

# Landchat

Landcare in the Southern New England, No. 117, October 2019 - June 2020



Southern  
New England  
**Landcare**

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

## 2020 Member Survey \$100 Voucher Winner

**Congratulations to ELWYN HEGARTY from Armidale!** Please make contact with us at the office on 6772 9123 so we can organise your voucher. We'd like to thank all those who participated in our 2020 member survey. Key survey findings will be published in eNews soon.

## Diary Dates

Regenerating Rural Landscapes  
Boot Camp | David Hardwick ..... 16-17 Sep

Southern New England Landcare AGM ..... 29 Oct

Greener Grazing Globally with  
Jones, Earl & Lawrence ..... 24-25 Mar 2021

30 Years of Landcare in Southern New  
England Celebration Dinner ..... 24 Mar 2021

Silvopasture 2020 ..... 2 May 2021

Check <https://snelandcare.org.au/group-events.html> for updates.

## Welcome

Welcome to Landchat 117 in this unprecedented year of pandemonium. We now have first hand knowledge of where that word comes from!

Since Edition 116, we've endured the worst drought, the worst bush fires, and now a terrible pandemic - COVID-19. So, we do apologise for the delay in producing your Landchat. Thankfully, much of our region has enjoyed some much-needed rain in recent months.

Despite all this, there is good work to report. Since our last edition, the final events of 2019 included the Frog Dreaming Conference for Kids, Regent Honeyeaters and their Habitat field day, the Kentucky Community BBQ and Raindance and our AGM and Christmas Gathering.

Most of our events this year have been thwarted by COVID-19 restrictions, however we report on those we've conducted online, including facilitation of Armidale Regional Council's Emergency Groundwater Supply Network Webinars, a discussion on Landcare at the National Level, and a webinar for participants in the new Reconnecting Thunderbolt Country project.

We update you on current projects including our Time Out with Friends series of local events, Mustering Members 4 Climate Change Challenges events, Turning the Tide for Regent Honeyeaters, Armidale Urban Planting Maintenance and the Malpas Catchment Project. We also welcome the signing of a new three-year Memorandum of Understanding with Armidale Regional Council.

Your Landcare Coordinators have been busy sourcing funding for future projects, reporting on completed projects and making preparations for some major projects and events in the pipeline.

For regular updates on coming projects and events, sign up for our regular eNews at [www.snelandcare.org.au](http://www.snelandcare.org.au).

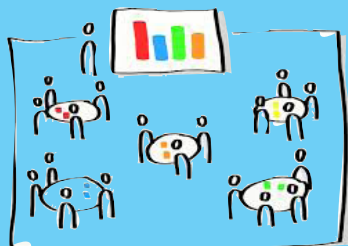
# SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND LANDCARE LTD

July 2018 - June 2019  
Achievements



## Build & service our networks

7 Group action plans  
30 Groups supported  
203 Members & 748 friends  
3 Landchats & 29 eNews  
666 FB followers & 8 FB groups



## Innovative ag & NRM initiatives for communities

12 Network-scale events  
344 event participants  
15 Regional projects  
5 Successful grants  
\$262,242 Grant income

## Financial security for our organisation

19 Partner organisations  
5 Grants from 8 applications  
Financials reviewed quarterly  
Organisation audited annually



## Build & maintain team capacity

9 Volunteer directors  
4 Part-time staff  
6 Board meetings  
16 Policies updated  
Strategic plan reviewed  
4 Team training opportunities



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

Read more on news and projects at  
[www.snelandcare.org.au](http://www.snelandcare.org.au)

# 2019 AGM & Christmas Gathering

Members and friends gathered at  
Uralla Community Centre on 27th  
November 2019 for the AGM and  
Christmas function.

The following group  
representatives were elected to  
the Board of Directors:

- David Henderson (Aberfoyle Landcare) - President
- Steve Harvey (Dangarsleigh Landcare) - Vice President
- Bevely Stubberfield (Uralla Rivercare) - Treasurer
- Bryan Johnston (Armidale Urban Rivercare) - Board
- Jill Moore-Kashima (Soil Health Forum) - Board
- Peter Metcalfe (Dumaresq) - Board
- Bill Perrottet (Malpas Catchment) - Board
- Rebecca Smith (BC<sup>2</sup>) - Board
- Richard Daugherty (Balala Brushgrove Landcare) - Board
- Karen Zirkler was appointed Secretary.

The year's activities and  
achievements against the  
organisation's strategic plan  
objectives were presented as a  
summary infographic (left).

A great night of catching up with  
old and new friends followed.

See the back page for details of  
this year's AGM.

# Time Out with Friends

Southern New England Landcare has secured \$16,460 through the Primary Health Network (PHN Hunter New England and Central Coast) to facilitate 'morning tea' events for landholders and community members.

We are calling them 'Time Out with Friends' and we aim to base them within eight of our traditional landcare group regions from now until June 2021, including:

- Balala-Brushgrove
- Boorolong
- Glen Morrison
- Kentucky/Wollun
- Lower Apsley River
- Wandsworth
- Wollomombi
- Wongwibinda.

The events will:

- Provide participants with 'time out from the crisis' where they can come together for social networking, support and information
- Host relevant, topical guest presenters or activity providers
- Facilitate connectedness and help reduce stigma associated with mental health issues
- Provide drought/bushfire and COVID19 support, health resources and contacts
- Provide an opportunity for local communities to

co-create their own more resilient futures through group action planning with our Landcare Coordinators.

These events will also be a chance to revitalise existing Landcare groups experiencing a lull in their activities due to tough conditions.

## Partner organisations

During the events, Southern New England Landcare will partner with the Rural Financial Counsellor, RAMHP PHN, all three local government organisations in our region and Northern Tablelands Local Land Services to provide relevant guest speakers/presenters and resource materials.

## Contact us

If you or your group would like to attend or host one of these events in your local area, please contact us at our office on 6772 9123 or [mail@snelandcare.org.au](mailto:mail@snelandcare.org.au).

Watch our eNews for updates on an event near you.



## Harnham Landcare lends a hand

Harnham Landcare Group - a sub-group of Southern New England Landcare Ltd, thanks the Rural Adversity Mental Health Program for co-funding their Kentucky Community BBQ and Raindance to the tune of \$3500.

Folks in the Kentucky, Wollun, Uralla, Walcha, or Woolbrook areas were invited to take a break from the drought on Saturday 2nd November 2019 and join a free BBQ and Rain-Dance with catering by Fat Butcher BBQ, live music by Pantor, and kids face painting.

Participants reconnected with neighbours and friends, heard a short presentation about tips for handling stress from the Rural Adversity Mental Health Program providers, and enjoyed a great night out for the whole family.



# Armidale Regional Council Renews Partnership with Landcare

**The start of the new financial year marks a fresh milestone in a 25 year partnership between Southern New England Landcare and Armidale Regional Council.**

A new Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the partners, ensuring collaboration on at least three significant projects for a further three years.

Southern New England Landcare Ltd President, David Henderson, said, "We are proud to continue our great partnership and delighted to be able to continue working together with Council on these important initiatives."

The MOU will see \$20,000 provided per year to support employment of the Malpas Catchment Coordinator. This role is currently filled by Rachel Lawrence, who can now continue working with groups in the Malpas catchment and beyond, to facilitate joint initiatives that promote a healthier catchment.

The MOU will also support further maintenance of Landcare

and community group plantings in the Armidale urban space and provide support for the Landcare Community Resource Centre in Hanna's Arcade.

A meeting of the board of Southern New England Landcare provided a great opportunity to celebrate the milestone, with a signing ceremony and light lunch for board members, staff and Armidale Regional Council CEO Susan Law, who was present to sign on behalf of Armidale Regional Council.

## Landcare Coordinators assist Guyra Groundwater Webinars

Two public webinars held in May 2020 provided community members up-to-date information and a chance to ask questions about the Groundwater Supply Network being developed in the Guyra district.

The bore network is being established as part of measures to increase the region's water security.

"The live online webinars were a great way to keep people informed about the project while social distancing measures were in place," the then Armidale Regional Council Mayor Simon Murray said.

While this approach was a solution during the COVID-19 crisis, webinars could become an ongoing part of Council's public engagement, he said.

As part of our support to the Malpas Catchment Project, the webinars were co-designed and facilitated by Southern New England Landcare's EO, Karen Zirkler.

"As Council ventures into community webinars, we are fortunate to have the assistance of Southern New England Landcare and its experience in running similar community forums," Mr Murray said.

The webinars may be viewed at Armidale Regional Council's Youtube channel.



*Below left to right: Kàren Zirkler (EO), Peter Metcalfe, Bryan Johnston, Bev Stubberfield, Jill Moore-Kashima, David Henderson (President), Susan Law (ARC CEO), Richard Daugherty, Steve Harvey and Bill Perrottet. Image courtesy of Struan Ferguson.*



# Friends Conserve Iconic Reserve

Contributed by Helen Stokes

**Angophora Bushland Reserve, at the junction of Bona Vista Road and Burgess Street in south Armidale, is a precious piece of bushland remaining within the town boundaries.**

It is small, only 1.35 ha but enough for large native trees to grow, mature, and shed branches. This is when most eucalypts develop hollows. Hollows in native trees are nesting places for some iconic Australian birds and animals and essential for survival of those species and can take many

decades to form depending on the tree species. No tree hollows: no kookaburras. These branches (and ultimately the whole tree) are left lying on the ground to provide habitat for animals such as lizards and echidnas, as well as store carbon and be a source of nutrients.

Angophora Reserve is looked after by a volunteer Landcare group - Friends of Angophora Reserve - supported by Southern New England Landcare. The group has cleared truckloads of weedy species from the reserve since 2014, including

pyrocantha, cotoneaster, blackberry and privet. In place of these, native species have been planted, including local wattles, shrubs and eucalypts.

The group has short working bees once a month in Spring and Autumn for maintenance (but last year the group was in stasis due to the drought). The Friends of Angophora Bushland Reserve have produced a booklet about the Reserve with text and photographs mostly by Ruth Trémont but also with contributions by members of the group.

In January it rained, producing an abundance of wildflowers among the native grasses not seen for 50 years, plus a few weeds that the group have been dealing with.

In February, the Coronavirus became a world-wide threat and in March, before the state went into lockdown, we had a working bee cutting back elm suckers. Five, well-spaced out people, spent an hour cutting and painting. The area we worked on looked much better afterwards.

There is a circular pathway mown through the Reserve, which will be maintained for the next months by a single worker. It provides a nice walk on flat terrain, with views from the north-west section over the Golf Course to Mount Duval.

Keep up to date with Friends of Angophora Bushland Reserve at <https://snelandcare.org.au/angophora-bushland-reserve>.

*Image - Artist Margaret Duncan pictured with the sign at Angophora Bushland Reserve, for which she provided the beautiful artwork.*





# What a Year!

*Contributed by Bruce Whan, Chair,  
Armidale Urban Rivercare Group (AURG)*

**In August 2019 when my wife and I got back from Europe, many of our recent plantings were dying or severely stressed due to the drought.**

Gordon Bell and I got permission from Council to pump water from the creek to water all of our recent plantings and we spent four days with a fire fighter pump and some long hoses to drench the planting area. At the time, the untreated water quality from Malpas wasn't good and the sand filters were working overtime, resulting in backwash water from the filters at the treatment plant being discharged down Yagoondah Gully. We were able to utilise it for our watering purpose.

In early September 2019 we had a bushfire in one of our 2004 planting sites behind St Peters Pre-School. A couple of kids lit a fire in some phragmites and it just exploded. I was driving

home when I saw smoke rising from the area, and after my initial shock at how intense the fire was, I managed to get some photos. Most of the Eucalypts have started to recover, but we lost a lot of understory, particularly *Leptospermum*, although I suspect many were already severely stressed due to the drought.

The rain since mid-December 2019 has been incredible – 500 mm so far. The growth of native grasses in particular has been spectacular.

Armidale Urban Rivercare Group (AURG) held a Native Grasses Workshop at Dangarsleigh Hall on 14th March conducted by Professor Wal Whalley and assisted by Rachel Lawrence. The workshop was very successful, and Wal commented that the growth of native grasses had been the most spectacular for 50 years, with summer and winter grasses all germinating together.

This has also meant a phenomenal growth of weeds as well in some places and we just started to get some contract weeding and regular working bees in place before Covid19 restrictions came into place. Helen Webb and her team have been doing lots of hand-weeding as well. However, with all the restrictions in place in relation to Covid19, we are having to think of new ways to do the essential maintenance of our plantings.

Our three regular AURG contractors will continue to do essential work and will be spraying, steam weeding, brushcutting etc. around all our sites while following Armidale Regional Council's guidelines for outdoor work. We will also assess where any hand weeding needs to be done and pass that on to Bryan Johnston to organise groups of no more than two to work on any one site.

Helen Webb has organised to





plant a selection of wildflowers around the Prickly Problems Project site sign and these are looking spectacular. Note the growth of the *Eucalyptus pauciflora* which were planted in September 2017. At just 2.5 years old, it is already nearly four metres tall!

Another of our plantings doing particularly well is a *Juncus* area. This area was weeded by our contractors on 19th March and since the recent rain has shown an amazing growth rate with some plants already self-seeding.

We are still waiting to hear whether or not we have been successful with an Environmental Trust Grant. So in the meantime we will prepare a couple of new sites on a shoestring budget in case we miss out. We will have these on standby anticipating the easing of Covid19 restrictions hopefully later this year.

*Left - fire tore through phragmites at a 2004 planting site. Above right - wildflowers impress at the Prickly Problems site. Right - Juncus growth rates are impressive.*



## Onwards & upwards for Sara

In March 2020, the board and staff at Southern New England Landcare sadly bid Sara Schmude farewell from the team.

Sara began her Southern New England Landcare career in the role of Coordinated Fox Control Officer in the mid 2000's, and has since undertaken a number of part time roles, culminating in Landcare Coordinator - Urban and Youth.

Perhaps Sara's greatest legacy is the Annual Youth Conference, Frog Dreaming, which she has run in collaboration with Rebecca Smith and various supporters every year since 2008.

Sara worked enthusiastically to support the urban landcare and rivercare groups in Armidale, and was an avid volunteer herself.

Southern New England Landcare thanks Sara for her tremendous

contributions over many years and wishes her every success in her future endeavours.

*Image by Ben Vincent.*







The years 1989-1992 saw the formation of several Landcare groups in the Southern New England. Then, in 1993, SNECC Inc (Southern New England Landcare Coordinating Committee Inc) formed, followed by Southern New England Landcare Ltd in 2001.

So, in 2021, whether it's 20 years or 30 years since the beginning - we're celebrating!

**We are proud to announce that we have secured both Dr Christine Jones, and Dr Judi Earl as keynote speakers at a two-day 30-year celebration event on 24-25 March 2021. Joining them, will be our very own Dr Rachel Lawrence, whose PhD was recently conferred - congratulations Rachel! See p13 for more details.**

We want to celebrate the organisation, its members, and the key movers and shakers who helped it become the great change agent that it is today.

## Early member?

If you were part of the formation of our groups or network, we want to hear from you!

Would you like to be part of the event organising committee?

Perhaps you have a great story to tell? Perhaps you would be willing to trawl through early group records to search for memorabilia?

An organising committee will meet for the second time in early September. Contact us via email or on 6772 9123.

# Focus on Ferals:

## Research Crucial to Maintain & Enhance Control Methods

**A forum in Uralla on 4th March was a timely opportunity to bring together landholders, extension staff and leading experts to discuss developments and best practice in pest animal management, with a special emphasis on a changing climate.**

Pest animal specialist, Stuart Boyd-Law, was engaged by Southern New England Landcare to jointly coordinate the forum.

"Feral animals are highly competitive and will bounce back quickly following drought and fires, potentially having a devastating impact on pasture resources, livestock and native wildlife," said Mr Boyd-Law.

"The Northern Tablelands is highly conducive to the establishment and migration of pest animal species including foxes, cats, pigs, deer and wild dogs," he said.

The damaging impacts from these species has led to widespread loss of biodiversity and destruction of agricultural

land in the past.

Sara Schmude, Landcare Coordinator with Southern New England Landcare said, "Now is the time to hear from the experts about the key principles that underpin effective control of pest animals in our region."

The forum addressed African Swine Fever, strategic baiting of feral cats, feral pig collaring and the latest advancements in wild dog control.

It aimed to raise awareness, knowledge and skills among the whole community, to deal with the scope and depth of feral pest animal management issues in changing, and challenging times.

This event was the first in a series under our National Landcare Program funded project called Mustering Members 4 Climate Change Challenges.

A case study produced after the forum (right) is available to download in the publications section of our website.

## Revegetating Urandangie Creek

*Malpas Catchment Group recently obtained \$5000 through Northern Tablelands Local Land Services so that landholders adjacent to Urandangie Creek can protect this important tributary to the region's water supply (Malpas Dam).*

*This grant will purchase plants for a section of Urandangie Creek that has already been fenced. Malpas Catchment Group, along with landholders, will provide in-kind labour to plant, leading to improved biodiversity, water quality and reliability of flow along Urandangie Creek (and tributaries), thus showcasing the value of catchment groups working together on a project.*



## Collaborations

# The complexities of pest animal control under climate change

Southern New England Landcare Ltd



## Focus on Ferals Forum

### The issue

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 areas, several endangered ecological communities and numerous threatened species are significantly impacted. Primary producers are affected by increased grazing pressure on pastures, and predation on livestock. Land degradation, animal welfare issues, and reduced productivity and profitability are the result.

But how might pest animal management change under a changing climate?

### The solution

Feral animal control is part our Strategic Plan, so we sourced funds through the National Landcare Program's Smart Farm Small Grants to host an event in our region.

Specialist pest animal guests were invited to present at an interactive one-day workshop to enable participants to explore and address together, emerging issues, including climate change.

We promoted the event widely, but due to drought attracted only 25 participants who gathered at Uralla Bowling Club on 4 March 2020. Participants included graziers, urban community members and pest animal specialists.

An evaluation was conducted with a view to producing an extension product for use by a wider audience.

### The impact

One third of participants had never attended a Landcare event before. Ninety five percent of participants said the forum significantly increased their knowledge and understanding of the range of pest management issues, and that it provided "a great deal of information that is hard to get anywhere else".

When asked to what extent did this forum enhanced their ability to embrace new ideas, innovate or transform their practices relating to pest animals, one participant said, "As I'm an environmental consultant it improved my potential to better communicate with people working in this field".

Eighty three per cent of participants said the information presented was either extremely useful or very useful for their situation, and that they were very likely or likely to implement the ideas in the near future. One participant said, "I feel more comfortable with aerial shooting and baiting strategies since learning about the extent of the issue relating to introduced/invasive species."

## Key facts

- The scale of the pest problem is huge.
- There is a need for integrated, landscape-scale and holistic approaches to pest animal control.
- Although complex, there is a large amount of work being done.
- Under climate change, research is crucial to maintain and enhance the control methods.
- Help for landholders is available.

## Project Partners



This initiative made possible by the NSW Landcare Program. A collaboration of Local Land Services and Landcare NSW Inc. supported by the NSW Government.



30 Apr, 2020

# Silvopasture<sup>2020</sup>

## Demo & Intro Field Day

**Trees and pastures  
for resilience and  
long-term profit**

**Sunday 2nd May 2021  
'The Hill', Kentucky NSW**

**Rowan Reid** - Australia's #1 advocate for agroforestry,  
author of 'Heartwood' and founder of the International Master  
TreeGrower program and Australian Agroforestry Foundation

- Species selection and establishment
- Maintenance and integration
- Production and harvesting
- Ecosystem services with Prof Nick Reid
- Field's Environmental Solutions
- Kentucky Tree Nursery

Photo by Michael Taylor

**More at [www.silvopasture.com.au](http://www.silvopasture.com.au)  
or [www.snelandcare.org.au](http://www.snelandcare.org.au)**

**Tickets \$26, \$36 or \$66  
by 16th April 2021 at  
[stickytickets.com.au/XT1BD](http://stickytickets.com.au/XT1BD)  
or by calling 02 6772 9123.**



This event is supported by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, through funding from Australian Government's National Landcare Program, and Harnham Landcare Group - a sub-group of Southern New England Landcare Ltd.





# Rehydrating Roumalla Creek Catchment —

## An Introduction to Natural Sequence Farming with Stuart Andrews

Saturday 28th March 2020  
'Balala Station'

Join Stuart Andrews of Tarwyn Park Training for an introduction to rehydrating your farm using Natural Sequence Farming techniques.

During this field day you will learn how to:

- Increase resilience in the face of a changing climate
- Read landscapes
- Fully utilise your farm's natural resources
- Locate, design and build landscape structures
- Redesign your property
- Begin improving landscape function on your farm
- Increase water storage capacity
- Increase biodiversity
- Reduce run-off and control erosion
- Lower your farm costs and boost profits.

Stuart Andrews is a farmer who has dedicated over 30 years of his life to understanding, practicing and teaching land rehabilitation techniques.

Stuart was raised on 'Tarwyn Park', Bylong, the celebrated home of Natural Sequence Farming, pioneered by his father Peter Andrews.

Currently, Stuart's property in 'Kybong' marries NSF with other tried and tested models of regenerative agriculture.

RSVP by Wednesday 25th March 2020 at  
[stickytickets.com.au/N9M5M](https://stickytickets.com.au/N9M5M) or by calling 02 6772 9123.



This project is supported by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, through funding from Australian Government's National Landcare Program. Support from Armidale Regional Council through the Malpas Catchment project is also gratefully acknowledged.



Photo by Benoit Gauzeire on Unsplash

# Regenerating Rural Landscapes with

**David Hardwick & Damon Telfer**  
**16 - 17 September 2020**

**"It is imperative we farmers have a basic working knowledge  
of complex creative systems, because that is exactly what we are managing."**

**Dr Charlie Massy (2017).**

**Essential learning for those keen to develop a whole farm  
plan that optimises ecology for a resilient, regenerative and  
productive enterprise.**

- **Learn the fundamental principles of landscape rehydration**
- **'See' your landscape using landscape thinking**
- **Understand landscape patches - building blocks of your farm**
- **Hydrate your farm while regenerating soils and biodiversity.**

David Hardwick is an agroecologist and a leading educator in soils, land management and whole farm planning across eastern Australia. He uses innovative and fun ways to help landholders build practical skills in regenerative agriculture. Damon Telfer has spent two decades restoring landscape functionality. He has skills in applying the principles of landscape rehydration in diverse environments.

This boot camp is the first two days of a 6-day 'Planning your Farm Landscape' course by Soil, Land, Food.

**Day 1 @ 'Eastlake', Day 2 @ 'Bimbivale'.**

**Places limited. Register by Friday 11 September at**

**[www.stickytickets.com.au/3iets](http://www.stickytickets.com.au/3iets)**

More information at [www.snelandcare.org.au](http://www.snelandcare.org.au) or 02 6772 9123.

**FREE Event for members  
of Southern New England  
Landcare**

**Non-members \$170**

**Morning tea and lunch  
provided**



*This project is supported by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, through funding from Australian Government's National Landcare Program as part of Southern New England Landcare Ltd's Mustering Members 4 Climate Change Challenges project.*





MM4CCC  
Challenge #4

# Greener Grazing Globally

- Dr Christine Jones -
- Dr Judi Earl -
- Dr Rachel Lawrence -

Three fabulous women who all began with Southern New England Landcare.

**24-25 March 2021**  
**Uralla**

## Principles. Paddocks. Party.

A milestone event to celebrate how far we've all come.

Don't miss your chance to mix it with the best in 2021.

Watch eNews or [www.snelandcare.org.au](http://www.snelandcare.org.au)  
for more details as they become available.



*This project is supported by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, through funding from Australian Government's National Landcare Program as part of Southern New England Landcare Ltd's Mustering Members 4 Climate Change Challenges project.*



# Regent Honeyeater Update

Bird lovers from the Southern New England had an opportunity to hear from one of the most informed experts on the endangered Regent Honeyeater, when Dr Ross Crates from the Australian National University spoke at a field day near Uralla Tuesday 22nd October 2019.

"We were very excited to host Dr Crates - he possesses such a wealth of knowledge on this beautiful species," said Struan Ferguson, Coordinator with Southern New England Landcare.

For several years, Dr Crates has been studying why this species has become rare and endangered, and what we can do to help them.

Participants also heard from local nature educator Peter Metcalfe about the types of Regent Honeyeater habitat we have in our local area, and Sara Schmude on how community members can help manage one of the key threats to Regent Honeyeaters - the feral Indian Myna.

## New Bird Group

One of Southern New England Landcare's newest interest groups consider themselves the 'Regent Honeyeater Revivalists' and aim to promote the Regent Honeyeater's habitat and how we can help improve it on known and predicted sites.

"The group has now met several times to prepare a local action plan of activities they are keen to work on," said Struan.

## Small Schools Visit

Project Officer Struan Ferguson recently visited three small schools in Regent Honeyeater territory. Kingstown, Kentucky and Kelly's Plains students were all involved in learning about the Regent Honeyeater and its habitat, and donning the binoculars to go bird watching in a fun setting!

To find out more:

- visit [snelandcare.org.au](http://snelandcare.org.au) and navigate to our projects page, or the Friends of the Regent Honeyeater group page
- visit our Facebook group "Woodland Birds of the Southern New England"
- call Project Officer Struan Ferguson on 6772 9123.

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



## THUNDERBOLT Project

A grant to the value of \$99,998 has been awarded so that landholders in the Uralla district can restore habitat connectivity for threatened fauna and flora.

Southern New England Landcare Executive Officer, Karen Zirkler said, "We are very pleased to have been awarded the grant by the NSW Environmental Trust, because it enables our members to continue important work they've been undertaking in our recent 'Closing The Gap' project."

"Re-connecting Thunderbolt Country for threatened New England woodland and wetland biodiversity" will occur around Uralla, Kentucky and Salisbury Plains on southern New England Tableland.

"Studies indicate that 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 in our region," said Karen.

Landholders involved in this project will contribute to 36 ha of new habitat with 12,000 native trees, shrubs and groundcovers. At least 18 ha of remnant native woodland and wetland will also be protected.

A Project Planning Webinar was held with 12 participating landholders on 1 July 2020.

The webinar provided background information and a Q&A session with Dr Andrew Huggett, the project's consultant ecologist and ornithologist.

Expressions of Interest submitted by the participating landholders will be assessed by an independent panel in early August, with Landholder Management Agreements formulated soon thereafter.

*Left: A Speckled Warbler - one of the threatened woodland birds for which the project will create habitat. Image courtesy of Ian Colley.*





# Agriculture that Regenerates Our Landscapes... and US

*Contributed by Sustainable Living Armidale with input from your Local Landcare Coordinators.*

**There is currently a tsunami of interest around regenerative agriculture. This begs the question - what is it?**

In many ways it is an agricultural movement that seeks to regenerate, rather than degrade, land. It goes beyond simply sustaining the current condition, which may be degraded. Inherent in the movement, is an intention to honour farmers wellbeing, as well as biodiversity.

Current agricultural paradigms are based around maximising short-term production of food and fibre from land - a system based on 'efficiency'. Often this comes at the cost of healthy, functioning soils and ecology - as well as the wellbeing of other critters that live there - from microbes to wildlife, and people.

Lots of great regenerative work has been done by the Landcare community in the past. However, compared to the focus on agricultural 'efficiency and high productivity', much less energy and resources have been focussed on building and maintaining the health of farm ecosystems or 'agroecosystems'. The result is reduced landscape health, biodiversity, ultimately lowering resilience of rural communities.

Regenerative agriculture is about bringing those things back while also producing the food and fibre that we all depend on. Arguably a more balanced approach.

There are many farming practices that regenerate farms and ecosystems. Mostly they are well supported by science, but

there are also some less well-understood aspects that may not yet have been studied by western science, even if they are considered to be highly effective by some. However, while some regenerative agriculture practices are challenging for science to grapple with due to their complexity, sometimes it is just a case of putting pieces of a scientific - and often broader social/ecological - puzzle together.

An evidence-based practice of regenerative agriculture includes maximising groundcover. In grazing systems, this includes retaining a reasonable height of pasture and monitoring and altering stocking rates to maintain this. In cropping systems, it might be incorporating cover cropping practices and using integrated pest management. Other methods are ensuring ecologically sensitive areas on farms are protected from over-use, thus leaving something for below and above-ground

creatures - both on land and in the water - allowing biodiversity and carbon stocks to regenerate. This means protecting riparian areas and areas with intact and regenerating native vegetation. It also means leaving dead trees with hollows intact, and where possible, woody debris on the ground for other critters such as insects, bats, birds, echidnas and lizards, and to store carbon. It might also mean incorporating practices like agroforestry or silvopasture.

Overall, regenerative agriculture aims to feed and clothe us, while working with nature as much as possible, and at the same time allowing other life to thrive, and regenerate where appropriate, on farms.

Regenerative agriculture is not magic, it is looking after our landscapes and people in ways that nurture all of life.

*Below - Regenerative Agriculture on 'Lana'. Tim Wright was a founding member of member group Balala-Brushgrove Landcare in 1989.*





# From Seedlings, Endangered Woodlands Grow

Contributed by Ben Vincent &  
Dr Tim Paine, UNE

A small team of researchers, land managers and practitioners at the University of New England and Northern Tablelands Local Land Services are embarking on an environmental project to protect and restore two locally endangered woodlands here in the heart of the New England.

The project is funded by the NSW State Government 'Saving our Species' program (SoS), and focuses on two historically widespread woodland plant communities:

1. Ribbon Gum-Mountain Gum-Snow Gum, and

*Below - a lone paddock tree at risk (left) and a Peppermint seedling (right), Ribbon Gum, Mountain Gum, Snowgum Woodland (bottom). Image courtesy of Ben Vincent. Images courtesy of Ben Vincent.*



2. New England Peppermint.

Several of the dominant tree species which make up these woodlands are favoured by Koalas as a food source and are critical in supporting a range of other native wildlife in our region. Arboreal mammals such as Sugar Gliders and Possums, small woodland bird species like Treecreepers and Whistlers, tree-hollow dwelling species and of course Echidnas, reptiles and insects that live and forage amongst fallen timber and bark are all dependant on woodlands such as these.

In addition to supporting tree and animal species, both types of woodlands are home to a rich diversity of mid- and understory

plant species, including native shrubs, herbs, grasses, sedges, orchids and many others, which contribute to a colourful display of wildflowers throughout spring and summer. Some local examples which are easily accessible to explore include; Snow Gums Bushland Reserve, Imbota Nature Reserve and Little Llangothlin Nature Reserve. There are also some good examples in some Travelling Stock Reserves, and here and there in patches along roadside reserves across the Tablelands. You may be fortunate enough to have a patch of one or both of these woodlands on your property.

Historic clearing severely reduced the extent of these woodlands. Today, they generally remain as small woodland patches or isolated paddock trees. In these altered conditions, woodlands are more susceptible to outside pressures and may be more prone to eucalyptus dieback, drought, over-grazing of the understory, weed species invasion, disease and limited natural seedling recruitment and survival. For these reasons, these endangered woodland communities are unlikely to persist without assistance. One way to reverse the decline is to encourage healthy seedlings of these woodland species to grow in our landscape.

One of the first steps in this project is to visit existing woodland fragments and paddock trees, and survey the number of regenerating seedlings that are occurring naturally. We hope to do this across the Tablelands in as many different situations as possible, e.g. Travelling Stock Reserves, road



side reserves and on farmlands. By doing so, we hope to gain a clearer understanding of under what conditions these woodland species are naturally regenerating, and be able to answer questions such as how much grazing pressure and how much weed encroachment, can the seedling trees withstand and still be able to grow?

### **A careful eye for seedlings**

Sadly, our big old paddock and woodland trees will one day die. If there are no younger plants to take their place, then that patch of woodland will eventually disappear. A healthy woodland naturally avoids this fate by supporting many trees of varying sizes and ages. Planting trees on a large scale by hand is one way to address woodland decline, but it can be expensive and time consuming. So how can we encourage and aid existing parent trees to rear their own offspring?

Severe drought, followed by heavy, soaking rains at the beginning of this year triggered some eucalypts in the region to regenerate, including our focal species. If you have woodland on your property it would be well worth keeping a careful eye out for these naturally regenerating seedlings, which may be no taller than a coffee mug at present, and or as small as the height of a 50 cent piece standing on end. If you are observing seedlings in your woodland it suggests that your woodland is healthy, at least in the short term and that this patch is actively investing in its future.

While it is an exciting time to observe adult trees recruiting their offspring, it isn't a given that their seedlings will survive. Given the current status of our two threatened woodland communities and the rarity of seedling recruitment events, we now have an important opportunity to

actively protect growing seedlings. This can be done by temporarily destocking areas where seedlings are found, or by placing short-term fences around seedlings until they are well established. The protection of seedlings while they are at their most vulnerable increases their chances of survival and can also be a convenient way to expand the current patch size of your woodland and safeguard its future. It is also a unique opportunity to help nature to do its thing. It's essentially planting trees for free!

### **Do you have these woodlands on your property?**

Findings from this project will be shared with you, the community, so that in time to come we can all improve on the experience and knowledge that we already have in our passionate community and can effectively play a role in restoring these unique woodlands for generations to come.

In the meantime we are asking interested landholders for your help. If you know you have, or think you might have, Ribbon/ Manna Gum, Mountain Gum, Snow Gum or New England Peppermint on your property then you might have one of the two woodland communities that our project hopes to foster. In the short term, we would be interested in talking with you about conducting a survey of seedling recruitment in your paddocks.

If you are interested in being a part of this project, or would like to learn more about it, the SoS program, or the two endangered woodland communities, then we would love to hear from you. Please get in touch by contacting Tim Paine [timothy.paine@une.edu.au](mailto:timothy.paine@une.edu.au) or Ben Vincent [ben.vincent@une.edu.au](mailto:ben.vincent@une.edu.au)

# Maximising Plant Survival Short Film

*Southern New England*

*Landcare recently secured \$5000 from Northern Tablelands Local Land Services for a grant to make a short film on maximising plant survival.*

*Achieving successful revegetation is not easy.*

*Numerous steps in the process have to be well done in order to attain success. Given the significant human and economic resources required to revegetate an area, maximising plant survival is imperative.*

*This short video will be a good resource for landholders undertaking revegetation projects. Topics will include: best practice ground preparation, optimal planting times, protecting plants from weather extremes such as wind, frost and extended dry periods (to water or not to water, when and how much) and particularly, protecting plants from herbivore damage. Speakers will be local credible experts and practitioners.*

# 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 to events.

You can become a member or check your membership at <https://snelandcare.org.au/membership/membership-signup.html>

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 contact mail@snelandcare.org.au or on 02 6772 9123 and us to check for you.**

# Ideas you want to put into action?

If you and your neighbours are keen to do landcare-type projects in your area, why not have a group get-together around the barbecue, and ask one of our Local Landcare Coordinators to come out and assist with some group action planning?

We can also assist you to develop project idea(s) and source funding or other resources. The group need not be a formal landcare group, it could be just a keen group of neighbours.

Alternatively, if you are a member and would like to pop a project idea on the shelf until a suitable opportunity arises, why not fill out a Southern New England Landcare Expression of Interest form?

We can help members develop their project ideas, or include them in a regional-scale project idea, and submit to a suitable funding opportunity when the time comes.

Anyone wishing to have an Expression of Interest held on file is required to be a member of Southern New England Landcare.

If you are interested in pursuing this further contact us by phone on 6772 9123 or at [mail@snelandcare.org.au](mailto:mail@snelandcare.org.au).

# Group Event Promotion Reminder

In order to be covered by insurance when running group events, please state your group name in the following manner somewhere on the promotional material:

**“[YOUR LANDCARE GROUP’S NAME] – a subgroup of Southern New England Landcare Ltd”.**





# Using LNSW DGR Status

In 2019, Landcare NSW achieved Deductible Gift Recipient Status (DGR). This means that every donation over \$2 is tax deductible.

Donors can express a wish for where their funds are to be spent (via emailing fundraising@landcarensw.org.au with their name and date).

Each donation will incur a 1.5% administration fee.

Landcare NSW Member Groups can hold fundraising activities and apply for funds via our policy framework (see [www.landcarensw.org.au](http://www.landcarensw.org.au)) and by filling out their project details for funds raised.

These fundraising activities can be applied to member groups only.

Landcare groups will be asked to fill out a form nominating the details.

Once the project fundraising initiative has been completed, whether it is ongoing or a once-off, you will be required to fill out a project status report.

For any further enquiries please do not hesitate to get in contact with Samantha Stratton, Marketing & Partnerships Coordinator, Landcare NSW Inc. on 0487 767 955 or email [ssatratton@landcarensw.org.au](mailto:ssatratton@landcarensw.org.au).

# Local Members Discuss National Landcare

**On 11th June, 21 members of Southern New England Landcare gathered via online Zoom meeting to discuss the current national landcare situation and make suggestions for the way forward.**

A presentation prepared by Landcare NSW and presented by SNE Landcare EO, Karen Zirkler was followed by a guided discussion, where participants were divided into 7 groups.

In summary, the current national situation made participants feel annoyed and frustrated and left them confused, with more questions than answers.

Participants then discussed positive ways forward, and suggested a unified representative network, that demonstrates good governance.

Campaigning local MPs and hosting members of Landcare Australia Limited locally so that they could see what local landcare is about, was also suggested.

We need to find a way to reconnect everyone back to the reason / purpose / importance of Landcare, and help move people past any selfish interests.

Our feedback was provided to Landcare NSW, so they could take it to the next level.

Regular updates will be available on the Landcare NSW website.

# Notice of 19th AGM

**6 pm Thursday  
29th October  
2020**

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 JWI Bequest

Announced

8.00 pm Supper

## RSVP

[mail@snelandcare.org.au](mailto: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.

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# Landchat

Landcare in the Southern New England, No. 117, October 2019 - June 2020



Southern  
New England  
**Landcare**



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.



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