

Landchat

Landcare in the Southern New England, No. 119, January - June 2021



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 a bumper 6-month edition of Landchat!

In this issue, we showcase the great work being done in our region despite continuing challenges of COVID-19. Check out our colourful infographic summarising all our 2020-2021 financial year achievements on page 19.

We've recently finished a range of projects, while others such as our Regent Honeyeater Project and our Koala Partnership Project are ongoing. They are all showcased for your pleasure.

Sadly, our Greener Grazing Event was postponed due to flooding, but we are announcing a new date for October this year, whilst Silvopasture 2020 changed course slightly, and became an online event, attracting an international audience.

Partnerships with Northern Tablelands Local Land Services, the Primary Health Network, the National Landcare Program, the NSW Government and Armidale Regional Council have resourced many projects and events.

At the same time, local groups have been putting in the hard yards making great things happen on the ground. Of special note are the achievements of the Save the Regent Honeyeater Group, Friends of Barry Munday Reserve, Malpas Catchment Group and Armidale Urban Rivercare Group.

We hope you enjoy reading about all these great community achievements!

Upcoming events

To stay up to date on coming events, be sure to register for our eNews at www.sneladcare.org.au.

Alternatively, check our events page at www.snelandcare.org.au/group-events.html.

Free membership subscriptions up for discussion

Membership subscriptions have been a topic of discussion recently, due to being steady at a low level for several years.

While the exact causes of low membership subscriptions are unknown, possible explanations include the online subscription process implemented several years ago, the cost of subscribing, the number of subscription categories, and time pressures community members currently experience.

Key facts

- Financial memberships as at 30 June 2021 total 261
- Total membership income for 2020/2021 financial year (via web) totalled \$5,104.
- In the past, financial memberships have been as high as 700+
- Fortnightly eNews subscriptions as at 30 June 2021 total 814.

At Southern New England Landcare's April 2021 board meeting, board members discussed these membership challenges, in readiness for proposing a membership subscription change to the 2021 AGM on Wednesday 27th October.

The proposal? Free membership.

Some of our peer networks operate based on free membership subscriptions, and they enjoy very large membership bases.

The board brainstormed the advantages and disadvantages of this concept and the results of this brainstorm are outlined further down in this article.

The board also resolved to broaden this discussion among members via this article, and seek members' input prior to the next board meeting on Wednesday 18th August 2021.

Continued on page 18

Regent Honeyeater Roadshow

Monday 12th April saw participants from the Southern New England gather near Bundarra for a day as part of a week-long Regent Honeyeater Roadshow.

The event began with a bird spotting walk through the Bundarra Common.

Participants heard first-hand from local bird expert Steve Debus about the pair of Regent Honeyeaters who resided in the common for about a month in October 2019 before moving on.

After morning tea, we heard about woodland birds in general and received an update on the statewide Regent Honeyeater Recovery efforts from Emily Mowatt Woodland Bird Officer with Birdlife Australia, Newcastle.

Kristy Peters, also a Woodland Bird Officer with Birdlife Australia, Newcastle, spoke about Mistletoe, breaking down some of the myths associated with them and current efforts to seed mistletoe onto trees in the Hunter Valley to aid in the conservation of the Regent Honeyeater.

Myth - Mistletoe is only found in Europe

Fact - Mistletoes grow worldwide across different habitats and all continents except Antarctica.

There are more than 1500 species with approximately 90 being found in Australia.

Myth - Mistletoe kills trees

Fact - In general, Mistletoe does not kill its host tree as it needs the host alive for its own survival.

The host tree can sometimes defend itself by dropping the infested branch. Often trees die as a result of multiple factors, and not only from Mistletoe.

One participant remarked that they, 'enjoyed the roadshow immensely' and another commented, 'Thank you for the very interesting walk and talks and yummy food!'

Resources Now Available

The following reference booklets are now available from the Southern New England Landcare office:

Breaking Down Myths About Mistletoe, Hunter Local Land Services and Birdlife Australia (2020).

Saving the Regent Honeyeater – A Conservation and Management Guide, Birdlife Australia (2019).

Left: Participants with Kristy Peters on the Bird Spotting Walk at Bundarra Common, courtesy Struan Ferguson, April 2021.

Right: Ironbark in flower Wood's Reef, courtesy Struan Ferguson, May 2021.

Inset top: Historical Regent Honeyeater Sign 1990s Ironbark Nature Reserve, courtesy Struan Ferguson, May 2021.

Inset middle: Beth Williams OAM.

Inset bottom: Saving the Regent Honeyeater resource booklet.



VALE

Beth Williams OAM

12th August 1928 – 23rd May 2021

Beth Williams died in Armidale on Sunday evening 23rd May, aged 92.

Beth had many interests from cryptic crosswords to opera, but her strongest interests were in plants, birds and nature conservation.

She was still writing knowledge-based submissions on draft government documents or contributing ideas and support for others until very recently.

Beth's physical health declined in stages but she retained her interest in nature conservation and how our world is managed, getting the Sydney Morning Herald in her nursing home as well as turning up ABC Classic FM when Mozart or other favorites were on.

Beth was determined and dogged in her conservation activities. She was active in BirdLife Northern NSW and is, with Andrew Ley and Damon Oliver, co-author of a number of scientific papers.

She received the BirdLife Australia Distinguished Service Award 2016 for the Bundarra-Barraba Regent Honeyeater Recovery program.

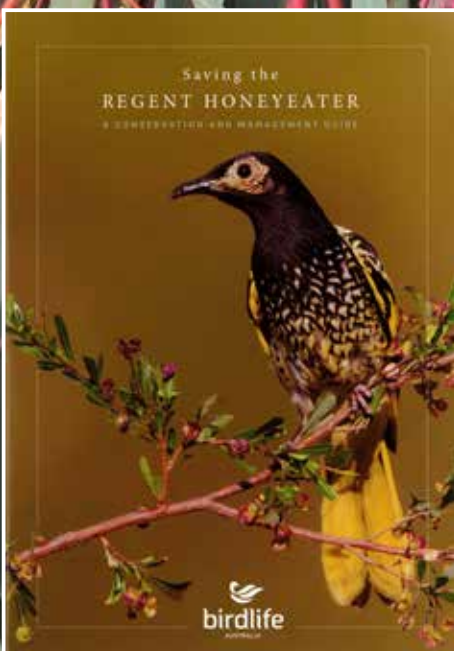
Beth served on the Regent Honeyeater Recovery Team and was instrumental in bringing about numerous Regent Honeyeater preferred species plantings in the Bundarra - Barraba Key Breeding Area. As an active member of the RHE recovery program, Beth has inspired local school children to plant ironbarks.

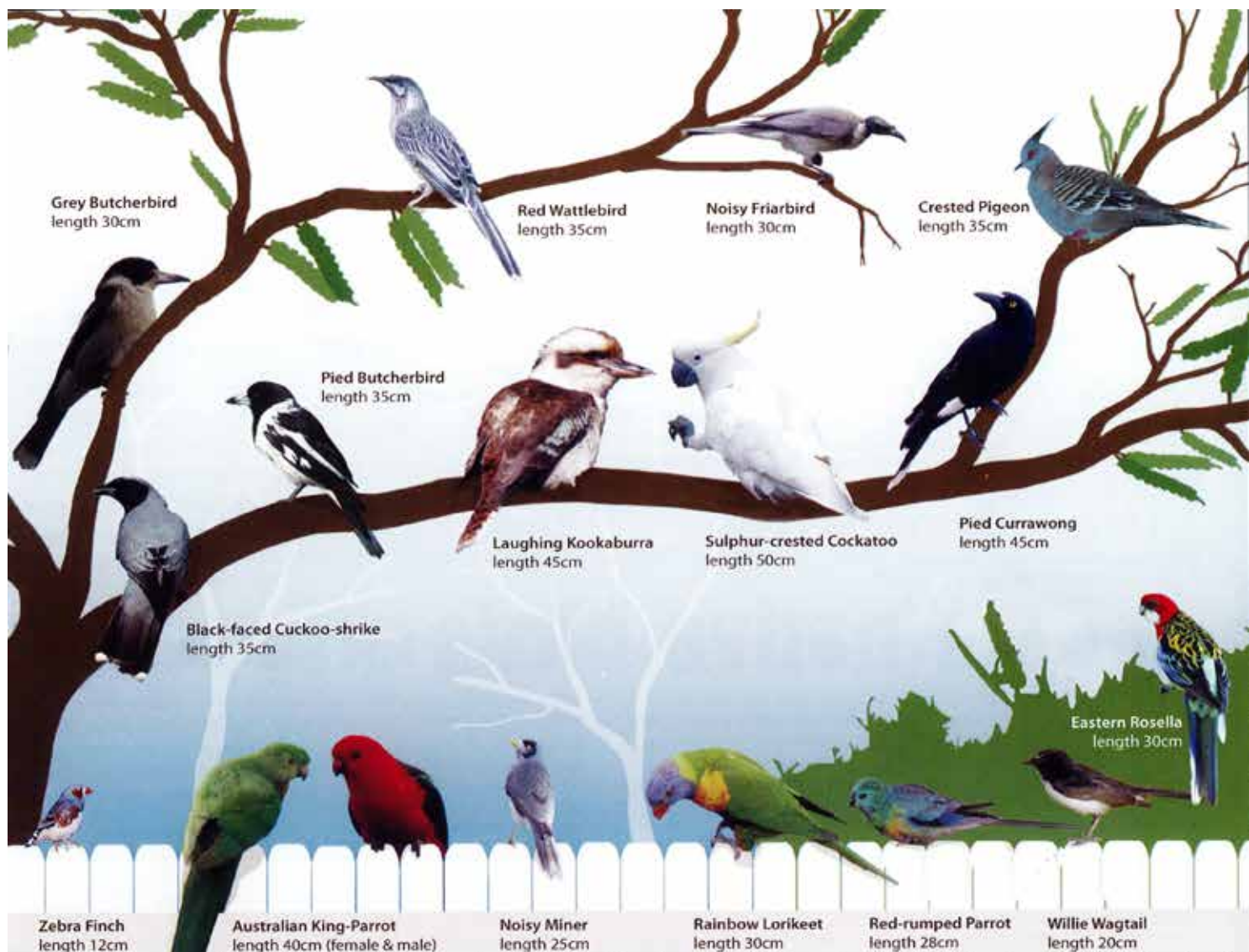
When a recent visiting birdwatcher suggested that the ironbark trees favoured by Regent Honeyeaters were flowering early, she assured him they normally start flowering in May.

Her personal effort and dedication was recognised in 2001 by the Australian Government with the Order of Australia Medal for her contribution to conservation and the environment.

This brief piece fails to do justice to Beth's admirable intellect, and her many years of striving to protect Australia's natural values and sharing her knowledge, passion and appreciation of our special places.

Compiled with thanks to Kate Boyd and Lynn Hosking.





How to bring ^{more} native birds into your backyard



Produced by:



affiliated with BOCA



www.tamworthbirdwatchers.com

Email: tambirds4us@gmail.com

Watson's Creek Community Fun Day

On 15th May 2021, Project Officer Struan Ferguson held a Regent Honeyeater Stall at the Watson's Creek Community Fun Day, a drought relief event organised by the Tamworth Regional Landcare Association.

Struan made worthwhile connections with members of the Tamworth Birdwatchers Inc and did a birding resources swap.

The 'How to bring more native birds into your backyard poster' (overleaf) is now available from the Southern New England Landcare Office.

Small school visits

Project Officer Struan Ferguson also recently visited two small schools in Regent Honeyeater territory. Bundarra and Rocky River students were all involved in learning about the Regent Honeyeater and its habitat and enjoyed using the monocular and binoculars to watch birds within their schools' grounds.

Below: Students from Rocky River Public School enjoying some birdwatching. Photo courtesy Struan Ferguson.



Above: Struan Ferguson showcased Regent Honeyeater resources at the Watson's Creek Fun Day. Photo courtesy Penne Frazer.

Frog Dreaming Postponed

Unfortunately, our kids teaching kids 2-day conference, Frog Dreaming was postponed in 2020 due to COVID-19.

It is unlikely to proceed until the Department of Education is able to give it the green light, based on their COVID-19 recommendations.

Koala Conservation Project

A Year of Achievements

By Des Andersen

The koala is an iconic Australian animal, synonymous with the uniqueness of the Australian bush. As a population, Australians are justifiably proud of our natural heritage.

We also expect that our beautiful natural environment will be available for future generations to enjoy in years to come.

Unfortunately, since the arrival of Europeans, our actions and lifestyles have not always been sympathetic toward the survival of the koala.

Koala populations came close to extinction in the early 1900's when koalas were hunted for pelts.

Since then, koala populations have

not recovered sufficiently with the loss of habitat, disease, vehicle strikes and dog attacks impacting on their survival.

The Northern Tablelands Koala Partnership Project aims to ensure the survival of koala populations in the Southern New England region.

Given the importance and magnitude of this issue, our local community is key in providing actions crucial to their survival, including:

- Planting and conserving koala habitat on public reserves and on private properties
- Reporting koala sightings on the Council website [https://www.armidaleregional.nsw.gov.au/self-service/report-it/koalas-in-](https://www.armidaleregional.nsw.gov.au/self-service/report-it/koalas-in-armidale)

armidale

- Reporting sick or injured wildlife to WIRES (1300 094 737) or Northern Tablelands Wildlife Carers (1800 008 290)
- Taking care not to hit koalas when driving through bushland areas
- Hosting koala drinking stations to provide water in hot/dry times
- Providing climbing structures across colour bond style fences, such as ropes or solid wooden posts.

In its first year, the Northern Tablelands Koala Partnership Project had an enormous helping hand from project partners.

By 30 June 2021, the project:

- engaged more than 40 community members in a demonstration event to learn koala conservation skills with help from UNE, Sunshine Coast University and John Lemon Consulting
- engaged more than 100 local landholders in events and activities to develop koala habitat
- worked with Armidale Regional Council to deliver community-based activities for urban koala corridors
- developed a Bushfire Recovery Plan with Wildlife Carers and Emergency Services
- developed a Koala Disease register to help understand and treat common diseases
- worked with the Northern Tablelands Local Land Services to complete koala surveys and monitoring to help understand local koala populations, and
- worked with Armidale Tree Group and Kentucky Tree Nursey to

Below: Participants join the Koala Detective Dog in action at a field event at Newholme near Armidale.



ensure a supply of koala habitat trees.

These combined efforts have provided a solid platform from which to move the project into the next stage.

In further good news, the Federal and NSW State governments recently announced a substantial funding boost for koala conservation and research, demonstrating commitment by both levels of government, and recognising the urgency in ensuring enough money is available to fund actions needed for koala population survival.

Southern New England Landcare would like to thank everyone who has been involved in the project to date and encourage those who would like to help to contact us, even if you are unsure about how you might help.

The survival of the koala now depends on support from across the entire community.

Even if your involvement is small, it will provide a significant contribution through our collective effort.

Please help us help an Aussie icon.

Stage One of this project was funded by the NSW Saving our Species program.



Below: Des Andersen, Koala Conservation Project Officer addresses landholders at the Dangarsleigh field event.



Small Grants Empower Groups on Road to Recovery

Two small grants secured in the last 18 months have helped groups gather together in eight districts across the region following drought, fire and flood disasters, to access bushfire and animal welfare recovery resources as well as mental health and resilience support services.

Events were hosted by Winterbourne, Wollomombi, Boorolong, Tenterden, Balala-Brushgrove, Lower Apsley River, Walcha and Wongwibinda Landcare districts.

With support from Northern Tablelands Local Land Services animal health staff and Primary (human) Health Network staff, the events included presentations and support materials on animal health and well being, weed control, and mental health support services.

Significant community connections were made and re-made. Two of the events led to the local community applying for NSW Government Drought Resilience Funds to hold community gatherings with live music and food, each of which attracted more than 100 participants.

The importance of community

connection for rapid response to local bushfires was made crystal clear from multiple discussions.

Following the drought and bushfires there were many service providers in the community, usually on short-term contracts. These events highlighted the value of the extensive landcare network that exists from decades of landcare work in the region.

It meant that these events provided an opportunity for short-term service providers to get quickly access the community thereby increasing their ability to support it.

The attention given to regenerative agriculture and biodiversity conservation in recent years has potentially alienated some members of the rural community and these events highlighted the importance of simply making connections and respecting the choices people make in terms of natural resource management, which in the context of farm business and personal goals, are very complex.

Although there may be exceptions, in general, rural communities are not open to activities that are directly about mental health. They would rather just get on with recovering from the drought and fires, reconnecting with each other and getting on with business recovery from these environmental challenges.

This project was jointly funded through the Northern Tablelands Local Land Services and the NSW State Government, and the Primary Health Network - Hunter New England & Central Coast.



Local Land Services
Northern Tablelands

Game - Set - Match

Friends of Barry Munday Reserve

The Friends of Barry Munday Reserve Group (FoBMR), enthusiastically co-ordinated by Susan McPhee and Peter Barkley have aced numerous points since the group's inception late last year.

The Barry Munday Reserve, located at 82 Munday Lane, Saumarez Ponds, and positioned on approximately seven acres, is undergoing a major facelift.

So far, several volunteer working bees have:

- Improved tennis court drainage by removing dirt and vegetation that was higher

than the surface, outside the fence.

- Built a new birdwatching seat.
- Discussed redirecting the drain at the north west corner of the reserve with Uralla Shire Council
- Removed the hawthorn bushes and weeds from the area along the road west of the entrance
- Retiled the barbecue counter areas
- Installed a noticeboard at the entrance to the reserve
- Added new poles for the tennis court fence to stabilize

existing poles and re-swung gates for the courts

- Installed a new practice board in the tennis court
- Erected signage to acknowledge the very generous community contributions towards the courts.

The working bees have attracted up to 20 people each time and newcomers are most welcome.

Long-time local identity, Barry Schaefer, who has been instrumental in his efforts to maintain the reserve since the

Below: working bee members improve the condition of the clay court surface and the fence (top) resulting in a very inviting scene (bottom).



1990's (a 30-year commitment), is back as a member of the FoBMR crew!

Works on the tennis courts and barbecues commenced last summer (2020).

Up to 10 local families got together in 2020 to enjoy the facilities, with their kids enjoying the extra space to run around.

The group also held a successful car boot sale in November 2020, with nearly 100 participants, which was very pleasing for the organisers.

The group has a number of activities that are either a work-in-progress or on their to-do list, so there is plenty of activity in the upcoming warmer months to keep the growing band of volunteers busy.

Future activities include:

1. Establishing a community garden to the north side of the tennis court with edging and steps leading down from the gate
2. Planting trees to increase tree and shrub cover from the current 15% to a maximum of 40%. This includes exploring grants for ground preparation and seedling protection.
3. Removing dangerous tree limbs in consultation with locals
4. Further refinement of the tennis court clay surface and continued control of vegetation growth
5. Mowing the cricket pitch from September to March annually. Residents will receive a fuel subsidy kindly provided by the Invergowrie Store.

There is a 125 year tradition of holding community activities on this site, and the Friends of Barry Munday Reserve are committed to keeping those traditions alive!

Recently completed projects

June 2021 was a very busy time for Landcare Coordinators, who, after coordinating 18 events in the last 12 months, final reported on 6 completed projects, including:

1. 2020-2021 PHN Empowering Our Communities Events (\$14,820 from Primary Health Network) was coordinated by Rachel Lawrence from 06/02/2020 - 30/06/2021.
2. 2021 Northern Tablelands Bushfire Recovery & Animal Welfare Project (\$15,787 from NT LLS) was coordinated by Rachel Lawrence from 08/03/2021 - 31/05/2021.
3. 2021 Sustainable Living Armidale's Climate Risk & Peri Urban Dwellers Project (\$13,427 from Armidale Regional Council) was coordinated by Annette Kilarr from 16/12/2020 - 30/06/2021.
4. 2021 NTLLS Small Community Grants Pasture Publication Reprints (\$7,500 from NT LLS) was coordinated by Karen Zirkler from 08/03/2021 - 25/06/2021.
5. 2020 NTLLS Maximising Plant Survival Short Film (\$5,000 from NT LLS) was coordinated by Struan Ferguson from 01/07/2020 - 25/02/2021.
6. 2020 NTLLS Revegetating Urandangie Creek (\$5000 from NT LLS) was coordinated by Rachel Lawrence from 01/07/2020 - 31/12/2020.

Stories on all these great projects later in this edition! Read on.

Notice of AGM

6 pm Wednesday 27th October 2021 at the Uralla Community Centre.

All members and friends welcome.

Guest speakers

Evening refreshments

Finger food

Come along and catch up with friends, new and old.

Pending COVID restrictions, a decision may be made to hold this meeting online at late notice.

To be kept informed, and for catering purposes, please RSVP to mail@snelandcare.org.au or 02 67729123 by Wednesday 20th October.

Life Membership

It may be timely, in Southern New England Landcare's 30th year of operation (2022) to launch a life membership opportunity to reward and recognise those people who have made a significant contribution to our organisation.

This will be a topic of discussion at our AGM on 27th October 2021.

A draft Life Nomination Policy and Nomination Form have been prepared.

To obtain a copy and provide feedback, please contact mail@snelandcare.org.au or call 02 6772 9123.

Community Participation

LP-010-004

Is Your Rural Lifestyle Block Ready?

Southern New England Landcare Ltd



A participatory workshop series on climate risk impacts

The issue

Landholders on larger properties with a commercial focus are beginning to identify and address climate change risk. Peri-urban property owners often have a higher proportion of off-farm income, and less focus on property management issues that could reduce such risks. We know, however that people on rural residential properties *are* doing things worth sharing. But is that sharing happening effectively?

The solution

Collective insight and learning evolves when we provide space to explore questions that matter. Our goal was to build capacity through sharing personal experiences within and across local community hubs. This way, we could identify commonalities and differences, and develop more detailed and area specific scenarios for responding to potential impacts.

We hosted a series of half day gatherings in three locations. Participants were asked to consider the last two years of drought fire and flood and we explored these powerful questions:

- What was the hardest thing you experienced? What was it that concerned you most?
- What future responses might be possible on rural lifestyle block? If resources were not limiting, what would you like to try? What would you do differently after today?

Using the 'World Café' process as a guide, we harvested participants' knowledge and experiences identifying recovery practices, possible future responses and information gaps.

The impact

Twenty six peri-urban landholders participated in the workshops with nearly half having never participated in a Landcare event before. Many had an interest or background in permaculture, regenerative agriculture or biodynamic practices.

There was an initial expectation that the workshops would involve an "instructional" process. However, participants were inspired by recognising shared experiences, exploring ideas and engaging with community around how to respond in the future.

Learnings

1. Witnessing radical changes – water depletion, vegetation desiccation, soil loss, native animal and livestock deaths, community and business depletion – brought fear and the message that climate change is real.
2. Participants were encouraged through communicating with others that actions such as water management, tree planting, fire and safety planning, solar systems, grey/black water use, mulching and soil improvement, are a step in the right direction.
3. There is concern around government resource distribution in a crisis situation: a call for better community-driven planning that values local knowledge from the outset.



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



Key facts

- The mental, physical and emotional toll of unprecedented drought and fire is a shared experience.
- The experience was intensified by social media and 24-hour news cycles.
- The participatory process was key to encourage reflection on crises, seek solutions, and determine timely actions.
- 'Climate events' versus 'recovery periods' evoke different experiential and practical problems.
- It is important for rural lifestyle residents to grow their landcare community and skills in order to be resilient and disaster-ready.

Project Partners



03 Jun, 2021

2020-2021 in Partnership with Armidale Regional Council

During the last 12 months, Southern New England Landcare has strengthened its partnership with Armidale Regional Council through our three Council funded projects.

Community Resource Centre

Armidale Regional Council provides financial support towards our Community Resource Centre in Hanna's Arcade.

The following groups utilised the resource centre in the last 12 months:

- 6 board meetings of Southern New England Landcare Ltd Board
- 12 group meetings of Sustainable Living Armidale Inc
- 6 visits from Friends of Barry Munday Reserve Group for grant writing assistance
- 5 visits from Armidale Urban

Rivercare Group for grant writing and project management assistance

- 14 Project partner visits for meetings & enquiries
- 46 individual members or visitors (excluding board members)
- 4 regular volunteers contributing to operations

In addition, four events funded by a Primary Health Network grant were conducted by our Local Landcare Coordinator in the Armidale Regional Council area.

The CRC also enabled delivery of a range of other environmental and sustainable agriculture projects across the region to the value of \$1.056M.

Southern New England Landcare conducted a survey of members during July 2020 and the outcomes relating to the Community resource Centre were of particular interest. Key trends and patterns included:

- Information on key NRM topics is required by the community. Key topics of highest interest are soil management and regenerative agriculture with pasture and native vegetation management not far behind.
- Information on key group related skills training topics is required by the community. Key topics of highest interest are promotion and social media.
- 85% of respondents said the Community Resource Centre was either Extremely Important or Very Important to them.
- 95% of recipients use their free eNews at least once a month, with 20% using it about once a week. 80% of recipients say it is either Extremely helpful or Very helpful.

- Social media is not overly important to current membership – only 40% of members say our social media presence is either Somewhat relevant, Very relevant or Extremely relevant.
- 75% of our members say our biannual hard copy Landchat detailing successes of members and friends, is either Extremely important or Very important.

Malpas Catchment Project

This year, we have assisted community members and groups with events, activities and projects on five occasions, including:

1. Facilitating the Guyra Groundwater network webinars
2. Supporting the community to plant 1600 sedges, shrubs and trees across three sites in Urundangie Catchment
3. Facilitating discussions around future opportunities for Restore Australia funding to support carbon drawdown in catchment
4. Developed several grant applications relevant to the water catchment
5. Clarified with Council, the role of a drought management plan (vs a drought resilience plan).

We also facilitated members of the Malpas Catchment Group to deliver annual actions relevant to Malpas Catchment Asset Protection Plan, including:

- Revegetation of 2 ha along two sections of Urundangie Creek
- Three grant applications to improve Malpas catchment health.

On-ground activity in the Malpas catchment has been severely hampered by severe drought and Covid. While a lot of disaster recovery funding has been available recently, it is mostly aimed at bushfire recovery.

Farewell Rachel Lawrence

Sadly for Southern New England Landcare, Rachel Lawrence, Malpas Catchment Coordinator for the last three years, recently gave notice of her resignation so that she can focus on her other NRM roles.

Rachel has done a fabulous job coordinating many events, applying for numerous grants, and inspiring a great many community members in the region in her time with us and we thank her for that great work.

Fortunately, Rachel is keen to coordinate our Greener Grazing event in October so those in attendance can catch up with her there.

We wish Rachel every success in her future endeavours!



Armidale Urban Planting Maintenance Project

One of the key roles of Southern New England Landcare is to coordinate urban planting maintenance works by contractors.

This year, we provided clarification of priority issues and identification of concerns. Ongoing maintenance is capably performed by Armidale Urban Rivercare Group, People's Park Group and Armidale Tree Group.

Removal of woody weeds and fallen timber, as appropriate in plantings impacted by drought and bushfires, was completed by contractors Bruce Whan, Gordon Bell, John Fitzgerald and the Armidale Tree Group.

Lots of volunteer support was provided, but this year, the program mainly involved recovery and maintenance of sites post-drought.

Considerable community engagement through People's Park Group and Armidale Urban Rivercare Group volunteers took place this year, although there was no school involvement, largely due to Covid and the changeover to Armidale Secondary College.

The Urban Planting Maintenance Project recommended the following actions:

1. Management of Ipomea (Morning Glory) vine - it might be worth exploring opportunities for a joint project with New England Weeds Authority to manage this weed.
2. Develop engagement with local residents in the vicinity of Niagara St and Northcote St as this may encourage more community ownership of these sites and reduce vandalization and arson which occurs periodically.
3. Consider all creekland plantings as a part of the Armidale Urban Planting Maintenance program as these are developed with substantial community in-kind support and typically with grants that do not include ongoing maintenance. As these amenities benefit the community a great deal, and the program leverages significant community in-kind support, it seems appropriate.

Revegetating Urandangie Creek Project Complete

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

Plantings are now completed and the final report submitted. Southern New England Landcare wishes to thank NT LLS for this opportunity offered through its NLP Small Community Grants, and the volunteer landholders who undertook this great work.

Maximising Plant Survival Successful Revegetation Short Film

Achieving successful revegetation is not easy - numerous steps in the process have to be done well in order to attain success.

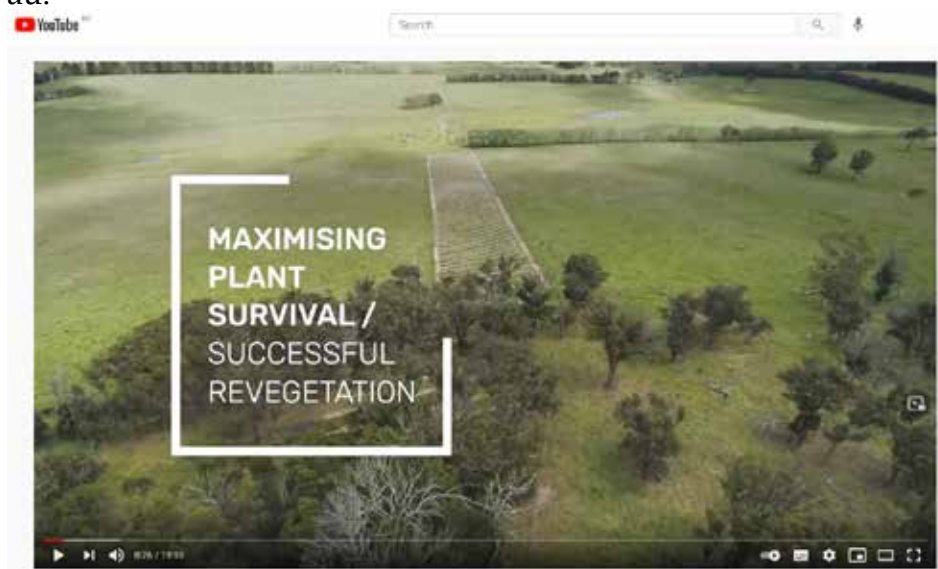
Given the significant human and economic resources required to revegetate an area, maximising plant survival is imperative.

Earlier this year, Southern New England Landcare completed *Maximising Plant Survival - Successful Revegetation*, a short film resource for landholders or anyone for that matter, undertaking revegetation projects. It was funded through Northern Tablelands Local Land Services NLP Small Community Grants.

Topics 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).

Speakers included local identities Shane Andrews, Peter Metcalfe, Bill Perrottet and Gordon Williams, who are experienced practitioners in the Southern New England region.

Maximising Plant Survival - Successful Revegetation is now available on Southern New England Landcare's YouTube channel, or you can access it via our website's home page www.snelandcare.org.au.



Birds of Prey films

Southern New England Landcare recently secured \$15,864 from Northern Tablelands Local Land Services to produce two films focused on the three key vulnerable birds of prey species as part of the NTLLS Birds of Prey Monitoring and Stewardship Project:

1. Little Eagle (*Hieraaetus morphnoides*)
2. Square-tailed Kite (*Lophoictinia isura*); and
3. Sea Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*).

This project has undertaken longitudinal monitoring of populations since 2016 and aims to improve management of important sub-populations of the three birds of prey species across the region.

The project is at the stage of launching into a new phase beyond survey in the Armidale-Uralla localities.

A stakeholder workshop and core working group (NTLLS and UNE) have recognised survey coverage needs to extend across the Northern Tablelands to better reflect the three species population levels and productivity rates.

The project will seek to engage volunteers to identify and report the birds.

The region's landholders will form up a target volunteer group, whilst the broader community will provide additional coverage.

A key tool to achieve this will be the production of two short videos by Southern New England Landcare:

1. For training landholders on bird awareness, identification, habitat, behaviour and regular reporting, especially with regard to nesting and success of target birds of prey.
2. For bird awareness, tips on identification and incidental reporting.

The videos will be used as part of a landholder toolkit and a community appeal.

Below: Square-tailed Kite courtesy of Laurie Boyle.

This project was jointly funded through the Northern Tablelands Local Land Services and the NSW State Government,



Saving Seeds for Threatened Species

Southern New England Landcare recently applied for a Landcare Led Bushfire Recovery Grant called 'Saving Seeds for Threatened Species in the Southern New England' to the value of \$50,000.

If successful, this project will build community capacity to protect native flora and fauna against future climate impacts such as bushfire and droughts in the bushfire-affected Southern New England region. This area includes critically endangered New England Peppermint/White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum grassy woodland communities and threatened species such as Koala and Regent Honeyeater.

The grant will also support seed collection by professionals and train volunteers and landholders to collect seeds through a 4-day seed collection workshop.

It will also enable the purchase of key seed collecting and processing equipment for a local not-for profit native nursery - Armidale Tree Group Inc - and build capacity for local nurseries to propagate seeds of local provenances threatened by future bushfire and severe climate events and increase the success of fire recovery and revegetation in the region.

Keep your fingers crossed for a successful outcome!

Silvopasture 2021

Southern New England Landcare Ltd



Celebrating trees, pastures & biodiversity for long-term resilience & profit

The issue

Landholders in the Southern New England have revegetated all soil types on all levels of slope to counter New England Dieback, however there is now another wave of dieback in another suite of species. Climate change simulations by NSW Office of Environment & Heritage identified New England species at risk of decline. Land managers planting trees and shrubs need them to survive a forecast 1.5 - 2 degree rise in average temperatures. Successful strategies for establishing seedlings are widely applied but there is much doubt about the species to plant for success into the future.

The solution

The Silvopasture 2021 webinar series was the confluence of two goals. It marked the 29th anniversary of "TreeFest" when 6000 attended the Taylor property 'The Hill' at Kentucky. It also delivered information on species selection for revegetation success, an outcome of our NLP funded Mustering Members for Climate Change Challenges Project. The event hosted:

- Rowan Reid, author of 'Heartwood', founder of the Australian Master Tree Grower program and the Australian Agroforestry Foundation, on Silvopasture theory, practice and species selection.
- Professor Nick Reid co-author of 'Nature and Farming: Sustaining Native Biodiversity in Agricultural Landscapes' on biodiversity benefits of silvopasture under a Changing Climate.
- Scott Hall, advocate and educator for Syntropic Agriculture Maintenance/Succession.
- Michael Taylor, The Hill, who runs the Taylor's silvopasture enterprise on harvesting.
- Andrew Gardiner, research technician in seed collection/database management, Fields Environmental Solutions, Uralla on seed collection.
- Chris Eveleigh, Kentucky Tree Nursery on planting techniques.

The impact

Silvopasture 21 supported an audience of 34 to interact on Silvopasture theory and practice. Here's what some of them said:

- 'Particularly helpful to better understand tree canopy cover and effect on pasture growth'.
- 'The benefits of planting trees, not only for the environment and biodiversity, but how it can also increase productivity. During Nick's talk it was very interesting to see the graphs showing land productivity versus the number of trees planted'.
- 'I am an experienced forester and forest grower but events like these always provide learnings through hearing of the experiences of others'.
- 'I need to think about species and the supply into the future to take account of the potential of climate change'.
- 'There is a need for science to be better reflected in native forest management as one way to tackle climate change. Thinning ... to turn over these generations as quickly as possible favours a more adapted population of trees and shrubs'.



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



Key facts

- Increased biodiversity through Silvopasture is beneficial to pastures and grazing livestock.
- Silvopasture assists with carbon storage.
- Attention to species selection may help manage climate change challenges.
- More research is required to quantify the benefits of Silvopasture for resilient landscapes.

Project Partners



Silvopasture is generally recognised as a form of agroforestry where trees and shrubs are integrated with pastures for forage and grazing purposes.

This layered, diverse, and integrated farming approach provides economic, social and environmental benefits that are resilient and adaptable across whole landscapes.

Silvopasture 2021

In 1992, many Southern New Englanders would have been among the more than 6000 participants at 'Treefest', hosted by Jon and Vicki Taylor, a field day to showcase current understanding and techniques in broadscale tree planting of the time in response to widespread New England Dieback.

To mark the anniversary, Michael, Jon and Vicky's son, and now principal at Taylor's Run Silvopasture Farm, partnered with Southern New England Landcare to hold Silvopasture 2021, a two-part webinar series on Thursday 6th and 13th May.

The catalyst for the event was the 2019 drought.

"It was a year that eclipsed many of the previous droughts we have experienced in New England since western settlement in the 1830s," said Michael.

"Many people have witnessed not only groundcover loss but also the death of many trees in the landscape," he said.

"Ground cover and tree health are a big part of the engineered silvopasture system as well as the natural silvopasture ecosystems of the region that preceded our

modern grazing enterprises," he said.

At the same time, Southern New England Landcare wanted to gather Landholders together to explore Species Selection for Revegetation Success as part of our NLP 2 Smart Farms Small Grant entitled Mustering Members for Climate Change Challenges.

Land managers planting trees and shrubs will need them to survive for the forecast 1.5 to 2 degrees rise in average temperatures and the associated abnormal maximum temperatures.

The strategies for establishing seedlings are well known and widely applied but there is much doubt about the species to plant for success into the future.

While organisers originally planned Silvopasture 2021 to be held on farm at "The Hill", Kentucky in 2020 it was postponed and became an online event due to Covid-19.

An impressive line-up of specialists featured in the webinar series.

Our keynote speakers included:

- Rowan Reid, advocate for agroforestry, author of 'Heartwood' and founder of the

Australian Master Tree Grower program and the Australian Agroforestry Foundation

- Professor Nick Reid, co-author of 'Nature and Farming: Sustaining Native Biodiversity in Agricultural Landscapes'.

Other specialists on the program included Scott Hall, an advocate and educator for Syntropic Agriculture (successional agroforestry), on maintenance and succession, while Michael Taylor spoke on harvesting.

We heard about seed collection from Andrew Gardiner, seed collection and database management and research technician at Fields Environmental Solutions in Uralla, and planting techniques with Chris Eveleigh, who with Maria, has been running the Kentucky Tree Nursery for 35 years, supplying native plants for the New England area.

People who registered for the event came from the local region, Victoria, ACT, Queensland and even Denmark.

Since the event took place, there have been numerous enquiries from people wanting to view the recording of the webinar.

Both webinars are now available for viewing on the Southern New England Landcare's Youtube channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCnIB-7ty-VudV9Lxy0IW2yA> or you can access this via the front page at www.snelandcare.org.au.

Left: a screen shot of the webinar presentation by keynote speaker Rowan Reid, who soon after our event, appeared on the ABC's Gardening Australia program.

This event was supported by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, through funding from Australian Government's National Landcare Program.



Local practitioner on the Peer Mentoring Program

Local agroforestry practitioner, Shane Andrews was asked what changed for him, as a result of being part of the Agroforestry Peer Group Mentoring Project. Here is what he said:

Before becoming involved in the Peer Group Mentoring Program as a mentor, I was a semi-retired farm forestry extension officer with 15 years' experience. I was, and still am, doing casual professional work in this field, the rest of my time is spent running our farm.

I had become over the last few years, quite jaded about the lack of

government support for forestry and farm forestry with the cuts to Greening Australia and the Private Native Forestry Development Committees, and the negative perceptions of forestry with the failure of the big forestry schemes during the Global Financial Crisis.

I had done the Master TreeGrower program in 1999, but when it returned in 2014, I came along to a few of the sessions to re-acquaint. It was there I learnt about the new Peer Group Mentor approach, which is really about what the farmer wants and needs.

In my past experience, I had been focused on native species, but now when visiting a landholder as a Peer Group Mentor, we talk about the whole gamut of species. Mentoring is a two-way discussion – you are not a 'consultant' and as a result, the farmer is more comfortable. I find they talk about their whole place, in a holistic way, focusing on their overall objectives.

It's a better approach – there is more ownership of the process by the landholder. For me, to step back and let the peer mentors and the farmer lead the discussion has been the most significant change.

Shane Andrews, November 2015.

How to get help

Southern New England Landcare has six local landholders trained in Agroforestry Peer Mentoring.

All you need to do is contact our office and tell us a bit about what you think you would like to do.

We then contact our peer mentors and set up an appropriate time for a property visit.

The mentors spend 2-3 hours with you on farm, taking a look around, asking you lots of questions, discussing ideas and taking photos.

The lead mentor will then prepare a site visit report for you, detailing everything discussed, including possible ways forward, with useful links, contacts and even species lists.

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 and you must become a member. We will invoice you when you receive your site report.

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

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 happens 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 Wise & David Wilkins, Castlebrine, Vic.

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 opinion as to where to go with its management. Rob Lavin, Brigden, New South Wales.



WWW.SNELANDCARE.ORG.AU

A project of the New South Wales Agroforestry Network (NSWAFN), 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.



Greener Grazing: Principles Paddock Potential

with keynotes
**Dr Judi Earl &
Tim Wright
at 'Lana'**

Our major field event that was set for 23 March 2021 and cancelled at short notice due to flooding has a

New Date!

**Friday 8th October
2021**

(all being well given
COVID-19)

All those who booked in to our initial event were fully refunded and will be the first to know when we are ready to take bookings.

For more information, watch our website and our regular eNews for updates.

Popular Pasture Management Publications Reprinted

Recently, Southern New England Landcare identified a need to reprint three popular publications that have proven so informative and useful to members and friends, that supplies were fully depleted.

In February 2021, we obtained a National Landcare Program Small Community Grant of \$7500 through the Northern Tablelands Local Land Services. The grant was used to make small authorised edits, and reproduce copies of these great resources:

1. Lewis Kahn & Judi Earl (2007), Pasture Management Checklist for The Northern Tablelands of NSW, 3rd Edition, Agricultural Information & Monitoring Services, © Agricultural Information & Monitoring Services, Printed by the University of New England Printery.
2. Lewis Kahn & Judi Earl (2009), Agricultural Information and Monitoring Services, Grazing Management Fact Sheets as follows:
 - Getting Started – develop a grazing plan
 - Managing plants to increase pasture growth rate
 - Managing pastures improves soil health
 - Stocking rate, stock density & using DSE values to estimate pasture intake.

The third publication, *Pasture Plants of the Slopes and Tablelands of NSW: a field guide to the recognition and attributes of 70 plants* by Lewis Kahn, Belinda Heard and Wal Whalley (2003), had to be re-digitised after it was discovered the original electronic files had been lost. Printing of this publication is now awaiting a further small grant.

Southern New England Landcare Ltd would like to thank the National Landcare Program and Northern Tablelands Local Land Services for funding this project. Significant contributions were also made by Professor Wal Whalley, and Professor Lewis Kahn at the University of New England.

These resources were first prepared using National Landcare Program Grants, and together, they offer graziers in the whole of the Northern Tablelands a set of practical, user-friendly, take-home information from any grazing management related event or any resource shelf.

This project was jointly funded through Northern Tablelands Local Land Services Regional Land Partnerships Program and the National Landcare Program.



MEMBERSHIP PROPOSAL

The current proposal is free membership for all individuals, with an opportunity for corporates to 'join' as Platinum, Gold, Silver or Bronze 'sponsors'.

Advantages

1. Easier joining online – no need to select a 'category' nor make a payment
2. Reduces need for processing payments online via paypal or bank deposit
3. Less membership processing work for Admin Officer and book keeper
4. Negates need for 'Affiliate Membership' category (i.e. other Inc groups) and frees up members of Affiliate Groups to become direct members of SNEL Ltd – providing them with clarity on insurance coverage. Affiliate groups are then recorded as 'Partners' in our database.
5. Potential for broader membership base and a greater number of members, in turn enabling 'bragging rights' to improve chances of success in grant applications.
6. Increases audience for the Landcare message
7. Potentially increases credibility among broader community
8. Could encourage new skills on the board of directors
9. Could attract more voluntary tax-deductible donations via a button on the membership signup page.

Disadvantages

1. Perception of 'getting something for nothing' decreases appreciation
2. Perceived loss of membership income
3. Swamped by people with little interest in Landcare.

PROPOSED NEW MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY

Individual Member

Subscription: free, however subscribers must sign up via our website or via our paper form available at office, online, events. Forms will collect name, address, contact details of each individual for insurance purposes. Membership would remain current until the member unsubscribes in writing.

Forms would outline the following benefits of membership:

- Insurance coverage all Southern New England Landcare related activities
- Digital subscription to fortnightly eNewsletters
- Hard copy subscription to Landchat newsletter
- Access to a local Landcare or interest-based group
- Subsidised entry to Southern New England Landcare events
- Access to Landcare staff for assistance in preparing grant applications or subsidy forms
- Free use of Southern New England Landcare library, meeting room, WIFI at the Community Resource Centre in Hanna's Arcade Armidale
- Access to occasional offers by Southern New England Landcare's corporate sponsors
- Access to use of Southern New England Landcare's field day equipment
- Member rates for use of Southern New England Landcare's tools & equipment
- Member rates for services that attract a fee.

Website Membership Page

A new membership page for the website could be designed and ready to switch on as soon as possible following a decision by members at the AGM.

PROPOSED NEW SPONSORSHIP STRUCTURE

As sponsorships are not 'subscriptions', it is unnecessary to have any proposal for sponsorship categories approved at the AGM, however, it could be useful and timely to discuss them together.

If membership is free and subscription numbers are increasing, local businesses may find sponsorship of our organisation an attractive option.

Sponsorship could be promoted via all our communications platforms, and via members.

The following proposed sponsorship levels would allow for an annual maximum of 10 sponsorships to the value of \$9500:

Platinum – annual value \$5000

Only one available per annum to enable us to highlight the sponsor effectively. Sponsor receives promotion at all events, on website, eNews, Landchat. Sponsor provides a field day banner, logos, advert to a set size.

Gold – annual value \$1000

Only two available per annum to enable us to highlight the sponsor effectively. Sponsor receives promotion on website, eNews, and Landchat. Sponsor provides logos and advert to a set size.

Silver – annual value \$500

Only three available per annum. Sponsor receives promotion on website and eNews. Sponsor provides logos and advert to a set size.

Bronze – annual value \$250

Only four available per annum. Sponsor receives promotion on website. Sponsor provides logos and advert to a set size.

Website Sponsorship Page

A new sponsorship page for the website could be designed and ready to switch on as soon as possible following a decision by members at the AGM.

FOR DISCUSSION & DECISION

1. Should Southern New England Landcare implement free membership subscriptions at the 2021 Annual General Meeting?
2. Should implementation of any new membership subscription decision be backdated to 1 July 2021, enabling swift implementation. Members who have paid an annual subscription renewal since 1 July 2021 could be reimbursed.
3. Should Southern New England Landcare implement sponsorships based on the recommendations above, and if so, to what dollar values?

FEEDBACK INVITED

Those wishing to discuss these ideas or provide feedback are encouraged to contact a board member, or our Executive Officer (contact details below), preferably prior to the next board meeting on Wednesday 18th August 2021:

- Richard Daugherty (President)
– Balala Brushgrove Landcare
– rcdaugherty@gmail.com
- Steve Harvey (Vice President)
– Dangarsleigh Landcare –
greenway@bluepin.net.au
- Bev Stubberfield (Treasurer)
– Uralla Rivercare – bevely.
stubberfield@gmail.com
- Bill Perrottet – Malpas
Catchment Group –
urandangie@gmail.com
- Peter Metcalfe – Dumaresq
Landcare – pandsmetcalfe@
bigpond.com
- Jill Moore-Kashima – Soil
Health Forum – yojill@
skymesh.com.au
- Bryan Johnston – Armidale
Urban Rivercare – bryan.
johnston@bigpond.com
- Karen Zirkler (Executive
Officer) – karen.zirkler@
snelandcare.org.au.

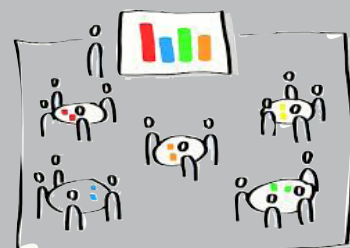
SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND LANDCARE LTD

July 2020- June 2021
Achievements



Build & service our networks

14 Groups engaged
261 Member subscribers
814 eNews subscribers
2 Landchats & 51 eNews
750 FB followers & 9 FB groups



Innovative Ag & NRM initiatives for communities

34 Partner organisations
7 Network events
13 Group events
558 event participants
27 projects in operation

Financial security for our organisation

21 projects current (\$994,420)
6 projects finalised (\$61,534)
5 grants unsuccessful (\$457,022)
7 grants pending (\$3,982,630)
Financials reviewed quarterly
Organisation audited annually



Build & maintain team capacity

8 Volunteer directors
5 Part-time staff
6 Board meetings
7 Team member training events
Strategic plan & policies reviewed

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

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

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Landcare in the Southern New England, No. 119, January - July 2021



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Acknowledgements

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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
Regional Council

regionalaustraliabank