

Lanchat

Landcare in the Southern New England, No. 116, April 2019 - September 2019



Southern
New England
Landcare

Our mission is to **lead, connect** and **enable** our communities to reach their sustainability goals in a changing environment.

Welcome

Welcome to Lanchat 116 - another double-sized issue for your enjoyment.

Despite the drought, we report on some fabulous events including the Malpas Catchment Group's field day at Urandangie in July, followed by Dr Judi Earl's Managing Holistically Out of the Drought workshop in September.

We have a range of feral animal initiatives in play, and updates on key Environmental Trust projects focussed on habitat restoration.

There are upcoming events on Koalas and Regent Honeyeaters, and a community BBQ and rain dance at Kentucky. And remember, our AGM on 27 November will be a great wrap-up to a big year.

For regular updates on coming events, sign up for our FREE eNews at www.snelandcare.org.au.

Diary Dates

Frog Dreaming Conference for Kids.....	17-18 Oct
Regent Honeyeaters & their Habitat field day ...	22 Oct
Kentucky Community BBQ & Rainedance	2 Nov
Focus on Ferals Forum	14 Nov
Board Meeting	20 Nov
AGM & Christmas Gathering	27 Nov

Urandangie Featured at Field Day

More than 50 people, including Armidale Regional Council Mayor Simon Murray, attended a field day hosted by the Malpas Catchment Group at Bill and Jacqui Perrottet's 'Urandangie' near Guyra on 31st July 2019.

Bill talked about the why and how of fencing off riparian areas on Urandangie.

"The benefits include efficient stock mustering, minimising stock deaths from bogged animals and substantially reducing livestock health issues through improved water-quality and reduced rates of liver fluke infection," said Bill.

He also talked about the reduced maintenance of fences and flood-gates along creek lines damaged by floods.

Bill explained how his approach is enabling him to hold clean water for longer in creeks through the construction of leaky weirs in areas away from major creek lines.

Continued on page 2

Below—part of the field day crowd along Urandangie Creek.



He finished by sharing details about his approach to whole farm-planning including fencing, water infrastructure and livestock movements and how he optimises production in the good times while also working towards improving environmental outcomes on the farm.

Bill also uses precision fertiliser technology on Urandangie. Milton Curkpatrick from Precision Pastures explained some of the theory and details behind this approach.

The crowd also learnt about Bill's special breed of goats - the 'Urandangie Brown', which is well-adapted to New England winters and does a great job at weed control.

There were some great discussions in the paddock - the fun bit - with visits to two sites along Urandangie Creek.

A delicious lunch was enjoyed by all at the conclusion of the event, thanks to Jacqui Perrottet.

All in all, it was a great day showcasing an innovatively managed property.

Southern New England Landcare are grateful to Bill and Jacqui Perrottet and the rest of the Malpas Catchment group for the work they put in for the day.

It's certainly impressive to see what has been done at Urandangie.

Along with the rest of the New England, Urandangie is feeling the effects of drought, but nevertheless it's a great example of what can be done to protect important environmental assets while also benefiting productivity through improved health and management of livestock.

The Malpas Catchment Coordinator is supported with funding from Armidale Regional Council.



Below—rugged-up participants enjoy the speakers at the Urandangie woolshed.



Regenerative Agriculture Podcast

A new podcast, produced by the Regenerative Agriculture Alliance and Southern Cross University, is set to ignite a much-needed national conversation about resilient farming practices in the face of climate change and drought.

The 'Ground Cover' podcast launched recently with an episode from 'revolutionary farmer' and author of *Call of The Reed Warbler*, Dr Charles Massy.

Hosted by the veteran voice of agriculture, Kerry Cochrane, Ground Cover is a podcast for farmers by farmers. It is a uniquely Australian series exploring real-life stories of land managers who have undertaken the transition from conventional farming to regenerative agriculture.

Each week the Regenerative Agriculture Alliance will share a unique and honest conversation about the challenges and opportunities of regenerative agriculture so farmers can make informed decisions about how best to manage their land.

In this Australia-first podcast you will hear from nine leaders in this space. You will hear them speak about the technical changes in their landscape but you will also hear them speak about deeper unexpected changes – in their values, in their connection to land and their economic, environmental and social wellbeing.

Listen on your preferred device:

- Apple itunes: <https://podcasts.apple.com/au/podcast/ground-cover/id1479675823>
- Stitcher (android): <https://www.stitcher.com/s?fid=464736&refid=stpr>
- Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/show/5IFJx5g7A7FTVedsYIltgN>

Capacity Crowds to hear Dr Judi Earl's experience

What will the next rain bring you? What will you change in preparation for the next dry spell? What are you learning from this one?

These were the questions with which Dr Judi Earl quizzed participants at the outset of a two day workshop held in Uralla on 26-27 September.

'Managing Holistically Out of the Drought', attracted a capacity crowd, with a solid waiting list to boot.

It's been a long time since we've had the opportunity to work with Judi, and it was really great that she could share her experiences and knowledge with us.

Judi Earl completed her PhD on pasture ecology at the University of New England and established the AIMS consultancy in 1998.

She went on to train as a Holistic Management Educator in the United States in 2002.

Judi has run workshops for farmers and graziers all over NSW, Queensland and South Australia ever since.

"During the last eight years, I've been implementing Holistic Management on my own property in the Coolatai district in Northern NSW," Judi said.

"The drought has been very challenging, and my property, as all do, has its own set of unique issues. It's brought home to me the importance of planning," she said.

Day 3 of the workshop be held at Richard Daugherty's 'Balala Station' on 30 October.

Grass Growers' Dinner Party

"A very important aspect of supporting graziers during times like these are social occasions where they can talk and have some time out," said Karen Zirkler.

"For this reason, we used funds

donated by the Northern Yarra Landcare Network in Victoria, to host a social Grass Growers' Dinner Party during the course.

"While we could only cater for 20 graziers in the workshop, the dinner was open to additional guests," she said.

"We had 55 people attend the dinner and the feedback has been very positive," she said.

Rebecca Smith and Bill Perrottet, both volunteer board members with Southern New England Landcare, accompanied Dr Judi Earl in a Q&A panel session.

"Participants really enjoyed the getting away from the farm for a social evening with the added bonus of a casual learning experience," said Karen.

The workshop was fully subsidised for drought-declared farmers in the Walcha, Uralla, Armidale and Guyra districts, with funding from Landcare Australia Limited.

Below—Grass Growers grazed through the Q&A panel at a social night supported by Northern Yarra Landcare network, Victoria.



Managing Priority Environmental Pest Animals & Alert Species

Southern New England Landcare recently secured \$10,000 from Northern Tablelands Local Land Services to educate the community on best practice control methods of feral cat and Indian Myna in peri urban areas.

The project has been promoting the Feral Fighters program and feral recording technologies found at www.feralscan.org.au.

During the project Landcare Coordinators will:

- Purchase cat traps and make them available for loan from local government partners
- Promote responsible pet ownership to the Southern New England community in partnership with Armidale Regional, Uralla, and Walcha councils, local vets and RSPCA
- Subsidise the cost of cat desexing during October
- Host a keynote speaker on feral cats in peri urban areas at our Feral Focus Forum in Uralla on 14 November
- Promote www.feralscan.org.au/feralcatscan/ and www.feralscan.org.au/mynascan/ for smart phones and encourage residents to participate
- Reprint and promote the current Indian Myna resource booklet in conjunction with other Landcare networks.
- Purchase indian myna traps and make them available for loan from key outlets.
- Increase awareness of Indian Myna at the Feral Focus Forum on 14 November.
- Increase awareness of alert species such as cane toad, tilapia, and sambar deer.

Indian Mynas targetted in control program

Have you noticed Indian Mynas encroaching on your patch?

Indian mynas have been spotted across the Southern New England, having increased their territory significantly in recent years.

Southern New England Landcare has 10 Indian Myna traps available for hire.

Sara Schmude, Landcare Coordinator working on the project said, "We currently have volunteers in Armidale, Guyra, and at Brockley, Yarrowich and Castledoyle districts who have sighted Indian Mynas and are now hosting a trap to capture the birds."

"We are looking for more volunteers to assist with the program as these birds are a genuine threat to native birds and small mammals," she said.

Indian Mynas compete successfully for habitat by flocking in numbers, eventually driving out native species.

They can also kill native birds and other fauna by removing eggs and young from nests and hollows.

"Our trapping program will allow people to become involved in controlling this pest species," said Sara.

"We have ten traps available for use in urban and rural areas across Southern New England," she said.

Volunteer trappers receive a hard copy of the Indian Myna Control Handbook which is also available in electronic format the Southern New England Landcare website.

The handbook helps volunteer trappers to

- Identify the Indian Myna
- Understand its behaviour and habits

- Use the traps
- Ensure humane handling of captured birds
- Monitor and report bird feeding and roost sites.

Members of the public can also assist by reporting sightings of the birds to Southern New England Landcare.

"Reporting sightings will enable mapping and monitoring of their distribution, thereby increasing the effectiveness of the control program," said Sara.

Anyone who would like to assist is welcome with all efforts greatly appreciated.

Visit www.feralscan.org.au/ for all smart phone apps you require.

For more information please call Southern New England Landcare on 6772 9123 or contact sara.schmude@snelandcare.org.au.

This project is funded with support from Northern Tablelands Local Land Services Feral Fighters Program and the National Landcare Program.

Below—John McKemey and Barry Higgins collect Indian Myna traps for use in the Brockley area, east of Guyra.



Cat desexing subsidy to help responsible pet owners



Cats Can't Add But They Can Multiply

**DISCOUNTED DESEXING
\$60 FOR MALE/FEMALE CATS**

Did you know that desexed cats...

- Live longer & are less likely to roam & get lost
- Are more affectionate & better companions
- Reduces amount of unwanted kittens being dumped

To book an appointment contact Armidale Creeklands Vet Surgery 6771 2899. Get in before October 31st to receive the discounted rate

Creeklands VET SURGERY

Southern New England Landcare has partnered with Creeklands Vet Clinic in Armidale to provide an opportunity for cat owners in areas of high urban biodiversity to receive a subsidised de-sexing rate for the month of October 2019.

Sara Schmude said, "Pest animals are a significant problem in the Southern New England region - as Landcare Coordinators, we receive frequent reports of wild and domestic dog attacks on livestock and are also aware, through our biodiversity surveys, of the impacts cats, both domesticated and feral, have on our native wildlife."

In an effort to reduce the ecological, economic and social impacts of pest species, Southern New England Landcare developed the *Where was your 'Best Friend Forever' today?* campaign.

"The idea is to raise public awareness about the risks and threats of their pets leaving home without them," said Sara.

"We want pet owners to know that if their dog or cat leaves home without them, they really are taking a big risk.

"They could be injured in a fight, which can cause lifelong problems and expensive vet bills," she said.

"We also want to raise awareness of the risks and threats of pest animals on our environment more broadly," said Sara.

"Unrestrained dogs on farmland are at risk of being impounded or even shot to protect livestock, and cats on farms risk being treated like a feral animal and trapped or worse, to protect wildlife like the endangered Regent Honeyeater - another species on which we are very focussed at the moment," she said.

The best way to protect your 'best friend forever' is to be a responsible pet owner and keep them indoors or restrained.

One of our readers recommends the Cat Bib, which is apparently 80% effective in preventing bird killing. They are available at the pet shop in Beardy Street Armidale.

For more information, contact sara.schmude@snelandcare.org.au or 6772 9123.

This project is funded with support from the Northern Tablelands Local Land Services Feral Fighters Program and the National Landcare Program.



WHERE WAS YOUR BFF today?

Did you know that if your dog or cat leaves home without you, your BFF is taking a BIG risk!

Injury from fighting risks lifelong problems and expensive vet bills.

Unrestrained dogs on farmland are at risk of being shot to protect livestock!

Cats on farms risk being treated like a feral, and trapped/shot to protect wildlife like the endangered Regent Honeyeater.

Responsible Pet Ownership - Look out for your best friend forever!

www.snelandcare.org.au/landcare-projects/current-landcare-projects.html

NSW Department of Primary Industries | Southern New England Landcare | Landcare

Closing the Gap nearly complete

Southern New England Landcare's 2016-2019 project "Closing the Gap: functional habitat for threatened New England fauna" will soon be complete.

The project, which sourced \$99,998 from the NSW Environmental Trust, has helped close a key gap in habitat connectivity, between the Dangarsleigh-Enmore area in the east and the Mt Butler-Saumarez Ponds area in the west.

Twelve landholders signed agreements to protect or restore remnant woodland and plant new habitat corridors or stepping stones, totalling about 50 ha.

More than 14,000 native tree and shrub seedlings and approximately 6 km of fencing will be installed. These on-ground works build on those of previous projects.

Bird surveys were a feature of the project. The group of birds present at a location is indicative of the ecological health of the site. The surveys have helped assess progress landholders are making - see article this page.

Three field events demonstrated effective approaches to habitat management; assisted community members to observe and monitor the bird life of different places in their locality; and helped land managers design and implement biodiverse and functional habitat restoration activities.

'Closing the Gap' has contributed to members' long-term commitment to restore, rehabilitate, re-connect and monitor the health of woodland and pasture areas across our region.

Bird survey reports now available

In 2017 ornithologist Dr Andrew Huggett conducted surveys of bird communities in native vegetation in the Armidale to Uralla district as part of our NSW Environmental Trust 'Closing the Gap' project. Here's what he found.

This work was undertaken to obtain data on bird occurrence, abundance, species richness and habitat use at 36 sites (29 planted, 7 woodland remnant) on 15 properties in the gap zone.

Dr Huggett recorded a total of 994 individual birds from 69 species during the spring 2017 survey.

The 6 woodland remnants supported 44 species, including the threatened (in NSW) Varied Sittella and birds of local conservation significance such as Eastern Yellow Robin, Dusky Woodswallow, Striated Thornbill, Buff-rumped Thornbill, White-throated Treecreeper and the migratory, hollow-nesting Dollarbird.

Older planted sites (16-25-year-old) were utilised by 22 bird species from 14 families. These included species that often occur in woodland remnants such as Brown Thornbill, Striated Thornbill, Rufous Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Crimson Rosella and Grey Fantail.

Intermediate aged plantings (6-15-year-old) supported 17 bird species, mostly those able to utilise food, shelter and nest sites available in developing shrubs and trees such as Superb Fairy-wren, Yellow Thornbill, Spotted Pardalote and the warm-season breeding migrant Scarlet Honeyeater.

Young revegetation (1 month-5-year-old) provided habitat for 34 species, typically more common, open country birds - Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Eastern Rosella and Australian Magpie.

27 of the 36 sites were surveyed during the first round of site monitoring in winter 2017.

A further 9 sites were added to the survey program for the spring 2017 round. Sites were also assessed for their habitat and landscape connectivity, habitat condition and revegetation and regeneration histories.

The Closing the Gap: Functional Habitat for Threatened New England Fauna Project, funded by the NSW Environmental Trust, took place between 2016 and 2019. Graziers involved in this project undertook on ground works consisting of tree and shrub planting, direct seeding and remnant protection to help close a 23 km gap in habitat connectivity for threatened and declining woodland birds and other fauna of the beautiful New England region - from Mount Butler and Invergowrie in the west to Gara Gorge and Dangars Falls in the east.

To obtain a copy visit <https://snelandcare.org.au/resources/publications/680-closing-the-gap-bird-survey-reports.html>.



Right—member Helen Webb enjoys her copies of the survey reports, which contain many beautiful bird images.

Great track record acknowledged

Southern New England Landcare experienced a proud moment recently when an email arrived from the NSW Environmental Trust, acknowledging the great track record we have with the Trust for developing and rolling out exceptional projects in the region. We thank the NSW Environmental Trust for this acknowledgement and have published it below:

The Trust acknowledges with pleasure the proud record of Southern New England Landcare (SNEL) in delivering environmental projects in the New England area. SNEL's first project funded by the Trust, "Improving degraded riparian areas and remediating eroded land" commenced in 2009, and since then SNEL and its groups have been awarded over \$450,000 for biodiversity projects in their patch. Typically SNEL projects exceed their targets, and build the capacity of the local community to take action to protect habitat for conservation. Their achievements include:

- Improving degraded riparian areas and remediating eroded land: (2009 - 2012) carried out riparian and soil control works with 7 land managers over 11 sites by fencing and planting more than 10 km of riparian zone.*
- Moths, magpies and marsupials - promoting on farm biodiversity (2013 - 2017) completed works over at 16 sites on 11 properties. The project connected fragmented native vegetation and created more than 17.2 hectares of habitat corridors, planting well over 14,000 seedlings.*
- Closing the gap: functional habitat for threatened New England fauna (2015, due for conclusion in November 2019) Volunteers have already completed well over 2000 hours of work, and carried out planting over 28 hectares at a time when the entire state is in drought. This project is working towards habitat connectivity for threatened woodland birds and other fauna south of Armidale to Uralla on the southern New England Tableland.*
- Centennial Avenue Rehabilitation of Dumaresq Creek (2016-2019), SNELandcare supported its sub group Armidale Urban Rivercare Group to deliver a project that planted over 18,050 natives with more than 500 volunteers donating 2320 in-kind hours to rehabilitating 2.4 hectares of urban riparian zones.*

The Trust is pleased that volunteers of SNEL are up for another challenge with a grant of almost \$100,000 recently awarded for their new project Re-connecting Thunderbolt Country for threatened New England woodland and wetland biodiversity.

The Trust looks forward to working with SNELandcare again and thanks volunteers for their hard work and dedication to the environment.

Karen Wakely
Grants Administrator.



AURG Milestone

Armidale Urban Rivercare Group (AURG) achieved an outstanding milestone in July with the completion of their Centennial Avenue Rehabilitation project, where more than 500 volunteers contributed 2320 hours to the eastern end of Dumaresq Creek in Armidale.

Bruce Whan, team leader with AURG said, "We received great support from our group members and the local school community over the course of the project."

A total of \$83,700 from the NSW Environmental Trust enabled the group to rehabilitate 2.7 ha along Dumaresq Creek in the eastern end of Armidale.

The grant paid for contractors to do the heavier work removing woody weeds, while volunteers participated in numerous working bees mulching, weeding, preparing for and planting 18,050 native seedlings.

The work done by volunteers is estimated to be valued at \$98,890 or more.

"We have many to thank but especially appreciate the support from Southern New England Landcare, Armidale Regional Council, Armidale Dumaresq Lions, Armidale Tree Group, Terry Rhodes, Ducats and Inglis Plumbing," said Bruce.

The majority of plantings have withstood the drought conditions due to heavy mulching however the more recent plantings are now receiving water from the council water treatment overflow.

Reconnecting Thunderbolt Country

Funds: \$99,995

Source: NSW Environmental Trust

Southern New England Landcare has been successful in its bid to the NSW Environmental Trust for a new project called "2019-2022 Reconnecting Thunderbolt Country for threatened New England woodland and wetland biodiversity".

The project will help restore habitat connectivity for threatened fauna and flora in Thunderbolt Country around Uralla, Kentucky and Salisbury Plains on southern New England Tablelands. A lack of viable habitat and poor condition of existing vegetation is jeopardising the survival and impeding movement of 19 key threatened fauna and 7 key threatened plant species.

Landholders who have already indicated an interest in participating, will plant 36 ha of new habitat with 12,000 native trees, shrubs and groundcovers. Remnant native woodland and wetland (18 ha) will be protected. Monitoring and education will improve landholder capacity to build knowledge and better manage threats.

The project begins in October 2019 and runs until May 2022.

As in previous years there was strong competition for funds, with a diverse range of projects proposed. The Trust received 83 applications to this program requesting funding of \$7,270,347, and following a rigorous assessment process, approved 44 grants with a total value of \$3,834,730.

Congratulations to all involved in putting this together!

Could dung beetles save the world?

Students from Armidale Waldorf School are on a mission to breed winter active dung beetles and find out just what is so special about these humble insects!

Dung beetles play a critical role in grazing ecosystems whereby increasing nutrient cycling, water infiltration and suppressing fly populations, they have the potential to significantly improve soil and animal health.

In the southern New England we have several varieties active from spring to autumn with little to no activity in the winter months.

Dung beetle specialist, Bernard Doube along with his son Andrew, have together been developing school based breeding programs through Landcare in the Central Tablelands and Tasmania.

Sara Schmude, Landcare Coordinator helping resource the project said, "It was only logical to start a program in the north and The Armidale Waldorf School where excited to embrace the opportunity."

Bernard kindly donated 200 *Bubus bison*, a winter active species imported from France, to kickstart the program.

The beetles are now residing in onion bags of soil buried in the school vegetable garden, with regular supplies of dung we anticipate many more when their breeding cycle is complete.

Waldorf teacher Joanne Low, said she appreciates this kind of rich learning experience where her students broaden their knowledge of insect lifecycles while utilising their scientific and mathematical skills.

The program is assisted by Dr Karl Vernes and Dr Zac Hemmings, both from UNE with specialist knowledge of dung beetles and their potential to save the world.

We have stocks of 'Dung Down Under: Dung Beetles for Australia' by Bernard Doube and Tim Marshall (Armidale-based) available from the Landcare office for a discounted \$25.

Brochures from the old Dung Beetle Express project in the New England are still available on our website www.snelandcare.org.au under publications.

Below - Dr Zac Hemmings with Sara and Monty Schmude sorting beetles into their new homes. Photo by Oliver Schmude.



Recognition & Awards for Wilmot

Southern New England Landcare has great pleasure in congratulating Stuart Austin and Trisha Cowley from Wilmot Cattle Co. Ebor, for winning the Excellence in Landcare Farming Award at this year's NENW Regional Landcare Awards held in Narrabri.

Local Landcare Coordinator, Sara Schmude said, "I admire Trisha and Stuart's practical and philosophical approach to land stewardship and their willingness to share their knowledge and experience with the broader community."

Station Managers at Wilmot since 2016, Trisha and Stuart Austin have embraced a regenerative management approach that places equal emphasis on ecological health and financial profit.

Their mantra is 'you can't manage what you don't measure', and this they have undertaken across the 1854 ha property.

We live by this philosophy, we measure almost everything we do, from a daily to an annual basis, that results in an annual scorecard of our key metrics of rainfall, soil, grass, livestock and money," said Stuart Austin.

The restoration of ecological function has been central to their success, with a shift in 2013 from a set stocking regime to intensive rotational grazing using large mobs of cattle in excess of 1800 head, in paddocks as small as 20 ha, with regular rotation and long rest periods.

The Austins use the Maia

Grazing livestock management software as their number one decision making tool to determine stocking rates relative to carrying capacity, measuring grass consumption and constantly reviewing individual paddock analytics and overall farm performance.

In 2018 the Austins secured a Federal Government 20 Million Trees Grant and over the course of the next 3 years will plant a total of 20,000 native trees, including 7000 New England peppermints, in 25 km of corridors across the property.

During this process they appreciated valuable input from long-standing Hanham Landcare Group members, Maria and Chris Eveleigh from Kentucky Tree Nursery.

In February 2019, the Austins opened Wilmot's gates to more than 250 people at a field day "Creating Drought Resilient Farm Businesses".

Stuart spoke about graziers needing to think differently

about farm business management.

He advocated accepting the two things beyond control - weather and markets, and focussing on the things we can control - grass, money and livestock.

The couple received further recognition at the 2019 Carbon Farming Conference by being awarded the 'National Young Carbon Cocky of the Year'.

We wish Trisha and Stuart every success as candidates for the State Landcare Awards at Broken Hill in October.

The New England Regional Landcare Awards were held to acknowledge the outstanding achievements of Landcarers in our region and the positive impact they have on the environment and their community.

This year the awards were presented at the New England North West Landcare Adventure held in Narrabri and organised by Northern Slopes Landcare Association.

Below—Trisha, Stuart, Harry and baby Poppy with their award.



Koalas need you!

The Cool Country Koala Project found that the Northern Tablelands is home to many koalas, indeed areas such as Nowendoc, Delungra, Armidale, Black Mountain and Uralla have large populations.

For two years, Dave Carr from Stringybark Ecological has been working with JML Environmental Consultants, EcoGeoSpatial and UNE to learn more about the Armidale population.

During this period Dave observed 12 koalas on 'Newholme', UNE's property near Mt Duval.

"We caught six koalas and fitted them with GPS tracking collars, then recorded their location," said Dave.

"This information enables us to see how big an area koalas use and what sort of bushland they prefer," he said.

Most koalas used an area approximately 1 km x 1 km (100 ha), while one male koala roamed over 400 ha.

They also recorded a female koala going on a 6 km hike in a very short time.

With help from Southern New England Landcare, the team also collected reports of koalas from the general public to see other areas where koalas live.

This showed that there are many koala sightings in the Rockvale Rd area near the Pine Forest; around Tilbuster; and on Sunnyside Road. They will now be focussing our efforts in these areas.

Over the next 12 months (from August 2019) they will catch three koalas and fit them with new GPS collars, then track their movements over several months.

Below—Cuteness factor 10. A koala captured near Armidale for tagging and release. Image courtesy Dave Carr.



They want to see whether they prefer large patches of bushland and how much time they spend in urban and peri-urban areas.

This information will help them understand the impacts of future development and increases in vehicle numbers and which parts of the landscape are most important for koala survival.

As climates get hotter in inland regions and urban development (with more cars and dogs) increases on the coast, the Northern Tablelands will be increasingly important for koala survival.

How you can help

- The team will be using VHF transponders to keep track of where our collared koalas go. A collared koala may end up on your property. We will not enter private land without permission. When it's time to retrieve the collars we may need access if that is where the koala is, so we ask you to send us your contact details so we

can get your permission. We will not share this information with anyone else.

- Allow us to do a scat (koala poo) survey on your property. We will search the base of 30 trees and do a quick vegetation survey. In return we will give you a list of trees and plants, and any information about koalas we find.
- Let us know if you see a koala. We can come and have a look and see how healthy the animal is. Keep an eye out for our collared koalas and make sure they are protected from dogs and cattle.
- Think about joining us at the field event to be hosted by Southern New England Landcare on 18th October.

Contact the team

If a collared koala enters your property or you would like a koala scat survey, call SNElandcare on 6772 9123 or Dave Carr on 0418 651 263.



Southern
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Landcare

Field Day



Image courtesy Dean Ingwersen.

Regent Honeyeaters and their Habitat

Join Southern New England Landcare and their new group, 'The Regent Honeyeater Revivalists' to learn about the Regent Honeyeater's habitat and how we can help improve it on known and predicted sites.

Everyone welcome!

8 am - 12 pm
Tuesday 22nd October 2019
Whyworry Park
376 Kingstown Road Uralla

Breakfast and morning tea
provided.

Register at www.stickytickets.com.au/92353 by Thursday
17th October for catering
purposes.

Guest speakers:

- Dr Ross Crates (Expert, Australian National University)
on why Regent Honeyeaters are so rare
- Peter Metcalfe (Local Nature Educator)
on Regent Honeyeater habitat in our area
- Sara Schmude (Local Landcare Coordinator)
on Indian Myna management

This field day is part of a series being run by New England Landcare networks during the week of 21 October 2019.

Enquiries to Struan Ferguson on 6772 9123 or
mail@snelandcare.org.au.

This project is supported by Northern Tablelands LLS in partnership with the New England North West Landcare Networks, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.



Local Land
Services



National
Landcare
Program



New England
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Landcare

Recovery grants for farmers hit by wild storms

Recovery grants are now available to help eligible primary producers who were affected by severe storms in Walcha and surrounding areas from 20 December 2018.

Assistance is being provided through the Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

Federal Minister for Emergency Management David Littleproud said that supporting primary producers in Walcha and parts of neighbouring Armidale, Tamworth and Uralla was a priority for all levels of government.

"These storms damaged around 23,500 hectares of mature native trees that provide shade and shelter to livestock," Minister Littleproud said.

"Farmers have lost livestock and their farm infrastructure has been significantly damaged.

"We want to ensure all those hard working primary producers who are struggling with the financial repercussions have

support to get back on their feet.

"These grants will help with clean up and recovery costs, including repairing and replacing damaged fences, equipment and machinery."

NSW Minister for Police and Emergency Services David Elliott said that eligible primary producers could now access recovery grants of up to \$15,000.

"The NSW Government recognises that these storm impacts came on top of devastating drought conditions that the Walcha area has been suffering for some time, exacerbating the effects of the drought."

"The grants are available to eligible primary producers within 45 parishes across Walcha, Armidale, Tamworth and Uralla who were directly affected by the storms," Minister Elliot said.

Primary producer recovery grants are available in 45 parishes: Walcha LGA: Aberbaldie; Ainsley; Andy;

Apsley; Bergen op zoom; Boulton; Branga; Cobrabald; Congi; Ella; Emu; Europambela; Fenwick; Gill; Glen Morrison; Halloran; Norton; Ohio; Oorundunby; Salway; Scott; Shelving; St Clair; St Leonard; Tia; Tiara; Uriamukki; Vernon (within Macquarie County, near Tamworth); Walcha; Waterloo; and Winterbourne.

Armidale LGA: Enmore; Murrumbidgee; and Gill.

Tamworth LGA: Tara; Muluerindie; Burke; South Burke; Anna; Vernon; and Ainsley.

Uralla LGA: Lawrence; Eastlake; Blacknote; and Sandon.

To apply for a recovery grant, primary producers should contact the NSW Rural Assistance Authority on 1800 678 593 or visit raa.nsw.gov.au.

As part of this announcement, a range of other disaster assistance is also being activated for individuals, small businesses, primary producers and other organisations in Uralla Shire that were affected by the storms.

"Assistance will also be extended to affected communities in Uralla who may have suffered personal hardship and to help local councils with the cost of clean-up and repairing damaged public infrastructure," Minister Elliot said.

Further information is available at disasterassist.gov.au and the NSW emergency information and response website at emergency.nsw.gov.au.

Left - storm imagery courtesy of Josep Castells on [Unsplash.com](https://unsplash.com).



Farmers and community members are invited to the

Kentucky Community BBQ & Rain-Dance

Catering by **Fat Butcher BBQ**
Live Music by **Pantor**
Kids **Face Painting**



Down tools and join with friends
To take some time off from the dry
RAMHP will run a short show
With tips for when your stress is high
Bring the kids and dance with us
In faith for water from the sky.

5 pm - late
Saturday 2 November 2019



KENTUCKY Memorial Hall
Noalimba Ave Kentucky

This is a free event.
Bookings essential at <http://tix.yt/kentuckybbq>
by Monday 28th October for catering purposes.



Southern
New England
Landcare

This event is brought to you by Harnham
Landcare Group - a sub-group of Southern
New England Landcare Ltd, and supported by:



Focus on Ferals Forum

On Thursday 14th November 2019, join us for special guest speakers and interactive workshops that focus on the challenges associated with feral animal control in the Southern New England.

Landholders, extension staff and experts all welcome!

Rabbits, feral pigs, feral cats, foxes, feral deer and wild dogs have significant impacts on both the natural environment and agricultural production in our region.

World Heritage listed Oxley Wild Rivers National Park and other local assets, several endangered ecological communities and numerous threatened species are significantly affected.

Primary producers are affected by increased grazing pressure on pastures, and predation on livestock. This leads to increased risk of overgrazing leading to land degradation, animal welfare issues, and reduced productivity and profitability.

This forum will increase participants awareness, knowledge and skills with interactive workshops special guest speakers, experienced group facilitators and practical extension and advisory staff.

Landholders to muster around key climate challenges

Landholders in the Southern New England region will soon have the opportunity to participate in four local forums designed to exchange ideas, knowledge and techniques that are more likely to succeed in changing climatic conditions.

Karen Zirkler, Executive Officer at Southern New England Landcare, who were awarded the \$47,215 grant to run the forums said, "The idea is to build awareness, knowledge and skills around priorities soil health, pasture management, feral animal control, and revegetation, but with a special focus on the challenges that arise as a result of dealing with these issues in a changing climate.

"We will host special guest speakers and deliver interactive workshop sessions that focus on the challenges associated with climate change around each topic," she said.

The events will be delivered over a two year period and each will be followed up with an extension publication outlining key outcomes.

"We've begun planning for our first event, which will be a Focus on Ferals Forum to be held this spring," said Karen.

Subsequent events will address climate challenges associated with

- Saving Soil Health and Hydration to be held Autumn 2020
- Species Selection for Revegetation Success to be held Spring 2020
- Greener Grazing Globally to be held Autumn 2021.

More information about the "Mustering Members 4 Climate Change Challenges" project can be viewed at <https://snelandcare.org.au/landcare-projects/current-landcare-projects>.

To stay informed about the events, please subscribe to the Southern New England Landcare eNews at www.snelandcare.org.au.

The Mustering Members 4 Climate Change Challenges project has been funded by the National Landcare Program Phase 2 Smart Farming Small Grants program.

Below—Mustering during drought by Tobias Keller on Unsplash.com.



Landchat - Landcare in Southern New England

FOCUS ON FERALS FORUM

10 am - 3 pm
Thursday 14th November 2019
Uralla Bowling Club

- Special guest speakers
- What to expect as the drought continues
- Alert Species: cane toads, tilapia & sambar deer
- Latest control methods for urban & rural areas

**A day of networking for landholders,
extension staff and professionals**

FREE Lunch. RSVP by Tuesday 12th November.
www.stickytickets.com.au/92076



Southern
New England
Landcare



National
Landcare
Program



This event is a Southern New England Landcare Member Muster. It is supported by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, through funding from Australian Government's National Landcare Program, and through Northern Tablelands Local Land Services under the Feral Fighters Program.



Local Land
Services

Thinking about an agroforestry project?

Southern New England Landcare boasts six local landholders who have been trained in Peer Mentoring for Agroforestry type projects. Here's how it works:

1. Make contact with us and tell us a bit about what you think you would like to do. It might be some kind of food tree production, native trees and shrubs, shelter belts or any other agroforestry idea.
2. We then make contact with those of our peer mentors who who have skills in the area of your interest, and set up an appropriate time for 2-3 of them to visit you on your property.
3. The mentors spend 2-3 hours with you on your property, taking a look around and asking you lots of questions and discussing ideas and taking some photos.
4. The lead mentor will then prepare a site visit report for you (approx 12 pages), detailing everything discussed, including possible ways forward, with useful links, contacts and even species lists.
5. You then have access to another 2 visits from your chosen mentor over the next 12 months to support you in your endeavours.

The cost of the program is \$100 plus GST. We will invoice you when you receive your site report.

For more information or to book a site visit, contact karen.zirkler@snelandcare.org.au or phone 02 6772 9123.

'Landscape Architecture' goal for Richard

I did the Master TreeGrower Program because I wanted to obtain more knowledge – I wanted to see if there were enterprise opportunities for different classes of land from which I could get a better return than using livestock.

I also wanted to understand more about tree density and some of the silvicultural methods. For example, there is a paddock with a lot of regrowth. I was looking at the possibility of thinning it and using the thinnings for firewood.

My aim with the Peer Group Mentoring program was to bounce ideas around about the tree species, and to use the mentors as a sounding board to perhaps validate whether my ideas would be viable. I didn't want to do purely native trees – I wanted to do a level of 'landscape architecture'.

The Peer Group Mentors were good. We talked about my concepts, we visited sites around the farm and talked about pros and cons and other options. I was also trying to 'see the wood for the trees' with the Native Vegetation Act.

I was wanting to create something pleasing to look at. I read Peter Andrews' book and wanted some deciduous species to help put organic material in an erosion area. Shane has experience with native species, while Michael has experience with non-native species so we were able to get both perspectives.

Through the Master TreeGrower program, I have a far greater understanding – the intricacies, the positives, and the negatives of doing many of these things.

Through the Peer Group Mentors, it's good to have the sounding board so that you're not 'alone in the wilderness' so to speak. You all learn from each other. Having the sounding board is significant because I'm new to the area, and it's an area that I don't know a lot about, so it's reassuring. It's different to other forms of 'advice' because you have a relationship with the mentor.

Richard Daugherty, 12th March 2018

Interview by Karen Zirkler.

PEER GROUP MENTORING SERVICE FOR AGROFORESTRY



FARMER TO FARMER EXTENSION

FOR FARMERS
MANAGING TREES
FOR REASONS THAT
MATTER TO THEM!



WHO ARE THE MENTORS?

- LOCAL EXPERIENCED TREE GROWERS
- MASTER TREEGROWER PROGRAM GRADUATES
- TRAINED MENTORS



WHAT SERVICES ARE PROVIDED?

- FARM VISITS SUPPORT YOUR IDEAS & GOALS
- TECHNICAL EXPERTISE AND INFORMATION
- SITE REPORTS



WHAT TOPICS CAN BE COVERED?

- Shade and shelter
- Farm aesthetics
- Natives or exotics
- Tree establishment
- Habitat
- Farm tree planning
- Native forest management
- Species identification
- Trees for timber

HOW DO WE KNOW IT WORKS?

Most significant change technique tells the story...

The suggestions and guidance of what species to try, planting locations, when and in what season to plant, as well as planting designs have all been of tremendous value.

Helen Nix & David Menzies, Castletbrook, Uralla

The mentors passed on valuable insights about the diversity in my forest and helped me see it as a whole ecosystem. They also provided useful practical tips which filled out much of my own opinions on where to go with its management.

Rob Laurie, Brigadood, Nowendoc.



WWW.SNELANDCARE.ORG.AU

A project of the New England Agri-Woodland Network (NEAWN), a sub-group of Southern New England Landcare Ltd. This project is supported with funding from the Australian Government and in-kind contributions from the Australian Agroforestry Foundation.



Membership Renewals

As a financial member, you will have received a full colour hard copy of this Landchat in your letterbox.

Only current financial members receive a hard copy of Landchat in their letterbox, so if you received this landchat via email only, chances are your membership is not current!

Members also get occasional special treats like free or discounted tickets.

There are currently 345 'members' (100 more than this time last year), however only 196 are financially up to date!

In the weeks leading up to your membership renewal anniversary, members receive an email reminder to renew.

Watch for email reminders when your membership renewal anniversary comes around. The email provides a clickable link for easy renewal.

If you have missed your renewal email, or are unsure of your membership status, please visit www.snelandcare.org.au and login using your email address and password (top right of the home screen). This will direct you to your Member Profile page.

If in doubt, please contact mail@snelandcare.org.au or on 02 6772 9123 and us to check for you.

Local Landcare Coordinator Funded

Southern New England Landcare will once again enjoy funding for a part time Local Landcare Coordinator position from 2019 to 2021.

A total of \$323,490 over four years has been provided by the NSW Landcare Program 2019-2023, which is a partnership between LLS and Landcare.

This funds the employment of 0.75 FTE Local Coordinators for the Southern New England Region from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2023.

It builds on a number of previous Landcare Support Programs, the Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative and regional Landcare investment made through National Landcare Program and Catchment Action.

The NSW Landcare Program 2019-2023 supports Local Landcare Coordinator positions right across the State.

At Southern New England Landcare, the role is job-shared by Karen Zirkler and Sara Schmude, and supplemented with wages from other projects.

Case Studies from our Region on World Stage

During the 2016 - 2109 Local Landcare Coordinator Project funded by a partnership between Landcare NSW and NSW Local Land Services, our Local Landcare Coordinators produced a series of case studies as a result of the great work with groups, in which they were involved.

They are now all on the world stage at both <https://landcare.nsw.gov.au/groups/southern-new-england-landcare/casestudy-listing/> and <https://snelandcare.org.au/resources/publications.html>.

Check them out!

1. Agroforestry Alive
2. Arding Landcare Re-invigorated
3. Council Support Provides Certainty

4. Diversifying Income
5. Horses for Courses
6. Hosting Conversations that Matter
7. Landcare Legend Shares His Story
8. Local Member Musters
9. Mentoring Students Pays Off
10. NENW Landcare Adventure 2017
11. New Urban Youth Group
12. Season for Soil
13. Weed Wackers Regreen Black Creek
14. What Future for Chilean Needle Grass in our Region?
15. When Two Become One
16. Where was YOUR BFF Today?

Thank you Regional Australia Bank!

During last financial year, Southern New England Landcare participated in Regional Australia Bank's Community Partnership Program, where community members can support us without costing them a cent.

And, we received a total of \$10,070!

Imagine our surprise! We heartily thank Regional Australia Bank for this wonderful initiative. These funds will help support our important work in the region.

And thank you to all our community supporters for choosing us!

How you can help make it even better this year...

All you need to do is save with an eFree, Community Partnership Account or Youth Account at Regional Australia Bank, and elect to support Southern New England Landcare.

Regional Australia Bank calculates the average annual balance of each of our supporters and donates the equivalent of one percent to Southern New England Landcare.

By banking with Regional Australia Bank, you will not only have access to this great program, but competitive interest rates, fairer fees and sound guidance from their local experts.

For more information contact Kate or Sabrina at Regional Australia Bank on 132 067 or visit regionalaustaliabank.com.au.

Stay tuned to what's on the Landcare calendar...

Stay up to date with all our upcoming events, projects and latest news at www.snelandcare.org.au, or just sign up to our eNews, which provides all the important information direct to your email inbox approximately fortnightly!

History of Landcare NSW Documented

We now have on record the observations and stories of a number of people involved in the formative years of Landcare NSW (the organisation) in the newly released Caring for Land and People: A History of Landcare NSW 2007 – 2019.

The book contains testimonials and insights from long-time Southern New England Landcare movers and shakers including Sonia Williams and Karen Zirkler, as well as Rob Dulhunty, originally from Glen Innes.

You can find a copy at <https://landcarens.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Caring-for-Land-and-People-A-History-of-Landcare-NSW.pdf>.

Notice of 18th AGM

**Wednesday 27th
November 2019**

Uralla Community Centre,
9 Hill St Uralla

All members and friends are invited to an evening of celebration to end the amazing year that has been 2019.

Agenda

6.00 pm Drinks & nibbles

6.30 pm AGM

7.00 pm Around Our Groups

7.30 pm Achievements

7.50 pm JWJ Bequest

Announced

8.00 pm Supper

RSVP

mail@snelandcare.org.au or

6772 9123 by

Monday 25th November 2019

for catering purposes.

If undeliverable return to Southern New England Landcare,
Suite 10, 128 Beardy Street, PO Box 85, Armidale 2350.
Tel 02 6772 9123, mail@snelandcare.org.au.

Landchat
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Landchat

Landcare in the Southern New England, No. 116, April 2019 - September 2019



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Australian Government

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Programme



Acknowledgements

Southern New England Landcare is supported by: the NSW Government's Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative, supported through the partnership of Local Land Services and Landcare NSW; the Northern Tablelands Local Land Services through funding from the NSW Government's Catchment Action NSW and the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme; Armidale Regional Council; Flight Centre Armidale; Regional Australia Bank; and Wesfarmers Federation Insurance.

Landchat presents a forum for the expression of a range of opinions. While every effort is made to publish accurate information, Southern New England Landcare and its employees do not accept responsibility for statements made and opinions expressed in this newsletter.



Need Insurance

for your farm, equipment, car or household?

We recommend Wesfarmers Federation Insurance, proud supporters of Landcare.

Mention you are a member of Southern New England Landcare, and 3% of the value of your premium is returned to SNElandcare to support projects! Contact David de Ferranti on 1300 934934 or 0412 328 911.



Local Land
Services
Northern Tablelands



ARMIDALE
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regionalaustraliabank