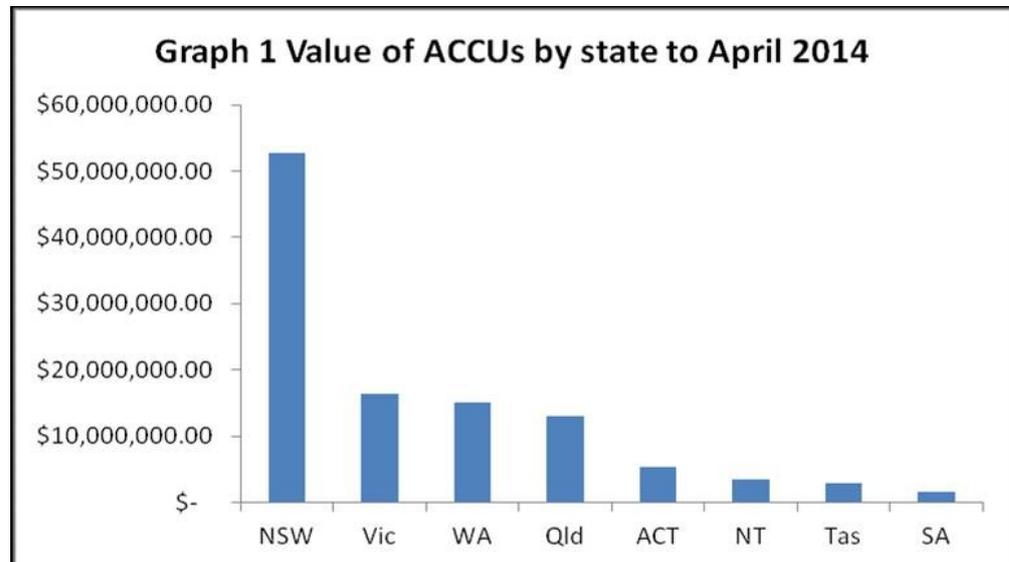
To be eligible, the emission reductions need to be permanent and additional to normal practices. Landholders also need to follow approved methodologies for their emission reductions. Some that could be relevant to the Upper Shoalhaven area include:

- [Native forest from managed regrowth](#),
- [Environmental plantings](#),
- [Human-induced regeneration of a permanent even-aged native forest](#),
- [Native forest protection \(avoided deforestation\)](#),
- [Reforestation and afforestation](#).

New methodologies are [now being developed](#) for:

- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions in beef cattle through feeding nitrate containing supplements;
- Measurement-based methodology for reforestation projects.

Despite uncertainties about the future of Australia's carbon emission reduction strategies, the CFI continues to receive bipartisan support and to achieve emission reductions. At the time of writing, nearly 5 million Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs) had been issued for [118 CFI Projects](#) including 48 in NSW. Each ACCU represents one less tonne of carbon dioxide contributing to the global greenhouse effect. Landholders can currently sell their ACCUs for \$23 per tonne, making the total landholder benefit over \$112m.



NSW has banked the greatest value in ACCUs with over \$52m worth of credits (see Graph 1). Over \$90m of all ACCUs have been earned by the waste sector, \$18m through sequestration (or forestry) and only about \$630,000, or 0.6% are from agriculture (see Graph 2).

The [Horse Ridges Native Forest Protection Project](#) is an example of the sort of forestry project that might work in the Upper Shoalhaven. This Native Forest Protection Project near Nyngan in Western NSW involves carbon sequestration through the sustainable management of forestry and agricultural projects. Participating farmers can continue grazing, but get extra income by managing the farm so as to also protect and optimise carbon stocks in native eucalypt and cypress forests. The project has so far [generated \\$1.66m in ACCUs](#).

In the past, money to pay for the ACCUs has come from the carbon tax. The Australian Environment Minister [Greg Hunt has explained](#) how the foreshadowed removal of the carbon tax, and its replacement with an Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF) may affect the CFI. First, the Coalition government aims to open up the system by allowing farmers to commit to sequestering carbon for just 25 years instead of the current 100 year commitment. A second goal is to streamline administration so that new projects can be approved more quickly and easily. More methodologies for soil carbon sequestration are also in train.

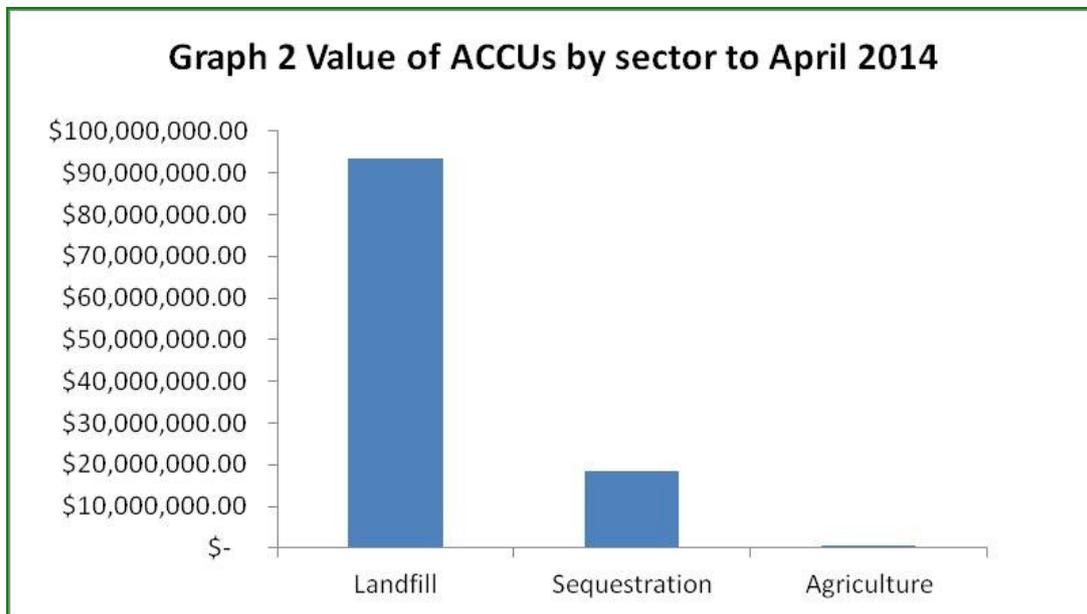
Continued on p.20

Carbon Farming Initiative update, continued from p 19

The down side for CFI projects is that the proposed changes will drastically reduce demand for ACCUs because only Australia's 130 biggest-emitters will be required to buy offsets. And the emission reduction target is being reduced to [5% on 2000 levels by 2020](#). This makes the total emission reduction requirement lower than under the previous scheme. The likely outcome is a buyers' market, where only the lowest-cost ACCUs will be bought in carbon auctions. In such a market, agricultural and sequestration projects will likely struggle to compete against cheaper landfill projects.

The government also intends to open up the Australian carbon market to the international Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) in 2015. The carbon credits being generated in Australia are dwarfed by the CDM which has issued [over 1,451m](#) carbon credits to date. Its market is so oversupplied that credits equivalent to ACCUs have been selling for [under \\$1 per tonne](#).

We are keen to hear of any CFI projects, so call or email if you want to discuss ideas. Upper.shoalhaven@gmail.com, 48422594.



Graph data source: <http://www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au/Carbon-Farming-Initiative/Register-of-Offsets-Projects/Pages/default.aspx>

Climate Adaptation Champions of 2014

A nationwide search is on to share the stories of Australian people, businesses and organisations who are champions of practical and innovative ways to adapt to climate change.

See: <http://www.nccarf.edu.au/engagement/nccarf-climate-adaptation-champions>

Nominations close on 30 June 2014.



Great Eastern Ranges Initiative (GER) grants are available for connectivity conservation projects in priority focus areas in the NSW section of the GER corridor, which improve connectivity, condition and resilience of landscapes and ecosystems and halt further decline and loss of species.

See: <http://www.greasterranges.org.au/how-we-deliver/ger-grants-program/landcare-grants-program>

Applications close 2pm, Monday 16 June.

The theme for the 19th Australasian Weeds conference is 'Science, Community and Food Security: the Weed Challenge'. This reflects the changing state and developing challenges management and will highlight with new developments internationally and nationally.

See: <http://australasianweeds2014.com.au/> 1-4 September in Hobart.

19th Australasian Weeds Conference

Science, Community and Food Security: the Weed Challenge
Hotel Grand Chancellor, Hobart - 1-4 Sept 2014



Pushing the think button Ecological insights into agriculture

By Ben Gleeson, B.Sci. (Hons), B.LandMgt. (EcoAg), Dip.Vit.

No. 2: On the social and economic ecology of agriculture: or, the difference between a local 'food-industry' and a 'local-food' industry.

Y'know, every rural area where farmers continue to try to make a living by raising food to feed other (less blessed) members of society has a local food-industry, and every part of the world where people buy food to eat has a local food-industry too. Accordingly, they're pretty much everywhere.

Lately however, there's been talk in various quarters regarding a thing more appropriately called a 'local-food' industry, with the hyphen between the 'local' and the 'food'.

What is this beast? And what's the good of it? What's the difference between a 'local-food' industry and the conventional food-industry that exists in our local area?

One answer would be that the local 'food-industry' is an industry in some ways like any other. It is a long-established industry and the part of it that occurs in our local area is the *local* part of it. In

contrast, the 'local-food' industry is somewhat different because it's specifically the *food* that is the local part. With a 'local-food' industry the local emphasis isn't on part of an *industry*; it's on the food.

The existing Upper-Shoalhaven food-industry already contains a growing 'local-food' industry but on the whole the food-industry most of us buy from, and/or sell to, is not a particularly locally focussed sector of our economy. Most of our region's farm produce is sold and transported to end up on the tables of consumers living hundreds and sometimes thousands of kilometres away. This is the model for the bulk of the conventional food industry; mass monocultural-production of tradeable commodities which are transported great distances to unknown consumers somewhere out-of-sight and out-of-mind. Similarly, because as consumers we generally utilise the same model of mass-production and distribution for our sustenance, the vast majority of the food

that we consume here in the Upper-Shoalhaven comes from farmers working and producing at a significant distance from our local area.

So what? You may ask. If you're a local consumer, does it matter where your food comes from? And, if you're a local producer, does it matter who's buying, or where your produce ends up?

It has been documented in the USA, under USDA-supported 'farm to school' programs, that significant economic benefits flow to local communities where schools purchase school lunch ingredients from local producers.*† Locally focussed purchasing decisions boost local and

regional farm incomes and create local jobs within the farm sector and throughout the rest of the local economy. Locally produced school lunches also contain fresher and more nutritious ingredients and so provide a healthier diet for students.

I'm not suggesting that our local schools should, or could, do the same; I'm raising this example because I want to point out the well-researched and established benefits that flow

from locally based consumption of local production. It's a fact; increased local consumption of locally produced food improves local economies and promotes healthier diets among local people.

In Australia, after the release of the Federal Government's 2012 white paper on agriculture which claimed Australia was to become 'the food bowl of Asia', one Shepparton fruit grower, dismayed at the volumes of imported tinned fruit on local supermarket shelves, suggested ministers ought to re-think their priorities, saying "we can't even manage to be the food bowl of Shepparton!" **

When local farmers compete on open markets with other distant producers the lower prices that result are supposed to be good for 'the economy' and for Australian consumers in general. But, in



*Some of the bounty from the first Braidwood Farmers' Market.
Photo by Alex Rea, Braidwood Times.*

Continued on p.22

Pushing the think button continued from p.21



fact, this benefit is not evenly distributed throughout our society. Low prices are a great benefit for urban consumers in large population centres where economies are significantly removed from the rural sector. But the same low prices are of less benefit to

consumers in rural areas where lower returns from farming means depressed rural economies with fewer services; it means dying towns and dwindling rural communities. Make sure you're clear on this fact, and think about it every time you see those delighted morons chanting "down, down, prices are down!"

This is not to suggest that local-food is more expensive; in fact the opposite is often true because there is no chain of 'middle-men' between the producer and consumer, and because transport and distribution costs are generally lower.

There are social and personal benefits associated with the 'local-food' industry too. Observe for yourself the social interaction that occurs between local consumers and producers around street stalls and farmers' markets. Studies on depression and suicide among rural populations have suggested that a strong sense of community-belonging, social support and participation can provide a cure, and help prevent tragedy within rural populations. Furthermore, producers participating in the 'local-food' industry can take personal pride in knowing they are feeding their local community, actually nourishing friends and neighbours and literally growing local children, the future of our towns and countryside.

The broader environmental benefits of local-food consumption have also long been recognised and are the basis of desire for low 'food miles' among some consumers. Although low food miles alone are not enough to guarantee sustainability (for instance, growing tomatoes locally under lights in heated greenhouses in winter may require more CO² emissions than importing field grown ones from warmer climes) there is no denying that food mileage must be part of the broader ecological picture when it

comes to sustainable human food production and consumption. Overall, the produce offered within the 'local-food' industry will tend to vary with the seasons, and locally based diets will reflect this seasonality. However, if you're a devoted connoisseur of easily-transported crunchy white tomatoes and you always look forward to the winter season to enjoy some, then go for it!

Our 'local-food' industry will only ever be a component of the broader local 'food-industry'. It's not as if the two industries are in competition, it's just that one is better for your local farmers, your local community, and you. Think about it.

Bon appétit!

* <http://www.farmtoschool.org/>

† <http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/farm-school>

** <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/bushtelegraph/shepparton-broadcast/4905602>

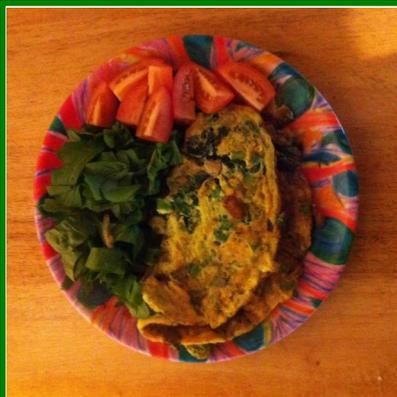


*Local grower Conrad Kindrachuck with a locally grown beetroot.
Photo by Alex Rea, Braidwood Times.*

Secrets of Upper Shoalhaven Autumn Locovores

Or, nourishment knowledge that skipped a generation

Locovore: someone who primarily eats food from their local area. Typically this is defined as 100-200 miles, but here are some of our best, simplest meals where food was sourced less than 200 metres from the front door.



Power breakfast *From Su Wild-River* **Omelette**

3 eggs plus any cooking vegetables. This one has beans, capsicum, spring onion, squash and oregano.

Side salad

The side salad here is tomato and rocket.



Easiest and best pumpkin soup

From Kathleen McCann

Roast one pumpkin, skin on and unpierced in a slow oven.

After one hour, add to the tray whole tomatoes, a whole unpeeled garlic, and perhaps a pepper or two. Cook for another hour. When it smells fabulous, peel and seed the pumpkin, squeeze the garlic out of its husk and blend it all together.



Slow roast rump steak

From Lea Barrett
Salt and pepper the steaks both sides, place in roasting pan. Combine punnet of grape or cherry tomatoes



(mine were Diggers heritage tommy toes) with 8-10 stalks of fresh thyme, bulb of garlic separated into cloves, skin on, and three good Tbsp of extra virgin olive oil. Spoon over steaks. Cook at 180C for 30-45 minutes depending on quality of meat. Rest for 10 min before slicing and serving. Meat will continue to cook as it rests so don't overcook as it is best on the rare side. Enjoy!

Winter fresh tomatoes and anything else too

From Su Wild-River

Food plants that need to be brought in from the frost, but are still unripe are your fresh winter bounty. Simply wrap individual tomatoes and other fruit in newspaper and put in a cardboard box in a cool place with a stable-temperature. They will ripen slowly through the winter.



Photo by Myrtle Wild



South East Local Land Services is hosting a Beef information day on the following topics:

- Cattle behaviour and handling, including yard design,
- Live animal assessment,
- Marketing beef,
- Bull selection,
- Crossbreeding systems.



The guest speaker will be former Beef Cattle Officer with the NSW Department of Primary Industries, Brian Cumming. Brian has over 30 years experience in the industry.

When: Thursday 22 May 2014

Time: 9am-4pm.

Cost: Free.

Contact: 4828 6760, matthew.lieschke@nsw.gov.au

Sender:
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